

Red Deer Polytechnic

Reconciliation Through Education

Red Deer Polytechnic (RDP) continues to grow a culture of inclusion and respect through education, collaboration, policies, and a variety of initiatives.

As evidenced by Red Deer Polytechnic Board of Governors' inclusion of its new Board Ends statement in 2021, RDP continues to demonstrate its commitment to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action, its responsibility to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the recognition of Treaties. In April 2019, RDP also made a formal commitment to Indigenous education, relationship building, and initiatives by signing the Colleges and Institutes Canada (CICan) Indigenous Education Protocol.

While Red Deer Polytechnic offers specific courses on Indigenous Peoples, it has also progressively infused more Indigenous teachings into a range of programs through collaboration with curriculum developers and RDP's Indigenous Student Services. As the Polytechnic reviewed and updated its curriculum in programming areas such as health and sciences during the past few years, Indigenous education has been woven into all aspects of those programs. Red Deer Polytechnic's new Bachelor of Education and Bachelor of Business Administration degrees also contain valuable teachings about Indigenous Peoples throughout students' academic journey.

The expanding education about Indigenous Peoples has also extended to the Polytechnic's staff and faculty through a variety of internal professional development opportunities. These opportunities have helped to educate RDP's employees about Indigenous history in Canada, Truth and Reconciliation, and other topics, from an Indigenous perspective.

Indigenous Student Services is extremely active on the post-secondary institution's campuses. Staff have engaged with many Polytechnic divisions, instructors, and learners on a range of presentation topics that include Indigenous health, history, and the criminal justice system.

Prior to COVID-19, many soup and bannock lunches were held on campus to teach about Indigenous culture and to gather the Polytechnic community. As the meal was shared according to Indigenous tradition, guests spoke about a breadth of topics, including on the Indigenous way of life in Alberta and Canada. RDP looks forward to more of these gatherings returning in the near future.

RDP's Indigenous learners have also led meaningful initiatives. Students have planned Orange Shirt Day activities and rock painting as methods of raising awareness and sharing the history of Indigenous Peoples in Canada. In June 2021, a Red Deer Polytechnic student, who is a child of a Residential School survivor, led a commemorative 2.15 mile walk on campus, representing the 215 graves found at the Kamloops Residential School site.

Indigenous Student Services has continued to foster meaningful relationships and collaborate with local school divisions, Central Alberta Regional Consortium, and regional Alberta First Nations and Metis communities. Members of these communities and from the Polytechnic's Indigenous Advisory Committee have also been invited to share their knowledge and expertise as impactful learning opportunities and the ability to work towards Reconciliation.

At RDP's 2022 Convocation, Indigenous students have the option to wear regalia or traditional clothing as a way of honouring their heritage. Other Indigenous graduates may select to wear a Convocation stole with the Indigenous Students' Graphic on it, symbolizing their culture and connection to the Polytechnic. This is a tradition that Red Deer Polytechnic has provided its learners for the past years, and that the institution will continue.

Moving forward, Red Deer Polytechnic will continue to search for opportunities to expand Indigenous education, relationship building, and initiatives.

To learn more, visit: www.rdppolytech.ca/here



April Massie
Indigenous Business Strategist,
Red Deer Graduate



**Red Deer
Polytechnic**

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