

SK-IMN

**ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 2019-2020**



LEADERSHIP ADVISORY COMMITTEE

► By Dr. Caroline Tait, NPI

The 2019-2020 academic year has certainly been a busy one. We began with the submission of the NEIHR grants in September 2019, a meeting of the IMNP coordinators and PIs in Kamloops (Allison attended on our behalf) and ended with an office move and working remotely during a global pandemic. It's easy to pull out highlights - Dr. LaRocque's invited lecture at our Annual Gathering at FNUniv, the success of our NEIHR applications in December, and the February writing retreat which retrospectively, we managed to sneak in just before COVID-19 changed how (and whether) we're able to meet and gather.

While we haven't had much opportunity to work out of our new

spaces, we're excited to be co-located at Station 20 West, and in the Health Science building's E-wing, close to other colleagues and students working in Indigenous health.

The pandemic has delayed a few of our regularly scheduled activities, but has also challenged us to broaden our knowledge of web-based tools. In May, myself and other mentors facilitated writing groups with graduate students, and throughout the spring and summer we hosted webinars on topics such as grant writing, accessing university library



Rigel Smith

resources remotely and more. While I am looking forward to the return of in person gatherings, travel, and other activities, our work has continued throughout this significant change and I continue to enjoy connecting with students and building a community of scholarship through the SK-IMN.



SK-IMN Annual General Meeting (June 3, 2019)

Back row (L to R): Lorraine Holtslander, Glen Luther, Andrew Greenshaw, David Cooper, Randjan Datta, Robert Henry, Joseph Neapetung, Stryker Calvez, Vanessa Hyggen; Second row (L to R): Farva Rizvi, Rhonda Taillon, Heather Foulds, Caroline Tait, Holly Graham, Micheal Heimlick, Fleur Macqueen Smith, Sandy Bonny, Tara Million; Bottom Row (L to R): Bill Mussell, Veronica McKinney, Allison Piche, Aden Tournier. 📷 Sidney Ray-Shacter

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Letter from the SK-IMN Manager

This year felt a lot like one in which we were finding our stride. It was our second time running our funding program, our second Annual Gathering, second and third writing retreats. And, in December, our larger team found out we were awarded the Saskatchewan NEIHR Centre (the FMHRN) and the NEIHR National Coordinating Centre grants. This is exciting news for the SK-IMN as it means we'll be able to continue many of our activities after the original IMNP funding program sunsets in 2022.

Just as we were feeling more secure and shortly after our February writing retreat - COVID-19 happened! There's nothing like a global pandemic to force a shift in the way we'd been doing things.

Our team began working from home March 16th and while the University has begun to open back

up to some research activities (as I write this in July) it will be a slow return to campus for many staff and students. For the foreseeable future (i.e. the Fall term) we will be working remotely. The University of Saskatchewan, First Nations University of Canada, and the University of Regina will all be offering primarily remote delivery for Fall 2020.

While this provides some challenges, it also presents a number of opportunities for connecting with students who might not otherwise be able to attend events in person. We've begun offering online writing groups, online mentorship sessions, and swapped workshops and a speaker series for webinars. We're



📷 Sidney Ray-Shacter

looking towards Fall 2020 as an opportunity to learn new online teaching and learning software. It will also give us the time needed to focus on our mid-term evaluation. 2020 has been a rollercoaster, but I've enjoyed the new challenges and meeting many new students (virtually) as a result.

Sincerely,

Indigenous Mentorship Network Program Update

In September 2019, the Ombaashi (National/International Network) hosted a meeting of Mentorship Network PIs and coordinators at Thompson Rivers University in Kamloops. This meeting was called to discuss national activities including an evaluation strategy and the new (yet unannounced) NEIHR Centres. We also planned for the second half of the IMNPs including possible funding opportunities we could work towards collaboratively in advance of the sunsetting of the IMNP program.

At this time it was agreed that collectively we would examine the 'pipeline' of Indigenous health researchers in order to highlight existing equity gaps and the impact the IMNP has had on student and New Investigator development in this context.

The coordinators and PIs continued to meet throughout 2019-2020 to discuss this endeavor, the new NEIHR centres, NGGS, the future of the IMNPs, and a cohesive Network evaluation strategy. NGGS was scheduled for May 11-14, 2020 and the IMNP and NEIHR PIs were

to meet in person May 14th. As a result of COVID-19, NGGS has been put on hold until its possible to get together in person again. A meeting of the IMNP and NEIHR PIs took place online instead on May 7, 2020. And these groups continue to meet regularly.

In lieu of NGGS, the IMNPs have opted to host an IMN Online Gathering August 12-14, 2020 on BlueJeans. Ombaashi is coordinating this event, with coordinators and PIs contributing from across the country.



Alberta Indigenous Mentorship in Health Innovation (AIM-HI)
Dr. Cheryl Barnaby • ccbarnab@ucalgary.ca



Prairie Indigenous Knowledge Exchange Network (PIKE-Net)
Dr. Josée Lavoie • Josée.lavoie@umanitoba.ca



Mno Nimkodadding Geegi: We Are All Connected (Ontario)
Dr. Chantelle Richmond • chantelle.richmond@uwo.ca



Réseau de Mentors Autochtone du Québec/ Quebec Indigenous Mentorship Network
Dr. Neil Andersson • neil.andersson@mcgill.ca
Alex McComber • otsehtokon@yahoo.com

Atlantic Indigenous Mentorship Network

Atlantic Indigenous Mentorship Network
Dr. Debbie Martin • debbie.martin@dal.ca



Ombaashi Network: All My Relations (National/International)
Dr. Rod McCormick • rmccormick@tru.ca



Indigenous Mentorship of the Pacific North-West
Dr. Charlotte Loppie • loppie@uvic.ca



International Indigenous Mentorship Meeting

► By Dr. Jaris Swidrovich

In the late Fall of 2019, I attended the International Indigenous Health Research and Mentorship workshop in Aotearoa. The workshop was offered by CIHR and the equivalents to CIHR in both Australia and New Zealand (National Health Research Council and Health Research Council of New Zealand, respectively). Indigenous health practitioners, researchers, and graduate students from each of the three countries came together

to learn from each other and collectively brainstorm how our three countries / organizations can partner to collaboratively improve Indigenous health research and mentorship. One particularly exciting possibility that arose was the development of an International Indigenous health research certificate program that would be offered collaboratively by all three organizations / countries. Listening to and learning from

everyone in attendance, while also participating in traditional ceremonies and land-based teaching and learning, it was an invaluable experience and certainly re-energized my commitment to Indigenous health research here in Canada and around the world.

Sub Committee Members

Awards & Adjudication Committee

July 17, 2019
February 3, 2020
April 21, 2020
July 15, 2020

Meets Quarterly
Next Meeting: Fall 2020

Ranjan Datta (Mount Royal University)
Brenda Green (department, First Nations University of Canada)
Andy Greenshaw (Psychiatry, University of Alberta)
Heather Foulds (Kinesiology, University of Saskatchewan)
Robert Innes (Indigenous Studies, University of Saskatchewan)
Pammla Petrucka (Nursing, University of Saskatchewan)
Indiana Best (Public Health, University of Saskatchewan)
Adam McInnes (Engineering, University of Saskatchewan)

2017-2020 | Carrie LaVallie (Health, First Nations University of Canada)
on sabbatical
2017-2019 | Bill Mussell (First Peoples Wellness Circle)

Events Committee

August 8, 2019
August 20, 2020

Meets Quarterly

Simon Lambert (Indigenous Studies, University of Saskatchewan)
Carmen Gillies (SUNTEP, University of Saskatchewan)
Sidney Ray-Shacter (CompSci, Marketing, University of Saskatchewan)

Evaluation Committee

June 5, 2019
August 21, 2020

Meets Annually

Micheal Heimlick, Evaluation Consultant - Two Bridges Consulting
Glen Luther (Law, University of Saskatchewan)
Ranjan Datta (Mount Royal University)

2017-2019 | Cassandra Wajunta (Indigenous Peoples' Health Research Centre)

Outreach Committee

Meets Annually

Andrew Hartman (PhD Student, Psychology USask)
Leah Ferguson (Kinesiology, USask)
Lana Elias (Science Outreach, USask)
Joseph Neapetung (Masters Student, Physiology and Pharmacology, USask)
Nolan Kenny (SIIT)

Mentorship Committee

August 27, 2019

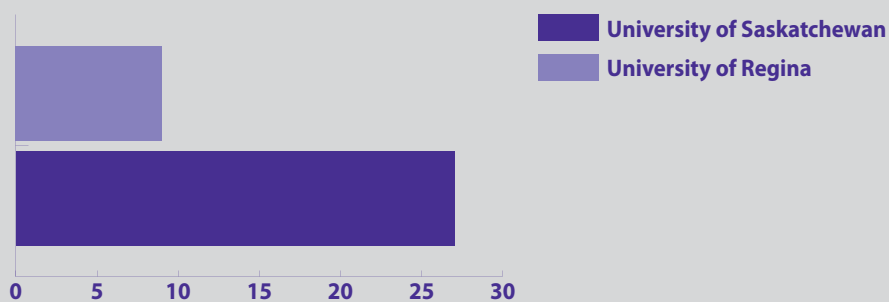
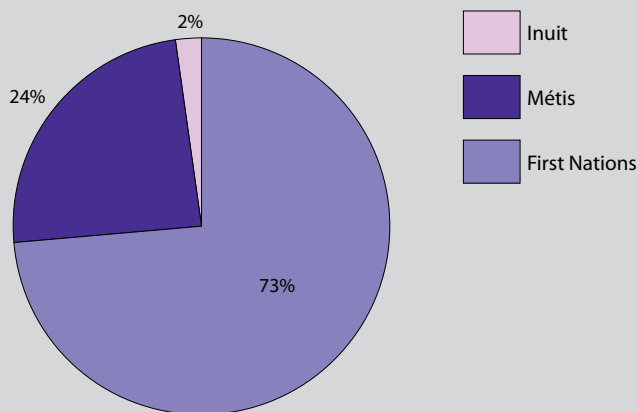
As needed

Stryker Calvez (Gwenna Moss, USask)
Merle Massie (OVPR, USask)
Patti Tait (Elizabeth Fry Society)
Cheyanne Desnomie (IPHRC)
Margaretha Uttjek (Umea University)
Kas Anderson-Carpenter (University of Michigan)
Susan Shacter (Admissions and Recruitment, USask)
Madeline Press (Sask Polytechnic)
Robert Henry (Indigenous Studies, USask)
Fleur Macqueen Smith (USask)

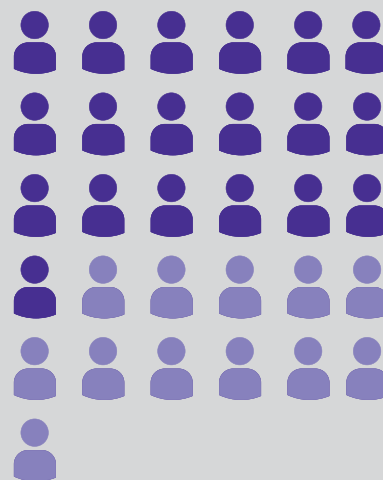
Student Funding

Since 2018, the Saskatchewan Indigenous Mentorship Network has provided 73 awards to 45 students, including 9 undergraduate, 23 masters, and 13 PhD. In the 2019-2020 academic year we provided funding to a total of 31 graduate students. Included below are details on the demographics of graduate students who received funding through in the Network this year.

BY THE NUMBERS



This year we provided funding to 19 Masters students and 12 PhD students...



...of these, 9 study at the University of Regina and 22 at the University of Saskatchewan.



WHAT STUDENTS ARE SAYING

"It was important to be involved in a group and with mentors that have an understanding of indigenous methodology as well as indigenous issues and practice. I have made lifelong friends and feel grateful to have been involved in the mentorship program."

- 2020 Writing Group Participant

"The mentor I worked with was fantastic and so down-to-earth. He demonstrated that we all have the capacity to accomplish our academic goals."

- 2020 Writing Group Participant

"Not a parent, but I was really, really happy to have the children be involved and thought it was good that they were there for the meals but not the quiet time."

- Winter 2020 Writing Retreat Participant

"Was very well planned and facilitated. Lots of freedom to explore. Possibly more workshops geared directly towards writing techniques, but this would take away from writing time and incur cost."

- Winter 2020 Writing Retreat Participant

2019-2020 Student Award Recipients

Graduate Mentorship Stipend

Christy Anderson
Indiana Best
Ann Dorion
Serena Gamble
Jed Huntley
Bonnie Marwood
Joe Neapetung
Carrie Pratt
Jacqueline Smith
Peter Turner

Each student received a \$3000 stipend to put towards their mentorship goals.

Graduate Travel Award

Tina Alexis
Bill Cook
Jenny Gardipy
Andrew Hartman
Tara Million
Brittany Tuffs
Michelle Zinck

Each student received between \$500-\$1500 based on the location of their invited presentation.

Undergraduate Summer Studentship

Nola Halabiski
Hailee Vandale Roode

Each student received a salary for all or part of May - August 2020 in order to participate in a research project.

Undergraduate Travel Award

Tesler Mosquito

Each student received between \$500-\$1500 based on the location of their invited presentation.

COVID-19 Special Call

Online Writing Group Stipend

Tina Alexis
Christy Anderson
Indiana Best
Harrison Bull
Ann Dorion
Jenny Gardipy
Andrew Hartman
Cheryl Herman
Denise Kennedy
Nathan Oakes
Bonnie Marwood

Adam McInnes
Kathy McMullin
Tara Million
Tatum Neveu
Jacqueline Smith
Penny Smoke

Each student received a \$1000 stipend for their participation in writing groups through the month of May 2020.

Online Mentorship Stipend

Danielle Bird
Shana Cardinal
Jed Huntley
Blaine Mirasty
Tamara Pearl
Sheila Thomas
Emily Winters

Each student received a \$500 stipend for their participation in one-on-one mentorship sessions with a faculty member.

Summer Student Projects



HAILEE VANDALE ROODE

My Name is Hailee Vandale Roode, I am entering my 3rd year of Nursing at the U of S. I was born in Yellowknife, NWT but raised in Saskatoon since 2001. I am involved in a variety of research-related activities with Dr. Holly Graham. This has included researching my Métis history, reviewing and learning how to do a literature review, creating a reading list of articles, podcasts, YouTube videos and virtual meetings related to Métis history, creating my first poster, and reviewing ethical frameworks for engaging in research with First Nation and Métis peoples.

Hailee received a 2020 Undergraduate Summer Studentship to support her work with Dr. Graham, CIHR Chair in Indigenous Nursing at the University of Saskatchewan.



NOLA HALABISKI

My name is Nola Halabiski. I am a student with the SUNTEP program in Prince Albert, SK. I am currently working with Carrie LaVallie, an Assistant Professor with First Nations University of Canada, on a research project that includes Moving Across Rural and Urban Aftercare Spaces to Support Healing from Addiction. The project includes exploring ways to move between rural and urban aftercare spaces to support healing from addiction with Indigenous land-based methods. Relationships and interviews will be conducted with Indigenous and non-Indigenous addiction healing services in and around the Prince Albert area to see what is available for cultural supports. Decolonizing addiction treatment and western-based aftercare measures are steps that support healing for Indigenous

peoples but there could be a more effective approach, an approach with spiritual and cultural connections. The main key to addressing mental wellness includes understanding Canada's colonial history. Providing cultural safe supports like Elders, knowledge keepers, sweat lodges, cultural medicines, smudging practices, ceremonies, and talking circles should be provided or at least optional in their healing process. First Nations communities are building land-based aftercare spaces and left out of the model are urban Indigenous peoples. This project explores the potential in moving between rural and urban aftercare spaces in healing from addiction using Indigenous land-based healing methods.

Nola received a 2020 Undergraduate Summer Student Stipend for her work with Dr. Carrie LaVallie, Assistant Professor in Indigenous Health at First Nations University of Canada.

Annual Gathering September 26-28, 2019 First Nations University of Canada



Annual Gathering 2019 📷 Rigel Smith

Our 2nd Annual Gathering, hosted in partnership with the Indigenous Peoples' Health Research Centre at First Nations University of Canada in Regina brought together more than 30 Indigenous students, faculty, and community members for 3 days of activities.

Thursday, September 26th included an excursion to All Nations Healing Hospital where we learned from traditional and Western medicine practitioners. In the evening, Dr. Angela McGinnes and her team presented "Strengthening the Horse-Human Relationship for Indigenous Wellness" and we were able to meet Boozhoo, one of the Lac La Croix Indigenous ponies she cares for at Red Pony Sands Sanctuary.

Friday included a BRRIC workshop with IPHRC and a presentation from Dr. JoLee Sasakamoose and the Wellness Wheel team. Dr. Emma LaRocque gave the keynote presentation at our banquet. Dr. LaRocque is a senior scholar and has been working as a Professor in the Department of Native Studies at the University of Manitoba since 1976 and shared with students her reflections on the changes and growth she's facilitated and witnessed during this time.

On Saturday, students and faculty shared their research work and hosted workshops. These included a student led panel presentation featuring Nola Halabiski, Jebunessa Chapola, and Carrie Pratt. Faculty members Drs. Lavallie, Henry and Datta shared strategies for writing

a research proposal, Indigenous research and grounded theory, and on academic publishing.

In the afternoon Dr. Simon Lambert presented on Disaster Emergency Management with Indigenous Communities and Veronica Santafe presented on Indigenous food systems and tourism.

We were lucky to have Elder Les Chekosis from Little Pine First Nation join us throughout the Gathering to open and close in a good way and spend a few days sharing and learning with us.





Indigenous Health Speaker Series

Our speaker series continued into its second year and included:

January 30, 2020
Book Launch *Settler City Limits*
Drs. Robert Henry

February 4 2020
IAW Health Science Student Panel
Joe Neapetung, Indiana Best and
Dr. Adam McInnis

March 11, 2020
MMIWG Calls to Action
Darlene Okemaysim-Sicotte, Dr.
Veronica McKinney, and Senator
Lillian Dyck

Note: you can read “Amendments to legislation protect vulnerable and Indigenous women” by Sarah Vermette in On Campus News to learn more about the lecture.

April 9, 2020
Indigenous disaster and emergency management: do past disasters give insight into the Covid-19 pandemic?
Dr. Simon Lambert



Workshop and Webinar Series

We hosted a number of workshops throughout the year that are now hosted under the ‘workshop’ session of our website.

These included:

October 4, 2020
How to Write a Conference Abstract
Dr. Robert Innes

November 1, 2020
Publishing for Academia
Dr. Ranjan Datta

April 3, 2020
Grant Writing
Dr. Caroline Tait

April 17, 2020
Ravenspace Digital Publishing Platform
Darcy Cullen, UBC Press

April 30, 2020
Accessing University Library Resources Remotely
Dr. Deborah Lee



Writing Groups

In April we launched our COVID-19 Specific Funding call and hosted 5 writing groups a week (1 hour each) throughout the month. Faculty mentors and post-docs supported students in each of these groups.

A special thank you to Drs. Henry, Tait, Datta, Swidrovich, and Ferguson for facilitating these!

Eighteen students participated, and while most joined from Saskatchewan, we also had participants from British Columbia, Manitoba and Ontario!

Online One-on-One Mentoring

Eight students and as many faculty participated in these which began in May and are ongoing.

Thank you to Drs. Sasakamoose, Lambert, Ferguson, Musquash, LaVallie, Dell, and Tait for mentoring students!



Sk-IMN Writing Retreat (February 2020)

Writing Retreats

► **By Allison Piché**

Our first writing retreat of the 2019-2020 academic year took place on campus, in the Health Sciences Building during fall Reading Week, **November 13-15, 2019**. Louise Halfe, Elder and poet laureate provided 1.5 days of guided writing activities.

On Friday, staff from the University Writing Centre provided writing support, tips and feedback to students as they worked on their papers and projects. Lunch and snacks were provided and SK-IMN Staff was on hand to answer questions and support any other needs.

Twelve students participated over the 3 days. Most attendees were from the University of Saskatchewan, with one from First Nations University of Canada. Students attended from a variety of disciplines including Education, Nursing, Public Health, Law, Indigenous Studies, Governance and Entrepreneurship in Northern and Indigenous Areas, and from the School of Environment and Sustainability.

February 18-21, 2020 marked our third retreat and our first outside of Saskatoon. 12 students and 6 faculty joined us at Elk Ridge for 3 days of writing, faculty office hours, and outdoor winter activities.

"The Faculty members were very helpful, and I got new ideas and advice from them to develop my research project. [Faculty mentor] told me to ask for help if I need any support while doing my research in Regina. I think the event was not only an opportunity to meet with other Indigenous scholars but also share ideas with each other, get support beyond classroom and learn different research projects from different angles."

- Winter 2020 Participant

"I liked the way everything was thought of. It was the best time of year and the best place. It changed my whole MSW. I went from feeling burnt and ready to quit to feeling like I had hope and direction. It was really empowering. Thanks for taking care of us. Game changer for me"

- Winter 2020 Participant

Students attended from the University of Regina and the University of Saskatchewan, Mentors included University of Saskatchewan faculty from the College of Medicine, Arts and Science, Pharmacy and Nutrition, Kinesiology, and Health Sciences at First Nations University of Canada. Accommodation, meals, and student travel costs were provided by the Mentorship Network and attendees came from Saskatoon, Regina and Prince Albert.

Each faculty mentor was asked to offer 2 hours of their time for 30 minute one-on-one mentorship sessions, and students were asked to sign up for at least one session. As it turned out, most students signed up for multiple sessions, and faculty were booked solid throughout the week.

After a frigid first day, the temperature moderated and many participants were able to get outside and enjoy the cross country ski trails (thanks to James Froh for the lessons!), hiking, snow shoeing, swimming (indoor), and a bonfire. Some students and faculty brought their families, and everyone was able to take advantage of the amenities at Elk Ridge Resort.

We now feel especially lucky to have had this opportunity in mid-February prior to the closure of campus and an end to all in-person activities in mid-March.

Sub-Committee Reports

Evaluation Committee

► **By Aden Tournier and Micheal Heimlick**

The evaluation committee met June 5, 2019 and Allison and Micheal continued to meet throughout the year to collaborate on event specific surveys. These included the 2019-2020 Annual Gathering and the November and February writing retreats. Each survey is developed collaboratively and administered by Micheal Heimlick so that student responses can be aggregated and anonymized before being provided back to the SK-IMN. Student feedback has helped to inform changes to event planning, future activities, and impact assessments. For more information on these activities, contact sk.imnp@usask.ca

Outreach Committee

In the summer of 2019 our outreach mainly consisted of information booths and community events. Joe Neapetung, Outreach Coordinator and Aden Tournier. Summer Student attended the Yellow Quill Powwow, Two Spirit Powwow (Beardy's & Okemasis), Back to Batoche Festival, and Fall Orientation at USask. In the 2019-2020 academic year we also presented to IPHRC trainees and hosted an info booth at the .caISES conference in February. Some of our other activities were foiled by COVID-19 including participating in and helping plan the Gathering for miyo mahcihowin and mii yoo naa kaa twayh ta mihk, and the National Gathering of Graduate Students.

Outreach this coming year will look quite different - we have a few online presentations planned and have been in touch with the Aboriginal Youth Entrepreneurship Program about campus tours and may look to doing something virtual instead!

Mentorship Committee

The Mentorship Committee met for the first time in September 2019 and discussed developing a cascading mentorship model that would include students from secondary and tertiary education as well as faculty and Knowledge Keepers. This committee reconvened in October 2020 after COVID shifted many of our activities and a new non-credit course is being developed focused on graduate student publishing. This course will include industry experts, experienced Indigenous faculty and senior scholars, and international partners. We hope to pilot the course in early 2021.

Mid-term evaluation report

As part of a strategy to evaluate the impact of the SK-IMN, their various activities as well as the supports they offer, a third-party evaluator is coordinating a mid-point evaluation of the SK-IMN. An ethics exemption request was submitted to the University of Saskatchewan June 12, 2020 and will begin as soon as approval has been received. The evaluators will look to find answers to a number of questions regarding the goals of the SK-IMN – specifically relating to collaborations and relationships, the improvement of skills and their relevance, improvement of knowledge products, as well as academic or professional advancement.

This evaluation will include interviews with Indigenous students at the University of Saskatchewan, University of Regina, and First Nations University of Canada who have previously been involved with the network. Some interviews were specifically undertaken with those individuals who had not previously been involved in the network so as to provide a comprehensive view of the network.

The evaluation team is preparing a mid-term evaluation report which will be ready in Fall 2020 and presented at the Annual General Meeting of the SK-IMN. COVID has disrupted some activities, namely that ethics has been delayed and our June AGM has been postponed until after the completion of this report.

2020-2021 Planning

► By Allison Piché

Normally, as I write this report, I'd also be organizing the SK-IMN Annual Gathering. Because this year is so different, we've opted not to host a multi-day Online Gathering. Instead, we'll be hosting many smaller events beginning in mid-September and continuing throughout the fall. These include an online orientation to the mentorship network for new and returning graduate students, webinars, networking sessions, and writing groups.

August 12-14th marked the first National Online Gathering of Indigenous Mentorship Networks which brought together students and Indigenous health leaders from across the country for workshops, presentations and more. The IMNPs continue to work together to plan online events between our networks.

The University will make an announcement regarding the Winter term in mid-September and so our term two planning will be largely dependent on whether we'll continue online or transition to in-person activities.

After meeting with the Awards and Adjudication Committee, one other change we'll be making will involve broadening the scope of our travel awards to include online conferences (where there is a registration fee). CIHR has announced the extension of all active grants for an additional year, so we'll be able to roll any unused money forward so that students can access travel funds once travel becomes safe again.

While this year will look very different, it has afforded us new opportunities to connect online with students throughout the province and across Canada. Creating meaningful mentorship opportunities and building a community of Indigenous health researchers in this new environment is challenging, but also fun and rewarding. We look forward to getting together again in person - and in the meantime will do everything we can to facilitate relationship building and mentorship in our new reality.

SK-IMN PROPOSED

YEAR FOUR

Our tentative plan for year four of the grant (COVID restriction dependent)

● September 2020

SK-IMN Online Orientation

Webinars: Building Your Academic CV; Indspire: Building Brighter Futures and Rivers to Success; Conversations with Elder Judy Pelly

*Universities in SK doing primarily remote program delivery. Winter 2021 announcement regarding programming delivery in mid-September.

● November 2020

Weekly Coffee + Catch Up
Mid-term Evaluation Completed

● December 2020

Coffee + Catch Up

Coffee + Catch Up Holiday Edition December 16

● January 2021

Virtual IMNP Graduate Student Recruitment Fair
January 5-8, 2021
Coffee + Catch Up
Winter Awards Deadline (Jan 29)

● February 2021

Coffee + Catch Up
Writing Course Launch
Publishing Webinar
Intro to Graduate Studies
Webinar with Admissions and Recruitment USask

● February Break (15-19)

Annual General Meeting
SK-IMN Student Symposia

● March 2021

Coffee + Catch Up
Publishing Webinar

● April 2021

Coffee + Catch Up
Spring Awards Deadline

● May 2021

TBD National Gathering of Graduate Students (NGGS)

● Spring/Summer 2021

2021-2022 Planning
Annual Gathering



USask awarded \$5 million to lead new CIHR Indigenous health research networks to address health disparities

University of Saskatchewan (USask) researchers have been awarded \$5 million from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) as part of a major new national initiative that aims to create a network of Indigenous research centres driven by and grounded in Indigenous communities.

SASKATOON—University of Saskatchewan (USask) researchers have been awarded \$5 million from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) as part of a major new national initiative that aims to create a network of Indigenous research centres driven by and grounded in Indigenous communities.

The new \$100.8-million, 16-year national program—Network Environments for Indigenous Health Research (NEIHR)—represents the largest-ever single investment in Indigenous health research in Canadian history. It is led by USask faculty member Carrie Bourassa, scientific director of the CIHR Institute of Indigenous Peoples' Health based at USask, and involves the other 12 CIHR national research institutes as partners.

“Through these nine health research networks across Canada, researchers, Elders, and communities will work together to conduct vitally important health research based on the priorities and values of Indigenous peoples,” said USask Vice-President Research Karen Chad. “This Indigenous-led, community-based approach will ensure better health outcomes for Indig-



USask researchers Dr. Caroline Tait and Simon Lambert with NEIHR partners Métis Nation-Saskatchewan Health Minister Marg Friesen, Whitecap Dakota First Nation Chief Darcy Bear, and MN-S President Glen McCallum. (Photo: University of Saskatchewan)

enous peoples and foster the next generation of Indigenous health researchers. This is reconciliation at work.”

The national co-ordinating centre will be based at USask. It will work collaboratively with the NEIHR centres in B.C., Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, the Maritimes, and Canada’s circumpolar region to advance national and international Indigenous health research partnerships, establish an annual international Indigenous health research conference, and help evaluate the effectiveness of

the new research networks.

Caroline Tait, a USask medical anthropologist and member of the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan (MN-S), has been awarded \$1.5 million from CIHR to lead the national centre that will co-ordinate health research and training with the leads of the eight other regional Indigenous health research networks. As well, with \$3.5-million from CIHR over five years and in-kind support from the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN) and MN-S, Tait will lead the Saskatchewan NEIHR network to foster health

research within Indigenous communities, working in partnership with the FSIN, MN-S, the Whitecap Dakota First Nation, and a team of more than 60 researchers and community partners.

“The majority of our provincial net-

“The majority of our provincial network members are First Nations and Métis peoples who are best placed to lead health research, training and knowledge mobilization for our communities,”

- Dr. Caroline Tait

work members are First Nations and Métis peoples who are best placed to lead health research, training and knowledge mobilization for our communities,” said Tait.

“These networks will help improve the health of Indigenous peoples by removing the barriers communities face in conducting their own health research, and by matching community needs with researcher interests and expertise.”

Two intertwined Saskatchewan networks—one for First Nations communities and one for Métis communities—will be established with funding from post-secondary institutions: \$400,000 from USask, \$75,000 from University of Regina (U of R), and \$25,000 from First Nations University of Canada (FNUniv). Over five years, these two networks will hire 12 people, award over \$300,000 in community project grants, and support more than 50 Indigenous students.

Research assistants hired from Indigenous communities will collect data in communities across the

province, community research facilitators will connect communities to relevant research opportunities, and Elders and Knowledge Holders will provide cultural guidance on relationship building, protocol, research, and community and land-based learning. The networks will

also educate researchers in best practices.

“This project will provide an opportunity to collect and protect Métis-specific health data to inform Métis health and well-being priorities which will then determine areas of health care program design and service delivery to improve the overall wellness of our citizens, based on our identity, culture and values,” said Marg Friesen, MN-S health minister.

The Saskatchewan networks will work with researchers at USask, U of R, and FNUniv, and with partners including the Office of the Treaty Commissioner, Gabriel Dumont Institute, Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies, Aboriginal Friendship Centres of Saskatchewan, Northern Inter-Tribal Health Authority, and Saskatchewan Polytechnic.

“Our goal is to ensure researchers and communities have the tools they need to work together effectively, guided by the First Nations’ OCAP® (Ownership, Control, Access

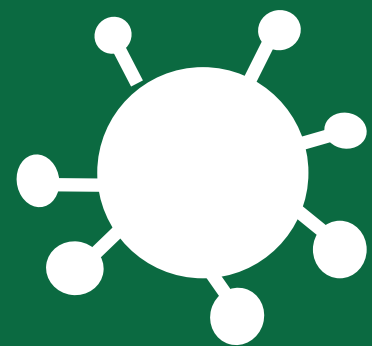
and Possession) principles, and Métis health research and data governance principles,” said Tait.

COVID-19 Update

While COVID-19 hasn’t slowed us down, it has certainly impacted each of the research projects we have on the go. It has allowed us to focus at the outset on laying a strong foundation, establishing committess, terms of reference, and being purposeful in developing our hiring policies.

We are mindful that our partner organizations, many of whom are involved in front-line health care delivery and pandemic planning are particularly busy as a result of the pandemic.

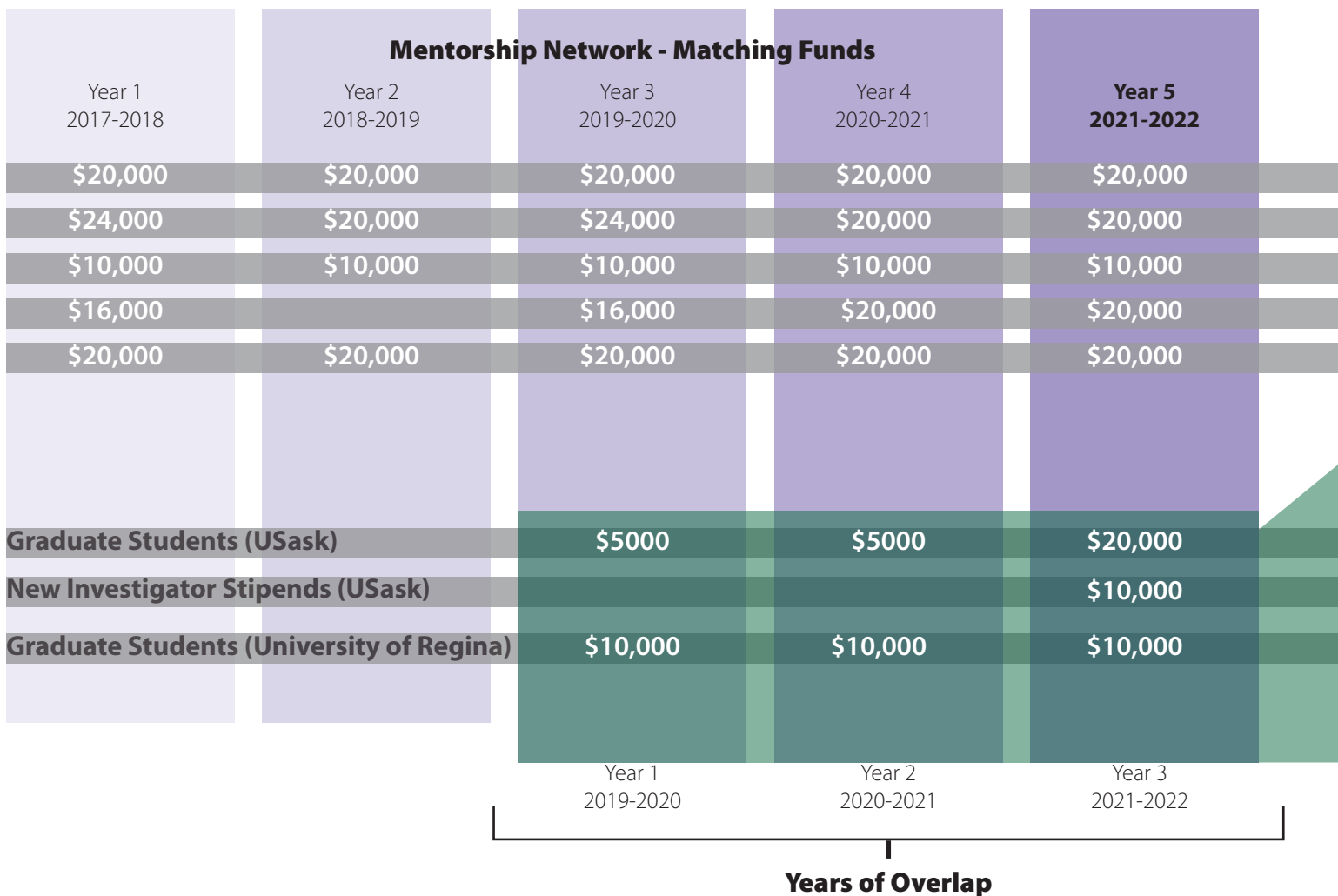
CIHR has extended the timeline for each grant by an additional year. This will allow some flexibility given the changing nature of our work and working environment over the past year. We’ve had to slow down our hiring given travel and research limitations and have instead focused on building a strong foundation for the network. Learn more by visiting www.fmhrn.ca.



SK-IMN + First Nations and Métis Health Research Network

As the mentorship network enters its fourth of five years, we wanted to outline some of what the transition entails. Streamlining these projects will be an evolving process. Recently, CIHR announced it would be extending the timeline of existing grants by an additional year due to COVID-19. This year is in addition to the typical one-year extension. No additional funds have been allocated. This means that beyond the 5 years listed below, the SK-IMN has two years to use up remaining funds, and a further two years before final reporting is due. While much of our work has continued, that which has been impacted by COVID-19 will be able to carry forward for an extra two years. This is great news as travel awards for undergraduate and graduate students will hopefully resume sometime in the next year or so.

The below diagram represents the existing, incoming, and concluding *external* funding resources that will impact the SK-IMN in the next 5 years. The annual SK-IMN allocation of \$200,000 will continue to be supported by the FMHRN and supplemented by external funds when possible. Matching funds were provided to the SK-IMN from many USask Health Sciences Colleges. Some of which were administered by the colleges themselves (i.e. Nursing and WCVM) and some of which were administered in partnership. Under the new FMHRN grant, both the University of Saskatchewan and Regina are contributing matching funds to support grad students and NIs. The below graphic shows how this funding is spread across the five year SK-IMN funding period and the 5 years of the FMHRN.





David Stobbe



Station 20 West

Health Sciences

It has been a long time coming, but Tait Research Group, including the Indigenous Mentorship Network, is moving out of St. Andrews College and into two new spaces. The SK-IMN will have space on the fourth floor of the Health Sciences Building, in the newly created Indigenous Health research cluster.

We will be co-located with Drs. King, Johnson-Jennings, and Bourassa. CIHR's Institute for Indigenous Peoples' Health has done a renovation to the space as part of a CFI and there will be shared bookable space for students, community members and Elders newly available. We are unsure of the timeline for moving into the E-Wing space due to COVID-19 restrictions but are looking forward to being in closer proximity to our colleagues and students.

The new FMHRN and NEIHR NCC will be occupying space at Station 20 West. We will be co-located with community organizations and have a space that is much more accessible to community members and the public. We hope to be in Station 20 West sometime in fall 2020.

We see a lot of fluidity happening between these spaces and look forward to this new chapter for our team and all the possibilities it will bring.

Graduate Students (USask OVPR)

Graduate Students (CoMGRAD)

Graduate Students (SPH)

Graduate Students (CGPS)

Graduate Students (WCVM)

FMHRN Matching Funds (for students)

\$20,000	\$20,000	\$70,000
\$10,000	\$10,000	\$30,000
\$10,000	\$10,000	\$50,000
Year 4 2022-2023	Year 5 2022-2023	Totals



The Saskatchewan Indigenous Mentorship Network is supported by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR). www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca