

Tuesday, April 2, 2024

MacEwan University elevates Indigenous initiatives portfolio to amplify commitment to indigeneity and reconciliation

Terri Cardinal becomes MacEwan's new associate vice-president, Indigenous Initiatives

Edmonton - MacEwan University is proud to announce that [Terri Cardinal](#) is the university's first associate vice-president, Indigenous Initiatives.

MacEwan established the position as part of its strategic vision, [Teaching Greatness](#), which includes a stated commitment to Indigeneity and reconciliation. The role is an important step toward reaching the university's goal for its student body to more closely reflect the community, which includes greater participation from Indigenous and other historically underrepresented learners.

"To successfully do this important work, and for our university to truly reflect our community, we know that we must have Indigenous representation embedded in all levels of our organization," says Dr. Annette Trimbee, president and vice-chancellor.

The new associate vice-president position, explains Dr. Trimbee, requires Indigenous knowledge, relationships within and a deep connection to Indigenous communities and a clear understanding of the needs of Indigenous students at MacEwan. Those are all things Cardinal has clearly exhibited since joining the university in 2017.

"In this new role, and from her seat at the Deans' Council and Provost's Group, Terri will make use of an enterprise-wide view of the organization to most effectively continue her work," says Dr. Craig Monk, provost and vice-president, Academic. "Terri's background, experience and training will help MacEwan in its commitment to Indigenous ways of knowing and reconciliation."

Since beginning her time at MacEwan as manager of the university's [kihêw waciston Indigenous Centre](#), Cardinal has taken on several roles – most recently as director of Indigenous initiatives where she focused on creating safe spaces for Indigenous students at MacEwan, including the development of kihêw waciston's current location in Building 9.

Cardinal, who is also a sessional instructor in the School of Social Work, has played an integral role in creating initiatives and policies that focus on supporting Indigenous students, including introducing Indigenous language courses, developing two full-time Knowledge Keeper roles and establishing the university's unique Ceremonial policy that allows smudging in any area of campus. She continues to have strong connections to Indigenous communities, and in 2022 took a leave of absence from MacEwan to help [search for unmarked graves](#) at a former residential school.

When Cardinal thinks about what this new role means to her, she recalls the words her young daughter used a few years ago to explain her work: “You make things Cree.” In her new role, Cardinal hopes to continue doing just that.

“As an Indigenous woman, I have watched mentors and scholars trailblaze some amazing paths for people like me, and it has given me hope,” she says. “I believe that having Indigenous representation at a very high leadership level is important to help ensure MacEwan meets its goals when it comes to representation for Indigenous students. I also hope that seeing someone like me in this position at MacEwan will mean that our young people, our students, will know that they too can fill these spaces.”

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Founded in 1971, MacEwan University inspires its students with a powerful combination of academic excellence and personal learning experiences. Offering more than 90 programs including undergraduate degrees, applied degrees, diplomas, certificates, continuing education and corporate training, the university provides a transformative education in a creative, collaborative and supportive learning environment where creativity and innovation thrive. Located in Edmonton, Alberta Canada, MacEwan University offers a unique student experience that opens up diverse pathways for achievement and growth.