MacEwan University appoints Director of Indigenous Initiatives

Edmonton – MacEwan University has named Terri Suntjens as its director of Indigenous Initiatives. Suntjens will be responsible for leading the development of a five-year strategic plan to implement and sustain Indigenous initiatives at MacEwan.

“The plan will focus on addressing the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and on creating positive change,” said Deborah Saucier, president, MacEwan University. “The plan will influence the way in which we decolonize institutional barriers; develop meaningful internal and external relationships; and create safe space for all Indigenous students, faculty and staff.”

“Ongoing dialogue with local and provincial leaders of Indigenous communities will be crucial to the success of these initiatives,” added Saucier. “These conversations will allow us to develop strategies for breaking down barriers to accessing post-secondary education and for ensuring that our Indigenous students and faculty see themselves and their culture reflected in our institution.”

This is a new position at the university. Suntjens—who is currently the manager of MacEwan’s kîhêw waciston Indigenous Centre—will assume directorship of the centre in addition to her new responsibilities.

The mandate of MacEwan’s kîhêw waciston Indigenous Centre will expand from its primary focus on serving the needs of MacEwan’s Indigenous students. These include fostering cultural understanding and accessing Elders for students. However, said Saucier, this expanded mandate will not reduce the university’s offerings to its First Nations, Metis, and Inuit (FNMI) and Indigenous students.

According to Saucier, kîhêw waciston will be the go-to resource for university wide education on Indigenous issues and culture and Indigenizing curriculum. “We will ensure that we can thoughtfully discuss the effects of colonialism and its practices on our country and our fellow Canadians in a way that meets the calls to action,” she said.

“This change will ensure that MacEwan meaningfully addresses the TRC and increases educational opportunities for FNMI and Indigenous students.”

Founded in 1971, MacEwan University inspires its students with a powerful combination of academic excellence and personal learning experiences. Offering more than 65 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.

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