

MEDIA RELEASE



**FIRST NATIONS
UNIVERSITY
OF CANADA**

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FNUniv Hosts “Igniting the Conversation” Conference on Self-Determination in Indigenous Social Work

Regina, Saskatchewan – The First Nations University of Canada (FNUniv) successfully hosted the Igniting the Conversation: Self-Determination in Indigenous Social Work conference on Friday, October 24, 2025, at the Regina Campus.

Presented by the Indigenous Social Work Alumni group, the full-day conference brought together social work professionals, alumni, students, and Elders to explore self-determination, healing, and culturally grounded practice in Indigenous social work. The event created a powerful space for dialogue, learning, and community connection.

The day began with a Pipe Ceremony in the Ceremonial Tipi, followed by an opening that welcomed participants from across Saskatchewan and beyond. Attendees joined concurrent workshops covering themes such as child welfare, health, cultural competence, burnout and self-care, grief and loss, trauma-informed care, lateral violence, advocacy, and language revitalization.

“This conference reflected the heart of Indigenous social work—bringing community, ceremony, and education together,” said Dr. Marlene McNab, Undergraduate Program Coordinator for Indigenous Social Work at FNUniv. “Our students and alumni are leading the change toward self-determination in every sense.”

The conference featured a keynote address by Jennifer Laewetz and presentations by Indigenous alumni and community leaders including Blaire Buffalo, Jaime Kayseas, Alex Powalinsky, Alexis Isnana, and Shiza Hirani. Workshops throughout the day explored healing, identity, and youth leadership in Indigenous social work.

“Igniting the Conversation reminded us that self-determination isn’t just a theme—it’s a practice,” said Dr. Susannah Walker, faculty in the Indigenous Social Work program and a member of the Indigenous Social Work Alumni planning team. “By bringing together our alumni, students, and knowledge-keepers, we strengthened the circle of Indigenous social work across generations.”

The day concluded with a closing ceremony, offering gratitude to all who contributed to its success and reaffirming FNUniv’s commitment to advancing Indigenous-centered education and professional practice.

About First Nations University of Canada

Established in 1976, the First Nations University of Canada is the country's only national First Nations-owned post-secondary institution. FNUniv is a unique place of learning that serves both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, delivering high-quality post-secondary education through the lens of Indigenous knowledge, languages, and traditions.

Learn more at www.fnuniv.ca.

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