

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Bringing Indigenous Perspectives to Canadians: First Nations University of Canada, Reconciliation Education and BMO launch new eLearning to mark National Indigenous History Month

- This year June 1st marks a tragic start to National Indigenous History month in Canada with the remains of 215 children found at the former Kamloops Indian Residential School.
- This tragedy emphasizes the need to learn and understand history in Canada from Indigenous perspectives, including the legacy and impact of Indian Residential Schools.
- Nisitohtamowin, an eLearning course that provides an introduction to understanding Indigenous perspectives in Canada will be available for the month of June to all Canadians to help promote understanding and reconciliation through education.
- \$250,000 donation from BMO will also support access to education with scholarships for Indigenous students attending First Nations University of Canada

REGINA, June 1, 2021 –This year marks a tragic start to National Indigenous History Month. We stand with the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation, Indigenous peoples nationwide and all Canadians in mourning the deaths of the 215 children – and all the children – who did not survive Residential School.

As part of its commitment to strengthening communities and bridging gaps, First Nations University of Canada (FNUniv) is working alongside Reconciliation Education and BMO Financial Group to launch [Nisitohtamowin ᓂᓯᓐᓂᓐᓂᓐ](#), a new introductory eLearning course to promote healing, equity and respect of Indigenous cultures and values in Canadian Society.

Available to Canadians throughout the month of June, Nisitohtamowin, which means “understanding” in Cree, is intended to help foster greater understanding of Indigenous perspectives through education, which can lead to stronger relationships and enhanced opportunities for the economy, communities, the environment and beyond. The course was developed in support of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s calls to action and recommendations on education, with a section that provides an introduction to the legacy and impact of Indian Residential Schools, including a personal account shared by Residential School Survivor and Dene Elder Margaret Reynolds.

“The tragic news regarding the remains of 215 children found at Kamloops Indian Residential School uncovers the pain and hurt felt across Indigenous communities,” said Elder and Residential School Survivor, Margaret Reynolds, who sits on the Elders (kehte-ayak) Council

and Board of Governors for First Nations University of Canada. “We ask everyone to take a moment of silence to honour these children, their families and communities. We ask the Creator to give strength and blessings to all those hurting and impacted by this news.”

“The painful news that has emerged regarding the Kamloops Indian Residential School underscores the critical importance of truth and reconciliation in Canada. The legacy and impact of Indian Residential Schools has not been taught widely and so education is key to understanding,” said Dr. Bob Kayseas, Interim President, Vice President Academic, First Nations University of Canada. “The path to greater well-being and prosperity for Indigenous peoples is through education, and the path to respectful relationships where we can all coexist and lift each other up is through reconciliation education. Nisitohamowin is just the first step on the journey – we encourage all participants to seek further learning opportunities either with Indigenous Peoples in your own region or at First Nations University of Canada.”

Financial Assistance and Supports to Indigenous Students

In addition to the eLearning initiative, BMO is providing a \$250,000 gift that will enable FNUniv to provide financial assistance and supports to Indigenous students through their academic year, including entrance level scholarships, Indigenous business student scholarships, and emergency bursaries.

Over the last three decades, BMO has had a leading presence in supporting long-term sustainable economic growth for Indigenous communities and is committed to progress for Indigenous peoples across three pillars that reflect the Truth & Reconciliation Commission call to action for corporate Canada: education, employment, and economic empowerment. Along with the BMO Sharing Circle (BMO's Enterprise Resource Group for Indigenous colleagues) and BMO's Indigenous Advisory Council – comprised of First Nations, Métis and Inuit leaders from across the country – the eLearning initiative promotes inclusion, education and progress against the calls to action.

“The recent tragic news from Kamloops, B.C. has only strengthened BMO's commitment to playing a role in reconciliation through education. We're grateful to have partnered with First Nations University of Canada and Reconciliation Education to develop Nisitohamowin, which, among other things, honours the stories of Residential School survivors,” said Michael Bonner, Head, Canadian Business Banking, BMO Financial Group. “Nearly 80 per cent of our employees have completed this learning to date and we are honoured to be able to share it now with the rest of Canada during National Indigenous History Month. As part of our commitment to supporting Indigenous communities through education, employment and economic empowerment, we're also pleased to be able to help First Nations University provide scholarships to its students.”

Click here to register for the free [Nisitohamowin](https://www.fnuniv.ca/reconciliation) eLearning course or visit: www.fnuniv.ca/reconciliation . For more information about BMO's commitment to supporting Indigenous communities, click [here](#) or visit: www.bmo.com/indigenous-commitments

About First Nations University of Canada

The First Nations University of Canada (FNUUniv) was founded in 1976 and is a First Nations owned post-secondary institution that aspires to have transformative impact by bridging our ceremonies, knowledge keepers, languages, and traditions with the delivery of high-quality post-secondary education that will lead to the pride and success of all students, First Nations communities and Canada. As of Fall 2020, FNUUniv has over 6,000 active students and more than 5,600 alumni. For more information about FNUUniv, please visit <http://fnuniv.ca>.

About Reconciliation Education

Reconciliation Education is an e-learning producer of online resources since 2014. These courses promote a renewed relationship between Indigenous Peoples and Canadians through transformative multi-media learning.

Developed in partnership with First Nations University of Canada, our award-winning resources assist the workplace and education sectors meet the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Actions. These courses have reached over 76,000 Canadians from across the country. For more information please visit:

www.reconciliationeducation.ca

About BMO Financial Group

Serving customers for 200 years and counting, BMO is a highly diversified financial services provider - the 8th largest bank, by assets, in North America. With total assets of \$950 billion as of April 30, 2021, and a team of diverse and highly engaged employees, BMO provides a broad range of personal and commercial banking, wealth management and investment banking products and services to more than 12 million customers and conducts business through three operating groups: Personal and Commercial Banking, BMO Wealth Management and BMO Capital Markets.

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