

## Media Release



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, June 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023

### *Wisemen Mathematics Contest, Canada's Only Math Contest for Indigenous students, Announce 2023 winners*

**Regina, Saskatchewan:** Thousands of students in Grades 4 to 6 have competed in the First Nations University of Canada's Wisemen Mathematics contest for the past 14 years, and this year – Saskatchewan took first place! Dr. Arzu Sardarli, professor in physics and mathematics, created the contest. He says the contest is unique because it is the only mathematics contest geared toward Indigenous students, and it is also one of the longest running mathematics contests in the country.

"In Canada, many public schools participate in mathematical contests, but many First Nations schools cannot participate in these contests for several reasons. That is why we decided to make one specifically for them, with no registration fee, and infused with Indigenous content," says Dr. Sardarli.

The Wisemen Contest helps to meet the need of mathematics teachers and content in First Nation schools across the country. It helps teachers assess their student's problem-solving skills, while giving young Indigenous students the opportunity to learn mathematics in a competitive environment. Along with the contests, the FNUUniv also develops and delivers preparatory materials to First Nations schools, registered in the Contest.

"Through the Contest, Indigenous students discover that they are part of a larger Indigenous community. I saw that involvement of communities, and of the parents. Many parents told me, 'I'm very proud of my child, they got the first place in Canada.' This year we almost doubled the number of participants for this contest, more than we expected, much more," says Dr. Sardarli.

The Contest provides students with the ability to work on non-traditional problems in a non-mandatory but competitive environment, which is atypical for Western schools. In 2016, the Regional Centre of Expertise (Saskatchewan) on Education for Sustainable Development Recognition Program acknowledged the Wiseman Mathematics Contest as an innovative project. It noted that the project has helped increase the capacity for sustainable development in the Saskatchewan region and contributed to the advancement of the UNESCO Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development. PromoScience, a program within the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC), has supported the program's start-up.

The 1st Place winners of the 2023 Contest also received an educational gift with videos of science laboratory lessons. The following schools received Elder Ken Goodwill Memorial Certificates for the best performance:

Grade 4: Chief Taylor School, Onion Lake Cree Nation

Grade 5: Chief Taylor School, Onion Lake Cree Nation

Grade 6: Eagleview Middle School, Onion Lake Cree Nation

*Congratulations to all contestants and appreciation to their teachers!*

Schools or teachers interested in receiving more information on Wiseman Mathematics Contest may contact Dr. Arzu Sardarli at: [asardarli@firstnationsuniversity.ca](mailto:asardarli@firstnationsuniversity.ca)

#### **About First Nations University of Canada**

The First Nations University of Canada (FNUniv) was founded in 1976 and is a First Nations-owned post-secondary institution that bridges our ceremonies, knowledge keepers, languages, and traditions to deliver high-quality post-secondary education. This transformative impact will lead to the pride and success of all students, First Nations communities and Canada. For more information about FNUniv, please visit <http://fnuniv.ca>.

-30-

#### **For media inquiries only, contact:**

Ntawnis Piapot

Communications & Marketing

C: 639.382.4290

E: [Npiapot@firstnationsuniversity.ca](mailto:Npiapot@firstnationsuniversity.ca)