Indigenous Students Week of Welcome Event

The Indigenous Students Week of Welcome event was held on Thursday September 22nd in the Atrium of the Singhmar Centre for Learning at NorQuest College. The event was very well attended as many people packed into the Atrium for the activities and speakers. The program opened with a prayer from Resident Elder, Delores Cardinal, and also included a welcome from NorQuest College Vice-President of College Services & Chief Financial Officer, Jill Matthew. Attendees heard messages from SANQC member, Gordon Holub, and RBC Indigenous Student Liaison, Elizabeth Routledge. Amanda Lamothe and her group, Native Entertainment, shared a variety of powwow dances with our institution who danced to the sounds of a local drum group.

Orange Shirt Day

NorQuest College acknowledged survivors and victims of Indian Residential Schools by participating in Orange Shirt Day on Friday September 29th. The day remembers the difficult reality of the residential school system in Canada and brings to light the harm this system did to children’s self-esteem and well-being. Orange Shirt Day grew out of Phyllis Webstad’s account of having her shiny new orange shirt taken away on her first day of school. Approximately 100 staff showed their support by wearing an orange shirt and gathered in the Atrium of the Singhmar Centre for Learning to take a group photo.

“The event was very well attended as many people packed into the atrium for the event.”

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Project of Heart

On September 29th staff and students of NorQuest College participated in the Project of Heart tile decorating which took place in the Indigenous Students Centre. The tiles were provided to participants and decorated in memory of victims or in dedication to survivors of residential schools. Over 80 participants, including students who are newcomers to Canada, and instructors, contributed to the national project and decorated approximately 250 tiles. The tiles have been collected to be used as part of a larger dedication to Indian Residential Schools and will be put on display in NorQuest College.

Alsena White Presentation

On September 29th Alsena White, Traditional Knowledge Keeper from Saddle Lake Cree Nation, was our guest at NorQuest College’s Indigenous Students’ Centre to share Gently Whispering the Circle Back, a documentary about Blue Quills College. The school was converted from an Indian Residential School to an Indigenous College. Alsena also shared her experiences as a Cree person who attended residential school with students and staff from several courses at NorQuest College.
We are extremely pleased to announce the appointment of Annette Lee as our new Elder at the Wetaskiwin Campus. Elder Annette is a Cree woman who practices traditional Cree ceremonies and has raised her five children to respect the ways of our ancestors. She comes from an educational background as her mother and husband attend university and received education degrees. Elder Annette has attended post-secondary at Maskwacis Cultural College, and the University of Calgary completing training in general studies, early childhood, and language arts. Both Elder Annette and her husband emphasized the importance of an education as four-out-of-five of their children post-secondary in Edmonton and Calgary. “This has been a great source of pride for myself and my husband,” said Annette. She credits the positive influences of her parents and has continued to follow their guidance and mentorship.

Elder Annette has been a dancer and enjoys traditional drumming and singing. She can sew traditional regalia, knows how to do beadwork, and can read and write in Cree Roman orthography. She has been employed as a manager and resided most of her life in the Maskwacis community. However, her greatest pride has been the responsibility of managing the family household. Elder Annette provides that she is “a daughter, wife, mother, manager, employee, board member, and student.” We are pleased that Elder Annette will give mentorship for our students and staff, initiate traditional activities, and assist in collaborating with Maskwacis Cultural College. Please welcome Elder Annette to NorQuest College and she can be reached at annettelee1957@gmail.com.

Cree Instruction

The Indigenous student centre is now offering a free Cree Instruction course with Indigenous Student Advisor, Pauline L’Hirondelle, who is a fluent Cree speaker. The class is offered through informal, non-accredited instruction and is held twice a week for the students of NorQuest College. Pauline has many years of experience as a Cree instructor and enjoys sharing the language with everyone. The classes started two weeks ago and there over 40 students who have signed up and expressed interest for instruction. Please contact Pauline L’Hirondelle for more information.
Conversational Cree
Pauline L’Hirondelle

Some Cree people continue to uphold the principle of Kîya mâka or “It’s up to you.” This principle of non-interference means that a Cree person does not tell another Cree person what to do. Actively interfering in someone’s life is considered rude. For example, should a person announce that he is going to buy a Ford, it would be considered rude to tell him to buy a Chev or an Oldsmobile. This belief in voluntary cooperation excluded directly coaxing, advising or pleading with people. In matters in which the person sought out advice, it was provided in such a manner as to avoid offense. This took the form of legends and stories that allowed the person to take or ignore the advice without offending either party. In the past, this value was also extended to children in that they were allowed to make their own decisions without coercion.

Photos from the Indigenous Welcome

Be a Part of NorQuest Colleges’ Commitment to Indigenous Learners and Communities

NorQuest College is embracing Indigenous traditions and education, and you are invited to join us for a college and community gathering to celebrate:

· The opening of our new Indigenous student centre

· Launch of our Indigenization Strategy

· Signing of the Colleges and Institutes Canada Indigenous Education Protocol

· Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Fund announcement

Thursday, November 2, 2017
10:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
Singhmar Centre for Learning, Atrium
10215 108 Street NW

Contact Information

Location:
Room 1-151, Singhmar Centre for Learning,
Downtown Campus
Phone: 780.644.5965

Website: https://www.norquest.ca/resources-services/student-services/indigenous-student-services.aspx