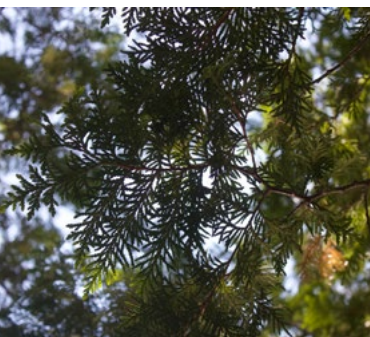




Indigenous Mentorship Network of Ontario

Year 2 Report

Summer 2018 - Spring 2019



Land Acknowledgment



IMN-Ontario is housed at Western University and our network extends across the Province and beyond. We acknowledge the many territories and diverse Indigenous communities of our mentors, trainees and network participants across Ontario and Turtle Island (North America).

Western University is situated on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Lunaapeewak and Attawandaron peoples, who have longstanding relationships to the land and region of southwestern Ontario and the City of London. The local First Nation communities of this area include Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, Oneida Nation of the Thames, and Munsee Delaware Nation. In the region, there are eleven First Nation communities and a growing urban Indigenous population.

IMN-Ontario values the significant historical and contemporary contributions of local and regional First Nations and all of the Original peoples of Turtle Island.

The Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) funds 8 regionally based Indigenous Mentorship Network Programs in Canada:



Indigenous Mentorship Network of Ontario – Ontario

Based at Western University

Indigenous Mentorship Network of the Pacific North-West – British Columbia and the Yukon

Based at the University of Victoria

Alberta Indigenous Mentorship in Health Innovation (AIM-HI) – Alberta

Based at the University of Calgary

Saskatchewan Indigenous Mentorship Network Program – Saskatchewan

Based at University of Saskatchewan

Prairie Indigenous Knowledge Exchange Network (PIKE-Net) Mentorship Program – Manitoba

Based at University of Manitoba

Quebec Indigenous Mentorship Network Program – Quebec

Atlantic Indigenous Mentorship Network – Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick

Based at Dalhousie University and Memorial University

Ombaashi Network – National/international outreach and opportunities

Based at Thompson Rivers University

IMN-Ontario welcomes all current and potential students, community members, and organizations interested in Indigenous health research to participate in our Network!

Sign up to join our mailing list and follow us on social media:

Facebook: @OntarioIMN

Twitter: ImnOntario

Instagram: IMN_Ontario

www.imnp.uwo.ca

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Message from Dr. Chantelle Richmond, Nominated Principal Investigator

Our second year has flown by and was a year filled with opportunities and events that continued to strengthen our relationships. This year we are thrilled to have awarded twice the number of scholarships, which we attribute to increasing membership within our network and the impressive quality of the students' research and community engagement. We hosted our second Summer Institute, this year at the Queen's University Biological Station and organized by mentors from Queen's University, Trent University and the University of Ottawa. This report is a glimpse into the community and relationships we have started to build.



We are guided by three long-term goals. The first is to redress the structural inequalities experienced by Indigenous people in Ontario universities, seeing more Indigenous people in the university context at all levels, and primarily at the faculty level. The second goal is to increase the number of Indigenous people doing Indigenous health research, and our third goal is to support meaningful ways for Indigenous communities to participate and lead research on the issues that matter most to them.

This Network is about making deliberate spaces for Indigenous scholarship to be realized and to strengthen the relationships between Indigenous peoples, scholars, and our institutions. The way forward is for universities and funders to make their environments and programs more inclusive of Indigenous scholars, including their Indigenous knowledges and ways of doing research.

Perhaps the most important part of our Network is that it has been built on a foundation of shared history, deep relational accountability, and a commitment to the future. During our public launch in January, I remarked that the day felt a lot like a wedding. We had speeches, rows of chairs, and beautiful catered food. What the ceremony truly signified, however, was something much more meaningful: we, as a Network, came together in commitment because of the love we have for one another, for our families and communities, and for the generations of Indigenous children yet to come.

Read about IMN-Ontario's backstory in Dr. Richmond's 2018 article, [**Try Bravery for a Change: Supporting Indigenous Health Training and Development in Canadian Universities**](#)

IMN-Ontario Staff and Mentors

Our small team housed at Western includes two other staff. Veronica Reitmeier is an undergraduate student who works part-time as the Network's Research Assistant and manages our social media, and Katie Big-Canoe is our full-time Program Coordinator who oversees all Network activities. This year, we also had the pleasure of working with Olivia Franks, an undergraduate student based at Queen's University, who worked as Research Assistant for the Summer Institute.

We have also assembled a large group of dedicated Mentors from diverse areas of expertise, all of whom are passionate about Indigenous health research and training the next generation of Indigenous scholars. Spread across the province, they support our network in different ways, sometimes working directly with students, or supporting network activities by offering webinars, hosting events, or reviewing applications.

About IMN-Ontario

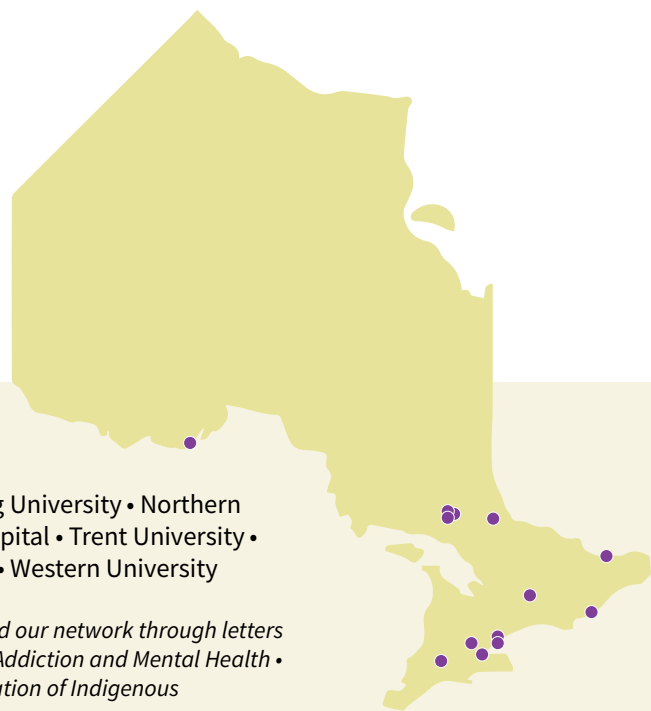
The Indigenous Mentorship Network of Ontario (IMN-Ontario) provides First Nations, Inuit and Métis scholars and trainees with high quality mentorship, training, and opportunities to engage in Indigenous health and well-being research. We are funded as part of a five-year, Canada-wide Indigenous Mentorship Network Program through the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR)'s Institute of Indigenous Health Research.

IMN-Ontario is fundamentally rooted in the philosophy of 'community first', bringing together 100+ scholars, trainees and community partners of diverse skills, experiences and methodologies in Indigenous health research. We are an interdisciplinary collaboration supported by 13 partnering research institutions, including the leading Indigenous health scholars and research centres in Ontario. Our partnering institutions support the Network in different ways, including hosting scholarships at their universities, facilitating or hosting mentorship or learning opportunities, and helping to fund IMN-Ontario activities.

IMN-Ontario Partner Institutions

Health Sciences North Research Institute (Sudbury) • Lakehead University • Laurentian University • McMaster University • Nipissing University • Northern Ontario School of Medicine • Queen's University • St. Michael's Hospital • Trent University • University of Guelph • University of Ottawa • University of Toronto • Western University

Chi-miigwetch to our community & academic partners, who have supported our network through letters of support and/or celebrated our launch: Cancer Care Ontario • Centre for Addiction and Mental Health • Chiefs of Ontario • Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences • Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres • Southwest Ontario Aboriginal Health Access Centre



Mno Nimkodadding Geegi: Supporting and growing the next generation of Indigenous health scholars

IMN-Ontario's driving force is inspired by the Anishinaabe concept, Mno Nimkodadding Geegi ('we are all connected'), encompassing the inter-relationships among youth and elders, health and environment, cultural practices, institutional policies, and many more. We seek to create and sustain the very best training environments and mentorship opportunities for current and up and coming Indigenous scholars at the undergraduate, master's, doctoral and postdoctoral levels, with particular emphasis on community-based research.

We focus on four primary activity areas, holding Mno Nimkodadding Geegi and our community of students, scholars, and partners held at the centre of our work. Within these four areas, some of our offerings include:

- Quarterly webinars to share knowledge, advice, and best practices
- Annual scholarships and seed grants for Indigenous trainees
- Annual community-based summer institute
- Engagement in local, national and international networks
- Research innovation and publishing opportunities
- Cultural, social and academic tools and resources



“It’s about more than scholarship money”: Examining the relational impact of Ontario’s Indigenous Mentorship Network

In March 2019, we surveyed our year one awardees, seeking feedback about their experiences with our program, their inspirations for seeking graduate level research, any challenges experienced along their academic journeys, and the ways in which we can better support them. Participants expressed appreciation for the financial support, however, they shared that the most beneficial impacts of network membership were the relationships they built with Indigenous communities, students and mentors; a sense of belonging; and the mentorship opportunities from Indigenous mentors and the network:

Relationships (with Indigenous communities) - “As I began to build relationships, my continued involvement with one project has led to another, and I am still on this pathway three years later!”

Relationships (with students and mentors) - “Being a part of IMN-Ontario became about more than just the scholarship opportunity. Through the network I have found a group of people who are going through similar experiences to me. I’ve formed relationships with both mentors and mentees who I know I can share my experiences with and they will understand.”

Sense of Belonging - “It is feeling that there is a place for Indigenous scholars. It is knowing that there are incredible Indigenous scholars leading the way. It is feeling connected to both mentors and mentees available and accessible to connect with about being in the academy. It is knowing that there are opportunities to feel valued and have Indigenous knowledges nurtured. It is being able to connect above and beyond my individual institution.”

Mentorship (from Indigenous Mentors) - “I was brought to this place in my program because I was able to connect with an Indigenous scholar who became my supervisor and mentor. Without her support I would not be here, pursuing a PhD and on the pathway to becoming an Indigenous health researcher myself.”

Mentorship (from Network) - “First off, I want to take a moment to thank the Indigenous Mentorship Network for providing me this incredible gift. Not just for the financial support (which has truly made a world of a difference in my home), but also for the opportunity to allow me to be a part of this growing body of mentors and mentees. I look forward to years from now where I can be telling the story of how I was a part of the inaugural IMN-Ontario network as a mentee and how I’ve learned and grown so much over the years that I’m now a mentor.”



Cultural Community Building and Networking

One of the ways we create a sense of community among students is through in-person activities hosted by IMN-ON partnering institutions. This year, we asked mentors to plan local activities that would be of interest to students studying at their universities. These included gatherings that promoted discussion on Indigenous scholarship, dinners and lunches with mentors, ribbon skirt and drumming workshops, and visits with Elders.

2019 Scholarships and Seed Grants

Total funds awarded Year 2: \$173,398

In our second year, IMN-Ontario awarded 14 scholarships and three seed grants.

Scholarship Awardees

In 2019, we awarded nine graduate and health professional scholarships to Indigenous students pursuing research in applied community-based Indigenous health and well-being.

We introduced undergraduate scholarships and awarded five scholarships to Indigenous students enrolled in an undergraduate program with the future goal of utilizing their degree within an applied Indigenous health community context.

[Read more about each of our 2019 Awardees on our website.](#)



Keri Cheechoo

PhD student,
Education,
University of Ottawa



Erik Mandawe

Medical student, Schulich
School of Medicine,
Western University



Andrea Martel

PhD student,
Dalla Lana School of Public
Health, University of Toronto



Shanna Peltier

Masters student, School and
Clinical Child Psychology,
University of Toronto



Staci Person

PhD student,
Clinical Psychology,
Lakehead University



Jacqui Powless

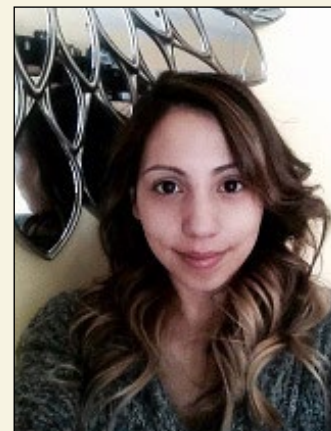
Masters student, Health
Research Methodology,
McMaster University



Randi Ray
PhD student,
Education, Nipissing
University



Justice Seidel
Masters student,
Indigenous Relations,
Laurentian University



Sara Smith
Masters student,
Public Health,
McMaster University



Sasha Doxtator
Undergraduate,
Indigenous Studies,
Western University



Heather Ellis
Undergraduate, Doctor
of Veterinary Medicine,
University of Guelph



Riley Kennedy
Undergraduate, Sociology
and Indigenous Studies,
Western University



Katie LaLonde
Undergraduate, Physical
and Health Education,
Nipissing University



Josha Rafael
Undergraduate,
Arts and Science,
McMaster University

**Chi-miigwetch to our Year 2
Award Adjudicators:**

- Dr. Jeff Denis (McMaster)
- Dr. Kim Anderson (Guelph)
- Dr. Brian Branfireun (Western)
- Dr. Brenda Bruner (Nipissing)
- Dr. Taima Moeke-Pickering (Laurentian)
- Dr. Bev Shae (Ottawa)

Seed Grant Awardees

Indigenous post-doctoral fellows and new investigators undertaking applied community-based health research can apply for IMN-Ontario Seed Grants up to \$5,000 per year. In 2019, we awarded 3 Seed Grants:



Dr. Diana Lewis, Western University

Dr. Diana (Dee) Lewis is Mi'kmaq from the Sipekne'katik First Nation in Nova Scotia. Dee holds a Master of Resource and Environmental Management degree and a PhD (Sociology) from Dalhousie University. Her area of research focuses on environmental health using quantitative, qualitative, and Indigenous methodologies to explore and foster an understanding of the unique aspects of Indigenous health, specifically as it is impacted by resource or industrial development. Dee will leverage the support provided through the Ontario Indigenous Mentorship Network to build on her expertise in environmental impact assessment processes, particularly in health and risk assessment. Dee is a faculty member at Western University in the Department of Geography and the First Nation Studies Program.



Dr. Karen Lawford, Laurentian University

Dr. Karen Lawford is the grand-daughter of Dedibaayaanimanook Sarah Keesick Olsen. Namegosibiingonjii Dedibaayaanimanook. Gaaminitgwashkiigaanig gi' izhinitaawigi. Odeden, omishoomenzha'gayeomishoomisan, Giizhiggaagiizhinikaazonij,gakinagii' onjiiwaa' Namegosibiing. Gaye oidaanikoobidaaganan, Jiiyaangaagii' izhinikaazonij, Namegosibiinggewiingii' onjiiwan. Apiimewinzhagakinaigiweniwaggii' izhidazhiikewag Namegosibiing. Wiingegii' onizhishinNamegosibmewinzha. Wiingegii'zaagitoonaawa o-Namegosibiimiwaa. Wewenigayeogii' ganawendaanaawaa. Dedibaayaanimanookomishoomisan, Giizhig,gii' ikidooniijaanisa' jidibendamowaaj Namegosib. Dr. Lawford is an Aboriginal midwife from Namegosibiing (Trout Lake, Lac Seul First Nation, Treaty 3) and a registered midwife (Ontario). She is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Gender Studies at Queen's University. Her research focuses on the provision of maternity care for those who live on reserve and understanding the barriers to equitable reproductive health services. Dr. Lawford also examines the leadership facilitators and barriers for Indigenous women and Two Spirit leaders in health care and the academic health sciences.



Dr. Lorrilee McGregor, Northern Ontario School of Medicine

Dr. Lorrilee McGregor is from Whitefish River First Nation near Manitoulin Island. She was recently appointed to the position of Assistant Professor at the Northern Ontario School of Medicine in Sudbury. Her research interests are in obesity, physical activity, and traditional knowledge. Dr. McGregor has been a member of the Manitoulin Anishinaabek Research Review Committee since 2002. This research project will explore obesity discourse among Anishinaabek knowledge keepers on Manitoulin Island through sequential focus groups. The intention is to understand obesity from a cultural perspective and to consider how to educate community members about healthy body weight through teachings.

2018-2019 Webinar Events

Queen's University IMN Launch – Queen's University held a gathering on September 21 to launch their local IMN-Ontario activities. Opened by Janice Hill, Director of Indigenous Initiatives at Queen's, the event featured a keynote presentation by Dr. Richmond, and a student panel discussion on the value of mentorship. Read more in [Indigenous Mentoring Network hub launches at Queen's](#) in the Queen's Gazette.

Balancing Graduate School & Life – On April 10, Randi Ray, PhD Candidate at Nipissing, Dr. Joey-Lynn Wabie, Assistant Professor at Laurentian, and Vanessa Ambtman-Smith, PhD Student at Western, shared their strategies for balancing life and graduate school, and facilitated a supportive environment for participants to share their own experiences.



2019 Summer Institute at Queen's University Biological Station

Mentorship, sharing, networking and team-building

During the week of June 16-20, 22 students gathered for the annual Indigenous Mentorship Network of Ontario Summer Institute on Traditional Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee Territory at the Queen's University Biological Station on Lake Opinicon. Post-secondary students and health professionals with a passion for Indigenous health and well-being were eligible to apply. Students were joined by Elders, Knowledge Keepers, scholars, and other guests for a week of mentorship, relationship building, cultural activities, and academic skill building sessions. The Summer Institute provided space for Indigenous health trainees to expand their knowledge of Indigenous health research and to build a lasting network, important for their own research journeys. It was a wonderful week!

Chi-Miigwetch - Thank you to our traditional knowledge keepers Janice and Tim for leading us in Ceremony and teachings throughout the week, and to the QUBS and organizing team for hosting!

"Having lots of time dedicated to spending time on the land, water [and] around fire really facilitated connection and friendship"

-Summer School Participant

Read more about the 2019 Summer Institute:

The [IMN-Ontario Summer School Report](#) includes speakers, topics, itinerary and student reflections on lessons and learning. The Institute was also covered in [Mentoring tomorrow's Indigenous health experts](#) from the Queen's Gazette.

2019 IMN-Ontario Mentors



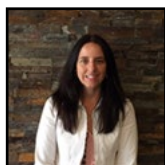
Dr. Amanda Sheppard
Cancer Care Ontario



Dr. Anita Benoit
Toronto



Dr. Bernice Downey
McMaster



Dr. Beverley Shea
Ottawa



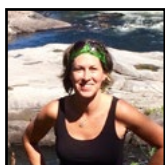
Dr. Bonnie Freeman
McMaster



Dr. Brenda Bruner
Nipissing



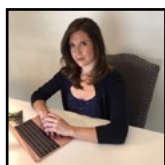
Dr. Brian Branfireun
Western



Dr. Carly Dokis
Nipissing



Dr. Chantelle Richmond
Western



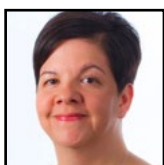
Dr. Chelsea Gabel
McMaster



Dr. Chris Furgal
Trent



Dr. Chris Mushquash
Lakehead



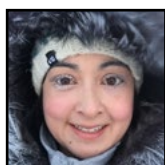
Dr. Cindy Peltier
Nipissing



Dr. Dawn Martin Hill
McMaster



Dr. Diana Lewis
Western



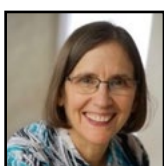
Dr. Gwen Healey
NOSM



Dr. Hannah Tait Neufeld
Guelph



Dr. Heather Castleden
Queen's



Dr. Janet McElhaney
HSNRI



Dr. Janet Smylie
St. Michael's Hospital



Dr. Jeffrey Denis
McMaster



Dr. Jennifer Walker
Laurentian



Dr. Jerry White
Western



Dr. Karen Lawford
Queen's



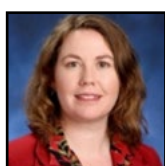
Dr. Katrina Srigley
Nipissing



Dr. Kim Anderson
Guelph



Dr. Laurie Chan
Ottawa



Dr. Lloy Wylie
Western



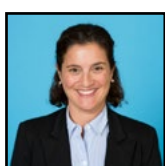
Dr. Lucie Lévesque
Queen's



Dr. Michael Green
Queen's



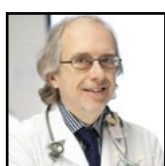
Dr. Michael Robidoux
Ottawa



Dr. Michelle Firestone
St. Michael's Hospital



Dr. Randy Jackson
McMaster



Dr. Robert Hegele
Western



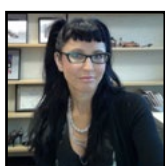
Dr. Sheila Cote-Meek
Laurentian



Dr. Sonia Wesche
Ottawa



Dr. Stewart Harris
Western



Dr. Suzanne Stewart
Toronto



Dr. Taima Moeke-Pickering
Laurentian