

MEDIA RELEASE



**FIRST NATIONS
UNIVERSITY
OF CANADA**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: September 26, 2024

First Nations University of Canada Hosts Annual Smudge Walk in Honor of Truth and Reconciliation

Regina, Saskatchewan, September 27, 2024 – First Nations University of Canada (FNUiv) is hosting their Annual Smudge Walk on Friday, September 27, 2024, at its Regina Campus. This event honors Indian Residential School Survivors and the children who never returned home, in commemoration of Orange Shirt Day and the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

The National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, observed on September 30, is a federal statutory holiday established in 2021. It is a day for reflection on the painful history of residential schools in Canada and the lasting impact on Indigenous communities. The day honors survivors, their families, and the children who never made it home, ensuring that this history remains central to reconciliation efforts.

The Smudge Walk will begin with a Pipe Ceremony at 8:00 AM, followed by the walk at 9:30 AM from the East Door of the FNUiv Regina campus. Participants will walk together in a gesture of solidarity, reflecting on the importance of reconciliation. The walk will proceed rain or shine and will take approximately 40 minutes.

A special program will take place at 10:45 AM, featuring speakers including Chief Micheal Starr of Star Blanket Cree Nation, FNUiv President Dr. Jacqueline Ottmann, Vice-Chief Craig McCallum of the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations (FSIN), Rob Wesseling, President and CEO of the Co-operators, and Cindy Fuchs, Executive Director of the Saskatchewan Roughrider Foundation. The event will culminate in a community lunch at 12:00 PM.

During the program, FNUiv and the Co-operators will announce a transformative initiative aimed at supporting Indigenous students through education and economic empowerment. This partnership will help FNUiv students succeed academically and transition into the workforce, contributing to long-term reconciliation and economic progress for Indigenous communities. Full details of this initiative will be revealed at the event.

In collaboration with the Co-operators, the first 200 participants will receive complimentary orange t-shirts, symbolizing their commitment to Truth and Reconciliation and honoring the memory of children who were taken to residential schools.

"The Annual Smudge Walk is deeply significant for our university and community. As we walk, we remember the resilience of Indian Residential School Survivors and honor the children who never returned home," explains Dr. Jacqueline Ottmann, President of FNUniv. "This walk is an act of reconciliation – Indigenous and non-Indigenous people are coming together to remember and learn from the past and consider new pathways forward. We also come together to celebrate current, new, and potential partnerships that will provide impactful and lasting opportunities for our students, experiences and opportunities that will help them succeed in their academic and professional journeys."

Event Schedule:

- **8:00 AM** – Pipe Ceremony
- **9:30 AM** – Smudge Walk (East Door, FNUniv Regina Campus)
- **10:45 AM** – Special Program featuring guest speakers
- **12:00 PM** – Community Lunch

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About First Nations University of Canada

Established in 1976, the First Nations University of Canada is Canada's only national First Nations-owned post-secondary institution. FNUniv is a unique place of higher learning that specializes in Indigenous Education for Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples of all cultural backgrounds. Our vision is to have a transformative impact by bridging our ceremonies, knowledge keepers, languages, and traditions with the delivery of high-quality post-secondary education. For more information, please visit www.fnuniv.ca.