

**Seneca**

**Reconciliation and Inclusion:  
A Shared Commitment  
with Responsibilities**

---

# Land Acknowledgment

Seneca's campuses are located on the land stewarded by Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee and Wendat Nations. We acknowledge Treaty 13 (Toronto Purchase) signed with the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and the Williams Treaty, signed with multiple Mississauga and Chippewa First Nations. We are all interconnected as treaty people with a shared obligation to learn, respect, honour and sustain.

Through this acknowledgment, we honour the Indigenous Peoples – First Nations, Inuit or Métis – and the history of the land upon which all Seneca campuses are located. This is a small but significant action towards truth, reconciliation and the strengthening of relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.

Acknowledgments enable us to give thanks and recognize our relationship to Indigenous lands, treaties, the original inhabitants and the history they have shared with this land for thousands of years. They also encourage reflection about the past, the resiliency of Indigenous Peoples and what individual and collective changes can be made to further the reconciliation process.

Today, this land continues to be home for many diverse Indigenous Peoples. We are grateful for the continuous and unceasing Indigenous stewardship of these lands and waters.

---

## President's message

The road to a Seneca that truly embraces reconciliation and inclusion is neither short nor easy. But we are on that road, leading us to the equitable Seneca. Our journey is important and necessary both for its destination and for what we will learn and experience along the way.

We are not starting from scratch.

Seneca's inherent diversity - both domestically and internationally - is a strong foundation.

Our institutional commitment to heeding the calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls inquiry and our own Au Large pillar of the equitable Seneca all echo the hard work and tenacious commitment over the years of many students and employees to these issues.

I am proud that this is not a plan to have a plan, or a plan to explore options, but an action plan with specific objectives and success measures.

My thanks to all those who put reconciliation and inclusion on our agenda, who help create a welcoming and belonging culture in our community and who make an equitable Seneca their priority.

We'll see you on the road.

David Agnew

---

## Identifying a shared commitment

In 2020, Seneca launched Au Large, a transformative initiative to emerge from the pandemic with a renewed sense of mission and purpose, and to continue to thrive stronger than ever.

Au Large was built on three pillars: the equitable Seneca, the sustainable Seneca and the more virtual Seneca.

The equitable pillar recognizes that educational institutions play a special role in building a more equitable world. We are many things – employer, teacher, gathering place, social venue, community space – and we have unique opportunities to model examples by what we do, how we do it and the environment we create for teaching and learning.

Seneca, along with other institutions, was asked to respond to the 2015 Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s (TRC) Calls to Action and the 2019 Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) inquiry’s Calls to Justice.

This shared obligation is to educate, instruct and change the Canada that our graduates will lead one day. We are responding to those calls clearly with focus and ambition.

Seneca’s institutional commitment is reflected in the 2023-26 Strategic Plan:

*“Seneca has a unique opportunity – indeed, an obligation – to help build an equitable world through the many roles we play in people’s lives. We teach, we employ, and we are a community gathering space that embraces our responsibilities for reconciliation, diversity and inclusion.*

*“... Beyond career-based education, Seneca also takes to heart our responsibility to help students become engaged citizens, active participants in building strong, vibrant communities that foster tolerance, diversity in all forms and respect. That is why we aim to instill the principles of reconciliation and inclusion in our graduates. We are also determined to reflect that goal across our organization, building the equitable Seneca, committed to reconciliation, free of systemic racism and bias.”*

The murder of George Floyd and ongoing examples of violence, intolerance, discrimination and oppression against marginalized peoples and equity-deserving groups, both domestically and globally, have accelerated Seneca’s need to respond to a worldwide call to action.

The time for words alone has long passed. This Reconciliation and Inclusion plan lays out accountable actions to support the journey to the equitable Seneca.

The first Au Large call to action was the formation of an employee-based Equity Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) committee to deliver on three Seneca-wide initiatives:

- anti-bias and inclusivity programming for all current and new employees, with similar programming for students
- a voluntary census to establish a database on the diversity of Seneca's students and employees
- an audit of admissions, retention and disciplinary policies and procedures for students and of hiring, promotion and disciplinary policies and procedures for employees to identify and remove any systemic biases

The EDI committee's work is summarized in the [2020-2022 EDI Review](#) and is the starting point of *A Shared Commitment with Responsibilities*.

---

# Seneca's Reconciliation and Inclusion Plan

A Shared Commitment with Responsibilities is a three-year plan to help guide the Seneca community to continue our work to embed reconciliation and inclusion within our culture, governance, spaces and the education we provide.

**The five areas of focus in A Shared Commitment with Responsibilities are:**

**Education:** including reconciliation and inclusion principles in program learning outcomes for students and in training for employees, starting with the Board of Governors and administrators

**People:** hiring for academic, support and administrative positions focused on reconciliation and inclusion priorities

**Services:** providing supports that are inclusive and reflective of our community

**Information:** better understanding who we are and advancing the data available about the people who learn and work at Seneca

**Spaces:** reflecting our diverse communities in our buildings, art and virtual environments

Within these five focus areas, Seneca has identified 13 goals with deliverables for the next three years. The number of goals reflect the 13 phases of the moon, which are depicted in the pillars fronting our CITE building at the Newnham Campus.

Annually, we will report on our collective accomplishments while continually evaluating our objectives and pivoting as required.

## EDUCATION

### **GOAL 1: Respond to the TRC Calls to Action and the Calls to Justice of the MMIWG inquiry.**

The TRC's calls to action and the MMIWG's calls to justice lay the foundation to a path of healing and understanding. Seneca considers these as foundational documents for fulfilling our commitments to Indigenous communities.

#### **Deliverables:**

Working with academic and student support stakeholders to ensure:

- four Indigenous reconciliation-based demonstrable course artifacts such as learning outcomes, assessment and learning experiences are included in the programs identified in the TRC and MMIWG documents
- three Indigenous reconciliation-based demonstrable course artifacts such as learning outcomes, assessment and learning experiences are included in the programs that often interact with Indigenous communities
- a plan is developed to include two Indigenous reconciliation-based demonstrable course artifacts such as learning outcomes, assessment and learning experiences in academic programs

The Office of Reconciliation and Inclusion (ORI), supported by the Academic Quality office, will develop and oversee a process for academic areas to document inclusion of the Indigenous reconciliation-based course artifacts and reflect on the impact to student learning and experience during program review.

### **GOAL 2: Incorporate EDI learning outcomes into Seneca programs.**

It is essential for students to learn about EDI and to have their lived experiences reflected within Seneca's curriculum. While some programs have EDI as a foundation, the goal over the three years of the plan is to expand that number.

#### **Deliverables:**

Working with academic and student support stakeholders to develop:

- a matrix that will guide academic teams to incorporate EDI principles into academic programs
- an ongoing process to provide training to faculty for infusing EDI into their teaching and curriculum
- a process for academic areas to document inclusion of EDI principles into their teaching and curriculum and to reflect on the impact to student learning and experience during program reviews

### **GOAL 3: Foster an inclusive culture.**

Part of fostering an inclusive culture lies in education, including teaching employees about reconciliation and inclusion principles. That will start with the Board of Governors and administrators then roll out to the rest of the organization to ensure that we can provide inclusive learning and working spaces that are welcoming for all. Training will be provided to prepare employees to have conversations about reconciliation, equity and diversity with students and colleagues.

#### **Deliverables:**

- reconciliation and EDI training for employees, starting with the Board of Governors and administrators
  - reconciliation and EDI community of practice, including web presence
- 

## **PEOPLE**

### **GOAL 4: Establish the Office of Reconciliation and Inclusion.**

Reconciliation and inclusion are shared obligations amongst all members of the Seneca community. The ORI will be part of the Human Resources department, providing institutional guidance for both students and employees on areas such as:

- EDI best practices
- initiatives to advance awareness
- reporting progress, milestones and achievements
- resources for Indigenous and equity-deserving students and employees

#### **Deliverables:**

- a fully staffed ORI working across Seneca to achieve this plan's objectives
- 

## **INFORMATION**

### **GOAL 5: Learn more about who students are and how we can support them.**

In all its forms, diversity in the classroom can lead to graduates who are better prepared to model behaviour in the organizations they enter or lead. Step one is understanding who is attending Seneca. In fall 2021, Seneca conducted its first-ever student demographic census in which 26 per cent of students participated. Over the next three years, we will conduct another census and will put strategies in place to achieve a higher participation rate.



**Deliverables:**

- a four per cent increase in student census participation
- a schedule and process for an ongoing cycle of censuses
- work with academic, student service areas and Marketing and Communications to attract a higher participation rate of students

**GOAL 6: Learn more about who our employees are and how we can achieve diversity in our workforce.**

The first employee census had a response rate of 54 per cent. We will continue to build strategies to increase participation across Seneca's workforce, including collecting census data from new hires.

**Deliverables:**

- build an internal ongoing census for employees with 60 per cent of employees completing the survey
- work with Human Resources to develop strategies to address gaps in representation throughout the organization
- point-of-application census for external candidates applying for positions

**GOAL 7: Improve self-identification protocol.**

Seneca has self-identification protocols in place for students and employees when applications are required (e.g., financial aid, new positions). There have also been attempts at policies to confirm identification among Indigenous employees. The issue is complex and many institutions are struggling to find solutions. A protocol will ensure the benefits of programs for equity-deserving groups gets to the intended populations.

**Deliverables:**

- a review of processes for self-identification among students and employees
- a process for identifying targeted equity-deserving financial support
- a process for targeted equity-deserving hires and employee development

---

**SERVICES****GOAL 8: Offer relevant, inclusive and responsive services and activities reflective of the Seneca student community.**

Services and activities are critical to the student experience. It is essential that they align with students' needs and reflect how they navigate the world. Assessing current practices ensures we are serving our changing community effectively.

**Deliverables:**

- working with student service areas to place a reconciliation and inclusion lens on:
  - student service delivery and employee training
  - student activities
  - systems that serve students
  - student-focused policies

**GOAL 9: Build a protocol for humanitarian crises.**

Seneca is a place where many students and employees from diverse backgrounds come to study, work and live. There are many external pressures on both students and employees, which include national and international crises that might be stressful or traumatize members of the Seneca community.

**Deliverables:**

- procedures for activating a team to support students and employees through crises
  - a resource of responses and services to inform approaches
- 

**SPACES****GOAL 10: Ensure Indigenous design and values are incorporated into major development projects on Seneca campuses.**

The Seneca community has embraced our connection to reconciliation by incorporating the values of Indigenous peoples into the foundations and structures of our buildings, including natural spaces, architecture, art and interior designs.

**Deliverables:**

- a requirement for vendors who bid on major development projects to have an Indigenous design firm included or Indigenous expertise available
- inclusion of Seneca's Indigenous community in the development of major development project plans and to act as resources for guidance and support

**GOAL 11: Establish The Path to Reconciliation.**

King Campus will be home to a path that will circumnavigate Lake Seneca and promote health, wellness and education. It will be a reminder of the Anishinaabe water walkers who travelled the Great Lakes and other bodies of water to bless them and feel the healing power of water. There will also be virtual vignettes along the path on residential schools and reconciliation.

**Deliverable:**

- creation of The Path to Reconciliation at King Campus
-

## **GOAL 12: Develop protocols for inclusive commemorations and celebrations.**

Seneca is made up of many diverse communities that commemorate and celebrate their milestones and holidays differently. Reflecting this diversity in activities, events and communications gives us another opportunity to learn about each other.

### **Deliverable:**

- develop protocols and review existing practices to honour and celebrate the diverse communities at Seneca

## **GOAL 13: Feature equity-deserving artists.**

In 2021, the Seneca Art Committee completed a review and evaluation of the on-campus art collection. We will expand our art holdings to feature the work of Indigenous and equity-deserving artists.

### **Deliverables:**

- work with the Art Committee to feature Indigenous and equity-deserving artists using a self-guided tool for the Seneca community to learn more about the artist and art piece
- secure new pieces that feature more equity-deserving artists

---

**This plan sets out an ambitious set of goals with objectives that represent meaningful progress in our journey to becoming the equitable Seneca.**

By both design and necessity, the plan engages and involves every member of the Seneca community.

While the work of reconciliation and inclusion will continue long past 2026, over the next three years, this plan will get us further along in that important journey.