

# ABORIGINAL HOUSE



*Circle Membership will automatically register you for a monthly e-mail of Circle News. For registered students at the University of Manitoba, becoming a member will also serve to extend privileges of the lounge and computer lab after hours.*

# *History*

Aboriginal students have a new building at the University of Manitoba!

A dream, over twenty-five years in the making, has come true!

The new building houses the Aboriginal Student Centre, the Access Program, some of the Native Studies Professors, the Office of University Accessibility and the University of Manitoba Aboriginal Student Association. The building was designed for, and predominantly by, Aboriginal People. It is a place of pride for the 1,600+ Aboriginal students and staff on campus and strives to be a welcoming environment for the entire campus. It is our hope that people from all Nations will feel comfortable and come to know our traditional teachings of sharing and caring.

The idea for a dedicated Aboriginal building at the U of M has been around since the 1970's when a handful of Aboriginal students brought the subject up with university management. Ovide Mercredi was a student at the time and he, along with Edwin Jebb, Moses Okimaw, Elijah Harper and a few others suggested a dedicated safe space/home for Aboriginal students.

In the early 1990's, the University of Manitoba Aboriginal Network (ABNET), continued to press the issue and suggested that a building was an excellent way to encourage Aboriginal student recruitment and retention. ABNET also suggested that the building would be a place where Aboriginal community members, University people and students could meet and get to know one another. It was important that this new home reflect a visible and respectful inclusion of Aboriginal Peoples on campus as well as offer a safe place to provide services to students and to share our Indigenous knowledge with the wider university community.

Prairie Architects, which included four University of Manitoba Aboriginal architecture students, was hired in 2004. We especially want to acknowledge these students who played such an intricate part in the consultation and design process: Michael Robertson, Dave Thomas, Destiny Seymour, and Eladia Smoke. We also acknowledge Dennis Kwan of Prairie Architects who took a leadership role in ensuring that the Aboriginal components remained in place throughout the construction process.

# *ARCHITECTS*



**Shown:**

Dave Thomas  
Destiny Seymour  
Crystal Bornais  
Teresa Da Costa-Neubauer  
Eladia Smoke  
Dennis Kwan

Missing: Dudley Thompson

**\*\* Special mention:** We would like to thank Michael Robertson who was part of the architectural design team during the initial stages. His vision, insight, consultative process and dedication were greatly appreciated.

# *CONSTRUCTION*

**Shown:**

Edwin Slaunwhite (level 3 Carpenter)  
Stuart Botelho (Journeymen Carpenter)  
Wally Bruce (Site Super)  
Susan Peterson (LEED coordinator),  
Fraser Hamilton (Project Manager)



Dominion Construction, boasting a crew of over 80% Aboriginal workforce, were the winning contractors and did a beautiful job of our new home.

MIIGWETCH!

# *LEED Building*

Targeted for LEED certification, sustainable design features such as the use of durable, natural, and recycled materials also express the shared value of the gifts we receive from the earth. Energy-efficiency and environmental considerations reinforce our innate connections to the land, to each other, and to future generations. Indigenous materials such as stone and wood reinforce this organic, holistic approach. A locally-quarried, tyndall stone wall traverses the true east-west axis and provides orientation into the building and within, rising from the earth in the east and returning to it in the west. The main entrance faces the rising sun and respects the East, a direction that signifies rebirth and new life to many Aboriginal people. As an all-inclusive facility, it welcomes all nations and invites pedestrians into the ongoing life of the centre.



Aboriginal House (previously Aboriginal Student Centre) is the first LEED building on campus and was designed using an Integrated Design Process where all team members, including building occupants and representatives from the Aboriginal community, worked together in a comprehensive design process to ensure synergetic design approaches and building systems. Using an Integrated Design Process along with the LEED rating system allowed the team to design an optimally sustainable building that meets the needs of the University of Manitoba staff and students. The following is a summary of some of the features of the building based on the LEED criteria:

## ***WATER EFFICIENCY:***

The designed landscape requires no permanent irrigation system because it uses a combination of xeriscaping and native, drought tolerant prairie species. The native landscape will create habitat for wildlife as well as require no permanent irrigation to sustain the plants.

The building maximizes water efficiency by the use of aerator faucets, automatic faucet shutoff devices, low-flow toilets and waterless urinals. These measures contributed to a total water use reduction of 52%.



### ***ENERGY & ATMOSPHERE:***



Aboriginal House uses a heat pump system for heating and cooling that exchanges heat from a waste heat loop running through campus, an energy recovery ventilator, energy efficient light fixtures, and daylight and occupancy sensors to achieve an energy performance 29% better than current building standards. Increased energy efficiency reduces environmental impact in relation to energy production and building systems emissions.

### ***MATERIALS & RESOURCES:***



The University of Manitoba started its first recycling programs in the late 1980's and now has an extensive program for paper, cardboard, glass, plastic and metals. In addition, the University of Manitoba also recycles inkjet cartridges, cell phones and has a composting program at food services.

During construction, 93% of construction wastes were recycled or salvaged. 14% of materials used in this project, including carpet, concrete and steel, contained recycled content and 21.5% of building materials used were extracted and manufactured within an 800km radius of the project site or transported by rail within a 2400km radius.

### ***INDOOR AIR QUALITY:***

91% of occupied spaces have a direct line of site to the outdoors and 75% of the regularly occupied areas receive daylight. This reduces the requirements for electrical lighting during the day and provides occupants with a connection to the outdoors, improving the well-being and productivity of the staff and students.



One unique feature that is another innovation of the project is using the campus waste heat loop as the heat source and sink for heating and cooling the building. During the summer this line carries chilled water for air conditioning. Using this loop made use of a resource already existing on campus and also reduced the materials and associated costs that would have been necessary to build a geothermal field.

*Prairie Architects Inc.*  
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Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3B 0R3  
Phone: 204.956.0938 Fax: 204.943.5597  
[www.prairiearchitects.ca](http://www.prairiearchitects.ca)



# CHRONOLOGY



\* A tobacco offering to the land ceremony was held in October of 2005.

\* Community, University, Elders and student consultations began in the Spring of 2006.



\* The building was blessed in a traditional ceremony, March 6, 2008.

\* Ribbon Cutting, June 20, 2008.

\* Official Grand Opening, September 19, 2008.

The building houses the Aboriginal Student Centre, ACCESS program, Office of University Accessibility, Aboriginal Student Association, and sessional instructors from the Native Studies Department. There is also a computer lab, student lounge, a student council office, a gathering space, an office for community representatives to meet with students, as well as a board room and a kitchen.

An eight foot statue of Louis Riel will be located near the front door, along with statues representing the First Nations and Inuit peoples. The pride of the building is the Healing Lodge which is attached to one side of the building. The Healing Lodge, or Circle Room is a spiritual place.

Requests to use rooms in the building can be coordinated through the Aboriginal Student Centre located on the main floor of the building.

## *Cultural Significance of the Building*

Elders Garry Robson, Ann Callahan, Roger Armitte and Peter Irniq were the ASC building committee Elders. Garry Robson continued as the primary Elder and consulted throughout the process and especially in regards to the symbolism found within.

*Garry offers the following teachings:*

There are many layers to the cultural significance of this new building. Once you've learned one, then you learn another and another and so on. For instance, many of our structures have a roundness to them. You can see that roundness in the center of our building. That roundness is reflective of the shape of Mother Earth, and our teachings say that all buildings are representative of a woman. They are like our mothers who protect and teach us. We must learn to honour and show respect to the buildings as we would to our mothers.

The women take care of the water, and so they are represented by the colour blue and the symbolic river that is our hallways. The men take care of the fire, and so they are represented by the colour red. There is a fire on the outside of this building to represent the role of the men. With the roundness and water inside, and the fire outside, there is balance. The Circle represents balance and harmony; symbolic of the Medicine Wheel where no one is more prominent than another, all are equal and there is no beginning and no end.

**There are 13 ribs in the student lounge.** These ribs honour the 13 times of the year that the "Grandmother Moon" is full and each moon has a Teaching. The ribs are also representative of women and home – a safe and loving place for all those who spend time within.

**The 7 poles in the building represent many teachings:**

- \* The Seven Sacred Teachings of love, courage, respect, honesty, humility, truth and wisdom.
- \* The seven stages in life, and it is by knowing these stages, that we can figure out where we are and what we need to know or learn in order to go to the next stage. As we grow into that next stage of our life, we must let the previous stage go – we must not drag each stage with us, although we will at some time 'visit' those past stages.
- \* The seven original Clans. Each Clan has a teaching, a role, and a responsibility that they bring into the circle for the strength of the community.
- \* The seven sacred fires/prophesies, seven disciplines to live a good and healthy life, and teachings about the seven Generations.

**The 4 directions** are respected in that the lounge is properly positioned in the cardinal directions that allow all people to enter and to be part of our gatherings. The number four also represent the four original races, the four seasons, and the four main medicines.

*'Welcome' is listed around the foyer area in the languages of:  
Cree, Anishnaabe, Dene, Oji-Cree, Michif, Dakota, Inuktitug, English and French.*

# *Units/Programs Represented*

## **Aboriginal Student Centre (ASC)**

The mission of the Aboriginal Student Centre is to provide student supports in a manner consistent with the cultures and values of Aboriginal Peoples for the purpose of increasing/enhancing the accessibility and retention of Aboriginal students. The Aboriginal Student Centre is dedicated to the creation of an educational environment that includes the affirmation of Aboriginal cultures, values, languages, history, and way of life by virtue of increasing the knowledge foundation offered at the University of Manitoba.

The ASC has an Student Advisor, Communications, Events Coordinator, Financial Advisor and an Elders Program (refer to Services page for Elders-in-Residence information)

The Aboriginal Student Centre is open to everyone. For more information please contact us at (204) 474-8850 or visit our website at: [www.umanitoba.ca/student/asc](http://www.umanitoba.ca/student/asc)



## **Access Programs**



The Access Programs offer unique supportive programming in the areas of academic and financial support, counseling, course instruction, orientation program, tutoring and advocacy for anyone who has not had an opportunity to attend University because of social, economic or academic reasons. Any resident of Manitoba may apply to the Access Program. Preference is given to Aboriginal people (Status, Non-Status, Métis, Inuit), residents of Northern Manitoba and low income

earners. Students in this program may obtain any degree offered by the University or may choose to enter the specialized Education (EAP), Health Careers Programs (HCAP) and Professional Health Program (PHP). The Health Careers Access Program Professional Health Program is exclusive to Aboriginal (Status, Non-Status, Métis, Inuit), residents of Manitoba interested in pursuing a career in Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacy, Nursing, Medical Rehabilitation and Dental Hygiene. Application deadline for all programs is April 1 of each year. For more information please call (204)474-8000 or visit our website at: [www.umanitoba.ca/extended/access/](http://www.umanitoba.ca/extended/access/)

## **Native Studies Department**

Native Studies is a community of scholars in pursuit of knowledge. We recognize that students and teachers can learn from each other, and we also accept our responsibility as teachers to guide that process. Our dialogues and debates allow us all to deepen our ideas, to sharpen our views, to hone our skills. We engage in conversations in a manner that is respectful of all participants. Whatever your views, whether you are Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal, you have a contribution to make and we invite you to join our circle.

For more information please call (204) 474-9266 or visit our website at:

[www.umanitoba.ca/faculties/arts/departments/native\\_studies/](http://www.umanitoba.ca/faculties/arts/departments/native_studies/)





## Office of University Accessibility

The office of University Accessibility is committed to the administration, co-ordination and development of initiatives and programs which enhance accessibility to and participation in the University by all segments of society. We are further committed to providing direction, co-ordination and assistance not only to University units and offices but to external organizations and groups where it concerns the development and management of programs and services which enhance accessibility to and completion of University education.

For more information please call (204) 474-9240 or visit our website at:  
[http://www.umanitoba.ca/admin/vp\\_academic/accessibility/index.html](http://www.umanitoba.ca/admin/vp_academic/accessibility/index.html)

# Accessibility

UNIVERSITY  
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## University of Manitoba Aboriginal Student Association (UMASA)

The University of Manitoba Aboriginal Student Association provides support and information on Aboriginal issues. The student association plans and organizes recreational, political, social and cultural events throughout the year.

All registered University of Manitoba students who support these initiatives are encouraged to be active and join.

The student council, along with having an office and lounge located in Aboriginal House, also have space in 113 Helen Glass Building and is open from 8:30 am to 10:00 pm.



# *Services Offered*

## **Counsellor:**

**Kathryn Ritchot\*** (Ph.D.) is a Métis psychologist who will be available on Wednesday afternoons from 1 - 3pm. She takes great interest in working with individuals to focus on their strengths as they overcome such challenges as depression; loneliness, feeling lost, anxiety; low self-esteem; interpersonal trauma; and concerns about identity, careers, relationships, and communication. Kathryn's emphasis is on providing support for students as they gain greater empowerment.



\* Appointments can be made with Kathryn through the Aboriginal Student Centre.

## **Writing Tutor:**

**Chantal Solange Fiola\*** (Ph.D. candidate) Chantal Fiola (Ph.D. candidate) is a Métis graduate student in Indigenous Studies at Trent University. She is also a Teaching Assistant with the Department of Native Studies at the University of Manitoba. Chantal will have an office with Native Studies on the second floor of the Aboriginal Students' Centre building (Rm 252). She will be available Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10:30-4:30 to assist students with academic writing.



\* Appointments can be made with Chantal through the Aboriginal Student Centre.

## **Scholarship/Bursary Assistance:**

**Shirley Haynes\*** Shirley Haynes, Financial Aid and Awards Coordinator at the Louis Riel Institute helps students find money for school. She is a Métis and Ojibway Education student with a diploma in Aboriginal Languages (Cree). Going into her fourth year, Shirley has found over \$40,000 of scholarships and bursaries for her own education, so she definitely knows where to help students find their own money!  
Shirley will be available Wednesdays from 9am—noon



\* Appointments can be made with Shirley through the Aboriginal Student Centre

# *Elders Program*

The Aboriginal Student Centre (ASC) runs an Elders-in-Residence program where Elders are invited to campus to provide Indigenous knowledge and cultural supports to students and staff. The Elders are available to everyone who has an interest in learning more about our culture, Indigenous knowledge or would like to speak to an Elder for support.

*\*\* Tobacco is required when asking for assistance from an Elder—be prepared to offer tobacco when visiting. If you have any questions please talk to Kali Storm or Carl Stone at the Aboriginal Student Centre.*

## **Elders:**



**Myra Laramee (Cree/Metis)**

Myra Laramee\* has been raised with Cree and Métis traditions, but is also very proud of her Celtic heritage. She has worked as an Aboriginal educator for many years, including as Principal of Nijii Makwa School in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Myra currently works as the Curriculum Development Writer at the Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre (MFNERC). Through the generosity and belief in Elders in the education system, MFNERC and the Aboriginal Student Centre have entered a partnership so that Myra can be on campus every Monday throughout the academic year for student support.

Garry Robson\*, an Ojibway from the Peguis First Nation, has been an Aboriginal Awareness Consultant with the Aboriginal Education Directorate for the past 27 years. A member of the Turtle Clan, Garry presents on, and provides traditional culture and historical overviews as they relate to the present day to classrooms, teachers, administrators, parents, community agencies and government departments within the province of Manitoba. Garry is also a poet and storyteller. He speaks about stories of the traditional life of his people, the Clan System, Prophecies, 7 stages of Life and the Cradle Board, to name a few. Garry will be available on Thursdays throughout the academic year.



**Garry Robson (Anishnaabe)**

# *Annual Events*



## **September - UMASA welcome BBQ and membership drive**

The University of Manitoba Aboriginal Student Association hosts an annual welcome BBQ for all new and returning Aboriginal students.



All students who support the initiatives of one of the largest recognized student groups on campus are encouraged to apply.

## **December - UMASA Family Xmas**

The University of Manitoba Aboriginal Student Association in partnership with other units provide a Xmas gathering for students and their families. A supper with Santa and presents for the children are provided.



## **March - Elders Gathering**

The Aboriginal Student Centre and the Department of Native Studies, in partnership with Accessibility, University 1, Access and UMASA, host a 2-3 day gathering of Elders and Traditional Teachers on campus to share Indigenous knowledge with the staff and students of the University of Manitoba. Native Studies offers a 'Working with Elders' course which the Aboriginal Student Centre staff co-teach, to help prepare students to work with Elders and Traditional knowledge in a respectful manner. As part of the course outline, students receive hands-on experience through their volunteer work at the Elders Gathering.



### **May - Traditional Graduation Powwow**

The Aboriginal Student Centre organizes and hosts a Traditional Graduation Powwow for Aboriginal students on the first Saturday of May each year. This event honours over 100 graduates a year and welcomes 2,000+ community members to campus to help celebrate the achievements of the students.



The Graduation Powwow is held at the Investors Group Athletic Centre at the University of Manitoba Fort Garry Campus and honours both University of Manitoba and University of Winnipeg Aboriginal graduates.

### **June - Aboriginal Day**

The Office of University Accessibility, in partnership with other units on campus coordinate Aboriginal Day celebrations on campus for the University community.



### **August - NATV 1000 'Colonizers & the Colonized' Orientation**

The Aboriginal Student Centre coordinates an annual Orientation course. The course, 'The Colonizers & the Colonized: Opening the Circle' is a three credit hour course offered through the Department of Native Studies during the last three weeks of August. This



course is designed for first year Aboriginal students to offer transitional and supportive resources to students prior to the September start of the fall term. Registration is restricted and applications can be made only through the Aboriginal Student Centre.





# *Building Donors*

## Individual Donors:

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# Miigwetch!!

## *A special thank you*

We, the tenants of Aboriginal House, would like to make a special acknowledgement of thanks to the following people who made our move to our new home just that much easier.

- \* To the University of Manitoba Administration for recognizing the need and, more importantly, supporting our dream!
- \* To the entire Physical Plant department (caretaking, mail services, administrative services, architectural services and grounds and general services) - you are all awesome!
- \* To Prairie Architects and Dominion Construction, miigwetch!
- \* To the fundraisers for the building and all the donors!
- \* To all the Deans, Directors and Department Heads who continue to support our initiatives on campus!
- \* To the IST team who got us all new computers and to the system managers who came over and 'hooked us all up'!
  
- \* And finally, to all the students and tenants of this wonderful new building:

**Together we are strong, we are proud, we are family - We are the Circle!**



## **Kitchi-Miigwetch!!**