

# **FNTI**

**Sharing and Learning**

## **Annual Report**

**2022-2023**

**[www.FNTI.net](http://www.FNTI.net)**



## Foreword

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She:kon, Aaniin, Greetings,

We are very pleased to present our stakeholders with our 2022-2023 Annual Report.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, we want to express our gratitude to the staff of FNTI for your ongoing commitment to our learners. What we have accomplished together over the past year builds upon our nearly 40 years of successes, showing us that we are stronger and more resilient with each Annual Report.

All of our programs are grounded in Indigenous Knowledge, identity, worldviews and traditional practices, guided by Indigenous scholars and elders. Our learners continue to thrive in both the virtual classroom and on-site, where hand-on training is essential, illustrating that dedicated wrap-around supports are directly linked to successful learner outcomes. This year's graduation rate is 93.9%.

FNTI is committed to providing programming necessary to build capacity in individuals and communities, as together we devote every available resource to improving educational, social, economic and health outcomes. As stated by the Honourable Murray Sinclair: "Education is the key to reconciliation. Education got us into this....and education will get us out of it."

Our stakeholders can take comfort in the knowledge that future generations of learners will have access to high-quality, culturally relevant Indigenous post-secondary education.

Congratulations, nya:wen and miigwetch to our learners and alumni for the great work you are doing, and to our staff for your commitment and dedication which contributed to FNTI's successes!

We thank our Board members for their focused engagement and unwavering support, who have empowered us to provide students across Ontario and Canada with Indigenous post-secondary education.



**Ralph Brant**  
Chair, Board of Directors

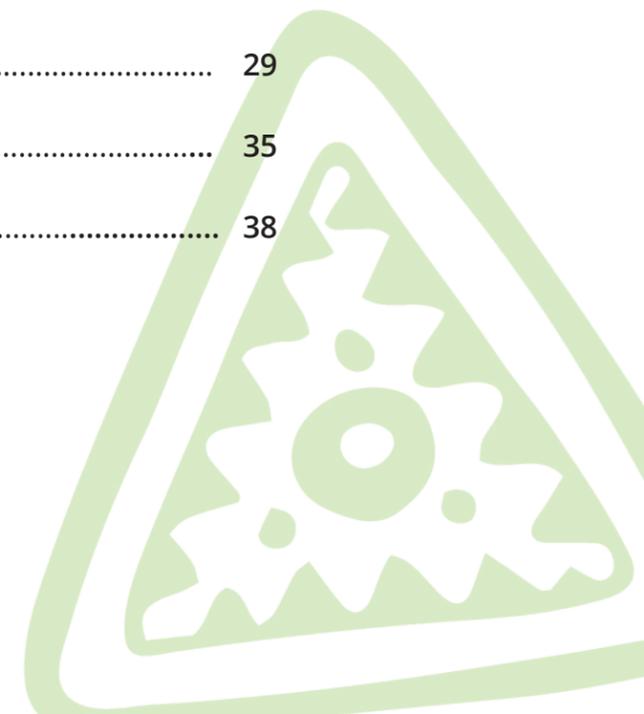


**Suzanne Brant**  
President, FNTI



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## Mission & Purpose

FNTI provides culturally responsive post-secondary education that supports self-empowerment, personal transformation, healing, identity, kinship and capacity-building for Indigenous peoples and communities across Canada. FNTI has reshaped the post-secondary education model to reflect methods of program delivery that ensure increased access to Indigenous knowledge and employment skills through high-quality education.

Learners participate in programs that are rooted in traditional ways of knowing, transforming education into medicine for the heart, mind, body, and spirit. We value the adult learning model and view our learners as already possessing many talents, skills, expertise, and knowledge. Our classrooms provide a safe space for learners to share in reciprocity with FNTI team members.

FNTI celebrates a 93.9% graduation rate and a 98% employment rate as a result of our culturally informed programming and support. Many mainstream educational institutions do not offer programs that reflect Indigenous languages, cultures, or knowledge systems. The lack of culturally-appropriate educational programs and supports excludes Indigenous students from post-secondary education. This disconnect alienates Indigenous students, leading to higher dropout rates and lower rates of completion. FNTI believes in Indigenous knowledge, transformative learning, promoting learner success, innovation, and inclusivity.

The purpose of this report is to showcase the higher learning landscape and generations of Indigenous learners who have graduated from FNTI, positioning it as an invaluable component of Indigenous education in Canada.

Given its history and success, FNTI plays a critical role in education and reconciliation in the province of Ontario and across the country, yet finds itself at a crossroads. FNTI lacks the financial resources necessary to meet the oversubscription in applications from future student cohorts, and to support Indigenous learners and communities.

As such, FNTI is asking the provincial and federal governments to support FNTI's continued efforts towards Indigenous reconciliation and education.



### Mission

To provide a unique educational experience, rooted in Indigenous Knowledge, thereby enhancing the success and strength of our learners, families and communities.

### Vision

We are Ontario's leading Indigenous post-secondary institute, recognized for providing high-quality education founded in Indigenous Knowledge, for and with our learners, in a healthy, harmonious, prosperous and vibrant learning and research environment.

### Values

#### Environment

We provide an inclusive environment that ensures mutual trust and respect.

#### Indigenous Worldviews, Knowledge and Values

We incorporate Indigenous worldviews, Knowledge and values into all of our programming and activities.

#### Learner Success

We commit to the success of our learners, which drives our program deliveries, policies, as well as learner and operational supports.

#### Innovation

We continually evolve our programs, supports and operations to facilitate improvement, positive change and sustainability.

#### Inclusivity

We value and practice sharing, authenticity, transparency and integrity in all of our relationships.



## FNTI History

FNTI, also known as the First Nations Technical Institute, is an Indigenous-owned and governed post-secondary institute. FNTI was incorporated in 1985 to create educational pathways for Indigenous peoples to train in various administration programs. In 1989 the First Peoples' Aviation Technology - Flight program began on the former site of the historic Canadian Royal Flying Corps' flight training facility in Tyendinaga, Ontario. In the decades since, FNTI has built a rich history of delivering Indigenous programming rooted in Indigenous culture and ways of knowing.

FNTI is a not-for-profit, registered charitable organization accredited by the Indigenous Advanced Education and Skills Council (IAESC) and a member of Colleges and Institutes Canada (CICan).

Since FNTI was incorporated, it has developed partnerships with many of Ontario's best colleges and universities. Currently, in addition to its standalone suite of degree programs, FNTI has signed MOU's with other Indigenous Institutes, and fostered partnerships with Canadore College, Queen's University, Toronto Metropolitan University, and Wilfrid Laurier University.

FNTI has graduated over 4,100 students with micro-credentials, certificates, diplomas, degrees, and graduate degree credentials. In 2022, the Institute began submissions to the Indigenous Advanced Education and Skills Council for accreditation of their standalone Indigenous degree programs, in accordance with the Ontario Indigenous Institutes Act, 2017. The first program to launch in January 2024 is the much sought-after Bachelor of Indigenous Social Work.



## Historical Barriers to Post-Secondary Education

Indigenous people in Canada have faced systemic discrimination and significant barriers that have resulted in limited access to post-secondary education. These barriers have had profound effects on educational attainment and opportunities available to Indigenous communities across the country.

Indigenous peoples in Canada have endured a long history of colonization, cultural assimilation, and forced residential institutionalization for children, causing negative impacts on community relationships with formal education. The 1876 Indian Act imposed restrictive policies to limit movement and assimilate Indigenous populations. The educational system was a primary means of suppressing Indigenous language and culture and assimilating Indigenous People. Indigenous children were forcibly removed from their families and communities and confined in residential schools, where they were prohibited from practicing their languages, cultures, and traditions. They were subject to abuse with impacts lasting generations. The education provided was substandard, children were forced to perform manual labour, leading to limited opportunities for further education and employment.

These historical policies and practices have had intergenerational impacts, perpetuating cycles of poverty and marginalization within Indigenous communities. Today, Indigenous communities continue to face socio-economic challenges as a result of colonization, including inadequate infrastructure, limited access to quality education, often with no access to high school education in their own communities.

Intergenerational trauma further complicates their ability to pursue post-secondary education.

Financial barriers also contribute to the lack of access to post-secondary education for Indigenous peoples. Socio-economic disparities and lower than average incomes within Indigenous communities make it difficult for individuals to afford the high costs associated with tuition fees, textbooks, and living expenses. Moreover, many Indigenous communities are situated in remote regions of Canada, where even high school is unavailable without children having to relocate to a large population centre. The emotional upheaval and cost of relocating to attend high school or post-secondary education is often prohibitive, perpetuating a cycle of inequality.

Additionally, the lack of culturally appropriate educational programs and supports contributes to the exclusion of Indigenous students from post-secondary education. Most mainstream educational institutions lack programming that is meaningfully reflective of Indigenous languages, cultures, knowledge systems and experiences. This disconnect often leaves Indigenous students feeling alienated and under-supported, resulting in higher dropout rates and lower rates of completion.

FNTI's programming is vital to this country's educational landscape and reconciliation, as we continue to recover and heal from the intergenerational impacts of colonization inflicted on Indigenous peoples.



# Our Approach: Indigenous Learner-Centred Education

FNTI places the student at the centre of strategic planning and decision-making. The focus places Indigenous values, learning and world views into all aspects of operations. FNTI is Indigenous-owned and governed, and primarily employs Indigenous faculty, staff, and administration.

FNTI is committed to creating a culturally-rich learning environment. We use cultural advisors who take part in learning sessions and ceremonies, celebrations, circles, and traditional activities that are all integrated into learning experiences for students.

FNTI meaningfully and deliberately incorporates Indigenous Knowledge and Indigenous ways of knowing by including cultural advisors, Indigenous academics and professionals, alumni, and community representatives on Program Advisory Circles in development and monitoring of programs. Students are immersed in Indigenous learning methodologies and cultural practices in the classroom, placing a priority on Indigenous learning outcomes in the curriculum. Local context-driven curricula and place-based Indigenous Knowledge contribute to high graduation rates.

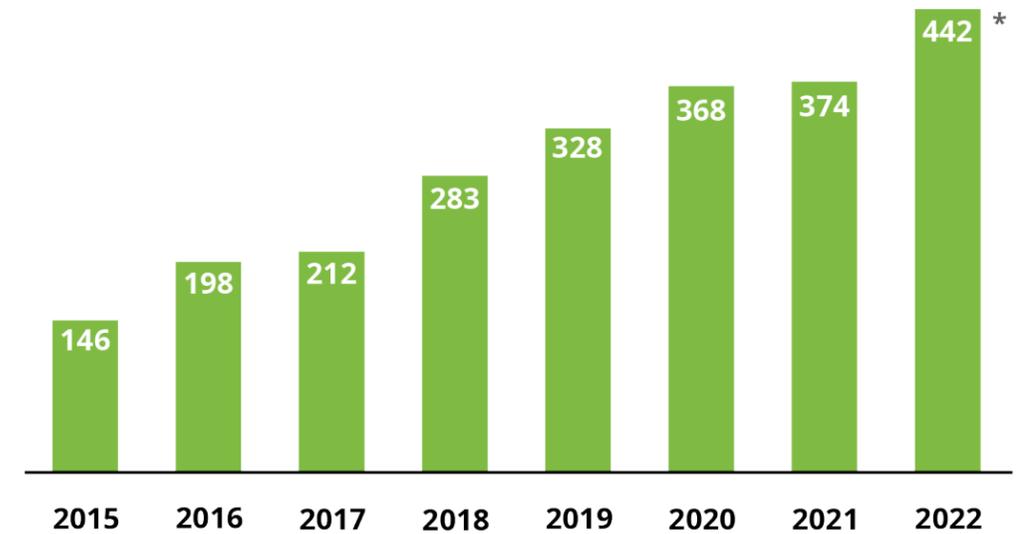
It is fundamental that Indigenous learners see themselves and their realities reflected in the curriculum, classroom, course delivery, and support services. This is precisely the unique lens that FNTI brings to post-secondary education: Indigenous perspectives by Indigenous peoples.



# Our Students

FNTI's unique programming provides an experience that students learn and grow within. Students come from an extremely diverse set of experiences and backgrounds. Currently, our students represent 112 First Nations communities in Ontario.

FNTI learners bring a wide variety of educational and work experience with roughly 70% of FNTI students holding previously earned credentials. Additionally, 37% of our students are 40 years of age and up, and 87% identify as female. Students' unique life and work experience contribute to FNTI's culture and success.



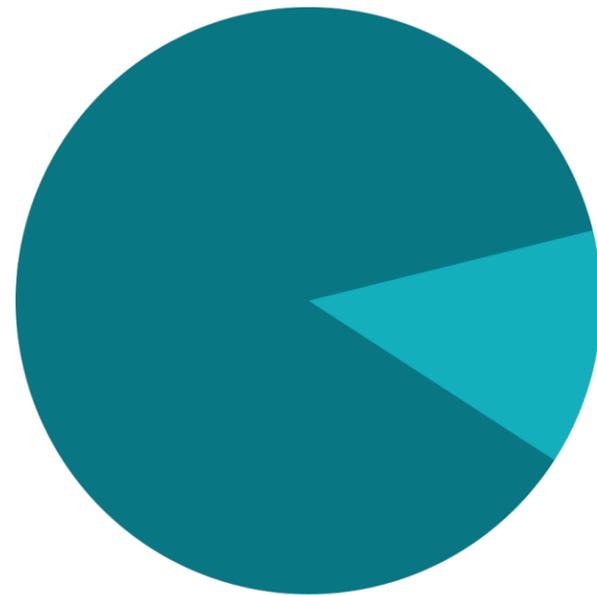
\*as of February 1, 2023

Our enrollment has increased by **203%** since 2015, with growth expected to continue



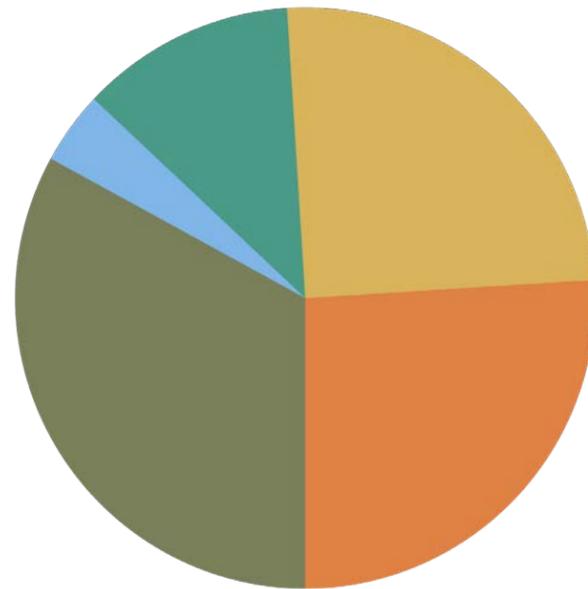
## Student Demographics

Gender Identity



Female - 87%  
Male - 13%

Student Age



50+ - 12%    30s - 33%  
40s - 25%    20s - 26%  
>20 - 3%



### Where Do Our Students Come From?

FNTI students represent Indigenous communities and urban centres from across Ontario and Canada, with a variety of educational and geographical backgrounds. Nations reflected in FNTI's student body include Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, Cree, Ojibwe, Oji-Cree, Inuit, Dene, Mi'Kmaq, Shuswap and many more. The diversity of our students shapes FNTI's unique educational experience.

## What Our Students Have to Say



*"When we were asked to go on the land and connect, it was refreshing, and I think it's what students need to do to feel grounded and have general connection to the course delivery."*

**2022 Social Service Worker Student**

*"I find the teaching approach, the story telling and hands on creativity helped me to absorb the material."*

**2022 Social Service Worker Student**

*"FNTI is like a family. When you attend the school, it is so much more than just showing up and doing work. It creates long lasting friendships and is a space where you learn, share and grow with your classmates."*

**Sarah,  
FNTI Alumna**

*"I have gained a lot of knowledge and experience within this course. I love how the culture was a big part of the learning environment. I felt very special and safe within the classroom which made learning a lot more enjoyable. Forever thankful. Miigwetch."*

**Justin Francis,  
MHA**



## FNTI reaches Indigenous learners from coast to coast to coast:



112

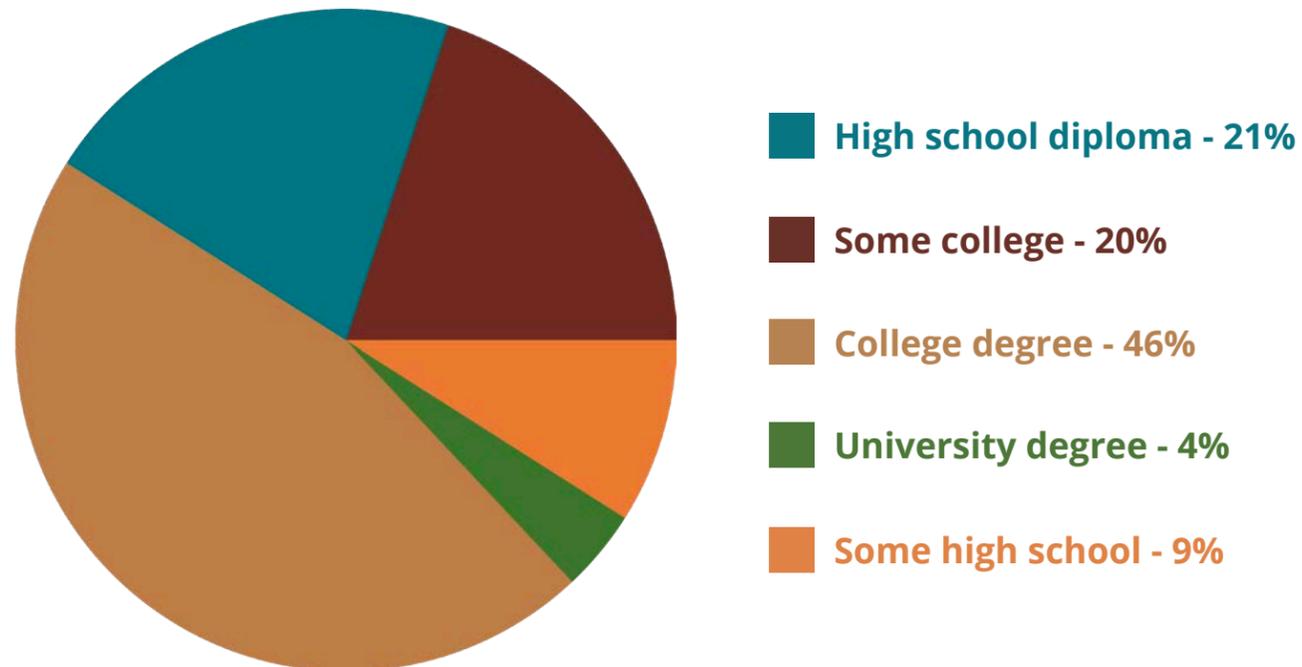
Number of Indigenous communities we serve in Ontario



176

Number of Indigenous communities we serve across Canada

## Highest level of education attained prior to attending FNTI





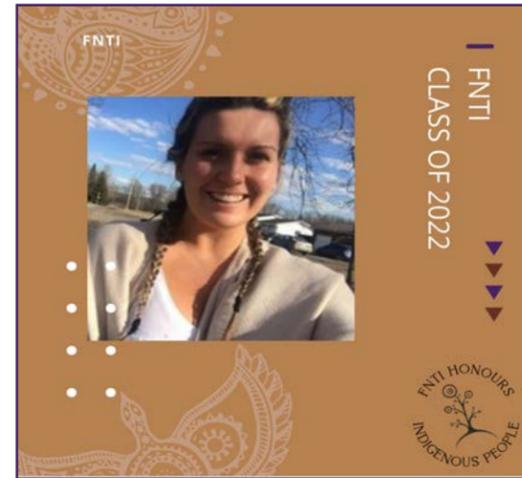
# Meet Our Alumni



## Emily Wood

### Social Service Worker

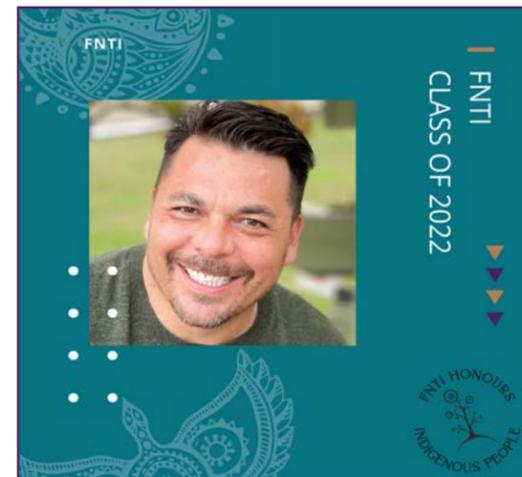
I hope to be able to help families, children and youth in the future. Being a part of an amazing class at FNTI made the experience of doing online school due to the COVID-19 pandemic that much easier. To have the support that FNTI has to offer makes me want to attend again. FNTI is about our culture and teaching us our ways of life, while also receiving an education. I am very grateful for that.



## Guy Brandon Copegog

### Mental Health and Addiction Worker

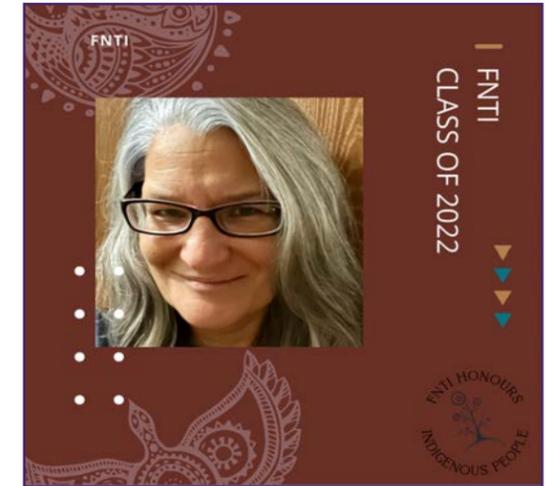
My greatest area of learning during my time at FNTI came personally. I gained confidence with my abilities, and I learned to connect with peers. I learned about support and asking for help. I learned to take pride in my projects and I learned to work well individually and as a team. I was also able to reclaim my love of creativity through drawing and painting and was able to share my art. It was a healing and transformative journey.



## Erika

### Social Service Worker

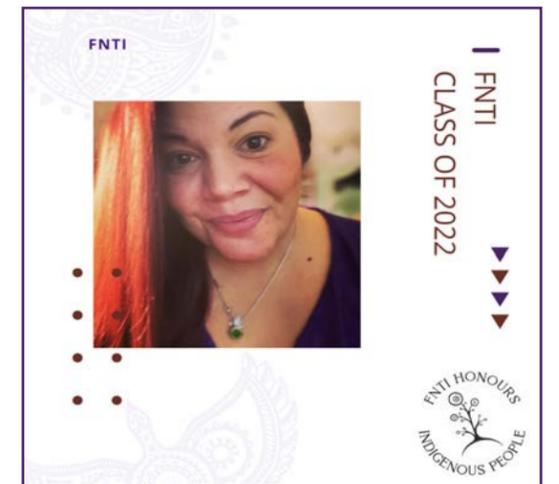
What has had the most profound effect on me during my journey with FNTI has been learning traditional stories and cultural practices, developing critical and relational thinking skills and acknowledging that, to make the world a better place, I must start with myself. I plan to continue my education with FNTI.



## Rebecca Pauze

### Mental Health and Addiction Worker

I want to work with youth, share my teachings and be a good helper. I will be continuing my education this coming fall with FNTI and look forward to all the new knowledge I will gather.



## Our Programs: Standalone Indigenous Education

FNTI provides a diverse offering of program subjects and types, with graduates accessing employment opportunities across the economic spectrum. Currently, virtually every program offered through FNTI is significantly oversubscribed, thus denying many students access to the post-secondary education of their choice, and resulting loss of economic opportunities. FNTI responds to community and national demand for programming, however applications and expressions of interest outnumber the funding of available seats in a given year.

FNTI's ability to deliver comprehensive Indigenous educational programming is restricted by unequal post-secondary funding and inferior infrastructure. The majority of programming continues through a virtual model due to the limitations of campus infrastructure. FNTI has a comprehensive vision and plan for campus development. It is imperative for FNTI to foster an equal, immersive, safe, and nurturing educational environment where learners feel safe and comfortable with peers, and gain the invaluable skills and knowledge that are best learned together in person.

FNTI has developed standalone Indigenous programs that respond to the needs of communities across the country. In total, FNTI has eight standalone degrees and three standalone diplomas under consideration for development, as well as a suite of Indigenous micro-credential bundles. As FNTI develops these brand-new programs and welcomes new students, more support will be needed to ensure students have equal access to the education they deserve.



### Indigenous Social Work

The Bachelor of Indigenous Social Work (BISW) degree program will provide FNTI's high level of academic rigour and Indigenous education, coupled with the traditional practices and cultural knowledge required to work with Indigenous children and families. It is vital to recognize that Ontario and Canada need to graduate hundreds if not thousands of culturally-relevant, Indigenous-trained Bachelor of Indigenous social workers to heal the persistent consequences of colonization and to reshape the future.

FNTI is excited to offer the Bachelor of Indigenous Social Work program beginning in January 2024, with 36 seats in total for the first entering cohort. In partnership with Indigenous Child and Family Wellness agencies, these 36 seats are allocated to align with the principles outlined in Bill C-92, An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families. Over 747 'expressions of interest' have been received for the BISW program. FNTI is eager to develop future generations of Indigenous social workers, but presently the demand greatly exceeds capacity. FNTI has not received provincial or federal funding towards the BISW or any of the standalone degree programs as of this report. With adequate funding, FNTI could train every eligible BISW applicant, equipping the next generation of Indigenous social workers and the critical work they do.



### Indigenous Sustainable Food Systems

This program will build skills needed to foster food sovereignty, community growth, economic development opportunities and increased health outcomes. This unique degree is being designed to equip students with traditional food systems knowledge, learn research and development skills, and bring awareness of ecological sustainability within First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities across Canada. Central to many Indigenous cultures is a deep and harmonious relationship with the land, which the degree program will incorporate. Teachings will revolve around traditional food systems cycles, ensuring that traditions are revitalized. Methods for growing and harvesting will support Indigenous communities to create sustainable approaches, resulting in improved health outcomes, food self-reliance, return to trade systems and economic growth opportunities.

## Indigenous Justice

Students of the Indigenous Justice degree will explore the impact of residential schools, the effects that colonization had on highly developed traditional justice systems, structurally imposed victimization and disproportionate levels of incarceration of Indigenous peoples. By approaching these issues from an Indigenous worldview, this degree program will focus on offense prevention, diversion, recidivism reduction, and traditional holistic restorative justice practices that build foundations of healing for Indigenous people. This program will contribute to reconciliation and fill an overabundance of gaps in the fields of public policy, law, governance, court systems, corrections models and rehabilitation perspectives through inclusion of Indigenous voices around the table.

The Indigenous Justice Program is in high demand as the number of Indigenous Peoples Courts are being placed within traditional court systems and in Indigenous communities across Canada. FNTI has received high applications and expressions of interest for this program. This will lead to additional Indigenous courtworkers, aftercare workers and Gladue writers to support the growing Indigenous court systems.



## Indigenous Midwifery

Indigenous midwives support the health and well-being of Indigenous women, babies, families, and communities. They offer choices for Indigenous Peoples to deliver and receive care on Indigenous traditional lands, with traditional practices and ways of knowing that have served Indigenous people for millennia. The comprehensive standalone Indigenous Midwifery degree is four years in length and brings a traditional Indigenous model of care to Indigenous communities, improving health outcomes and returning the focus of childbirth to the family and community. The importance of graduating midwives in a culturally-informed training environment is paramount to developing health care services that are available directly to all Indigenous women.

**Demand for our programs greatly exceeds the number of places we're able to offer:**

Standalone Degree	Places per Year	Expressions of Interest	Percentage of prospective students we are able to serve
Bachelor of Indigenous Social Work	36	747	4.8%
Bachelor of Indigenous Justice	18	214	8.4%
Bachelor of Indigenous Sustainable Food Systems	18	168	10.7%
Bachelor of Indigenous Midwifery	10	222	4.5%

With adequate infrastructure funding, operational funding and funding formulas equal to mainstream post-secondary institutions, FNTI could build the facilities and campus needed to offer these programs, and expand capacity required to offer Indigenous-led education, research and innovation.



## Micro-credential Programs

Micro-credentials are a new and innovative educational tool supported by the Ontario government. These courses recognize short-duration, competency-based learning opportunities that align with labor market or community needs and can be assessed and recognized by industry for employment or lead to further learning opportunities.

FNTI is continuing to plan for the delivery of micro-credentials in the upcoming year. FNTI has been awarded several funding opportunities from the Ministry of Colleges and Universities to develop and deliver bundles of micro-credentials. These micro-credentials, similar to our standalone programs, are firmly grounded in Indigenous Knowledge and ways of knowing and learning.

Our strategic approach will enable us to refine our micro-credential offerings and enhance FNTI's internal capacity to deliver these micro-credentials as well as future offerings. This is an exciting process, marking the first standalone offerings by FNTI since ratification of Ontario's Indigenous Institute Act, 2017.

These innovative micro-credentials will support programming in many subject areas like education, justice, social work, food systems and many more. These short, scalable education options provide flexibility for learners and their unique situations especially for those employed. The short-term nature of these programs allows learners to quickly upgrade skills and succeed in the workforce.



## The Benefits of Micro-Credentials



### IN-DEMAND

Micro-credentials address specific skills that industries need.



### STACKABLE

Micro-credentials add up. Together, they can count toward a degree.



### FAST

Micro-credentials are short-term programs.



### AFFORDABLE

They cost less because they are hyper-focused.



## Partner Programs

FNTI offers partner programs with universities and colleges alongside our standalone Indigenous programs. Since becoming a fully-accredited educational institute through IAESC in 2019, FNTI has been building capacity to be able to deliver a wide range of comprehensive, Indigenous-led programs, aligning with our inherent right to self-governance, education and knowledge systems.



### Practical Nursing

This program trains students in nursing theory, practical pharmacology, interprofessional health care, anatomy and physiology, and developmental psychology. Indigenous communities are particularly vulnerable to the nursing shortage in Ontario due to the nature of living in rural and remote areas. Training more nurses remains a top priority for FNTI as it does for the provincial government.

*As of September 2023, FNTI can only offer 15 seats for PN, but could train all eligible applicants, currently 70 individuals.*



### Personal Support Worker

This program trains students to offer personal care and home management services to clients in community or institutional settings. Personal support workers provide services to clients with physical, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral challenges. The Financial Accountability Office (FAO) has projected that Ontario will be short 33,000 nurses and personal support workers by 2028. These shortages are particularly troubling in remote Indigenous communities. We aim to train students to connect and support communities who need them most.

*As of September 2023, FNTI is only able to offer 20 places in this iteration of the program, but could have trained all PSW applicants.*



### First Peoples' Aviation Technology

Graduates will hold a commercial license with their rating of choice. The curriculum meets all of Transport Canada's regulations and standards for flight training, and Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities curriculum requirements. Graduates of FNTI's flight program hover at approximately 50% women and all graduates find employment in the aerospace industry. A majority of pilots choose to support their home territories by delivering goods, services and people in and out of some of Canada's most remote communities. FNTI is responding to the acute national need for pilots by training Indigenous people who fill gaps in remote regions. Many opportunities exist to expand technical training at FNTI.



### Early Childhood Education

In this program, students explore Indigenous community realities within the context of the Early Childhood Education field. Indigenous ways of knowing and understanding the world are examined and presented with knowledge and skills relative to Indigenous culture, values, and practices. This program is vital to community members who hope to preserve Indigenous culture and language over generations, and supports the goals outlined in December 2022 by the Minister Of Families, Children and Social Development, in Bill C-35, An Act respecting early learning and child care in Canada. This enables Indigenous communities to exercise full jurisdiction over early childhood education, meeting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and UNDRIP.

*As of September 2023, FNTI has 48 students enrolled, with over 79 applications.*



## Social Service Worker

Over FNTI's history, it has trained large numbers of Indigenous social service workers. Learners explore Indigenous community realities within the context of the human services field. Indigenous ways of knowing and understanding the world are examined and presented with knowledge and skills relative to Indigenous culture, values, and practices. Students learn from an Indigenous perspective through intensive field placement and a culture camp experience that focuses on personal growth, organization/community development, communications, program planning skills, interviewing/counselling, family, and group work.

This program trains and educates the next generation of Indigenous social workers to take a culturally-based approach to care, which, critically, aligns with the goals of Bill C-92, An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families, that transfers full jurisdiction for Indigenous communities over child and family services. This legislation recognizes the fact that there is not a one-size-fits-all approach to Indigenous child and family services, and enables groups and communities to develop policies, programs, and laws that align with their history, culture, and context.

*As of September 2023, the urgent need for social service workers continues, with FNTI receiving over 221 applications for this admission cycle.*



## Mental Health and Addiction Worker

Students in the Mental Health and Addiction Worker program explore Indigenous community realities within the context of the mental health and wellness field. Indigenous ways of knowing and understanding the world are examined and presented with knowledge and skills relative to Indigenous culture, values, and practices. Mental health workers are especially vital in communities due to persistent systemic barriers and generational trauma tied to the legacy of residential schools and colonization. Higher proportions of Indigenous participants reported fair/poor mental health than non-Indigenous participants - 38% compared to 23%. Additionally, in recent studies it has been found that 46% of Indigenous women and 32% of Indigenous men described most of their days as "quite stressful" or "extremely stressful"<sup>1</sup>, demonstrating the urgent need for more mental health and addiction workers.

*As of September 2023, FNTI has 73 students enrolled and over 100 applications received.*



## Bachelor of Arts: Public Administration & Governance

The Public Administration and Governance curriculum is designed for current and future leaders and managers in First Nations communities, government, policy creation, Indigenous agencies, education providers and/or organizations. Students build effective management skills and the ability to support the development of economic and political sovereignty. These programs are vital to ensure Indigenous voices are heard and respected in areas of policy making.



## Professional Master of Public Administration

The Professional Master of Public Administration (PMPA) program is designed for experienced senior administrators and executives in First Nations and other Indigenous agencies. This unique program helps leaders integrate traditional knowledge and philosophies into Indigenous policy and governance and build capacity within Indigenous communities and organizations. These programs are vital to expand understanding of Canadian policy and ensure Indigenous voices are heard and respected in areas of policy making and design.



<sup>1</sup><https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/45-28-0001/2020001/article/00035-eng.htm>



### Master of Social Work

The Indigenous Field of Study Master of Social Work (MSW) program is completely informed by an Indigenous worldview. Its goal is to develop social work practitioners who demonstrate an understanding of, and respect for, the history, traditions, and cultures of Canada’s Indigenous Peoples. This unique program includes the involvement of Indigenous Elders, a traditional circle process, and Indigenous ceremonies.

*As of September 2023, this program offers 18 seats but has received over 82 applications.*

#### FNTI lacks the capacity to deliver programs to all prospective students:

Program	Spaces available in all years of program	Number of applications received as of March 2023	Percentage of prospective students we are able to serve
Practical Nursing	15	70	10.7%
Personal Support Worker	15	20	75%
Early Childhood Education	48	50	48%
Mental Health and Addiction Worker	73	100	36.5%
Social Services Worker	45	300	7.5%
B.A. Public Administration and Governance	56	50	22.4%
Master of Social Work	18	70	12.8%

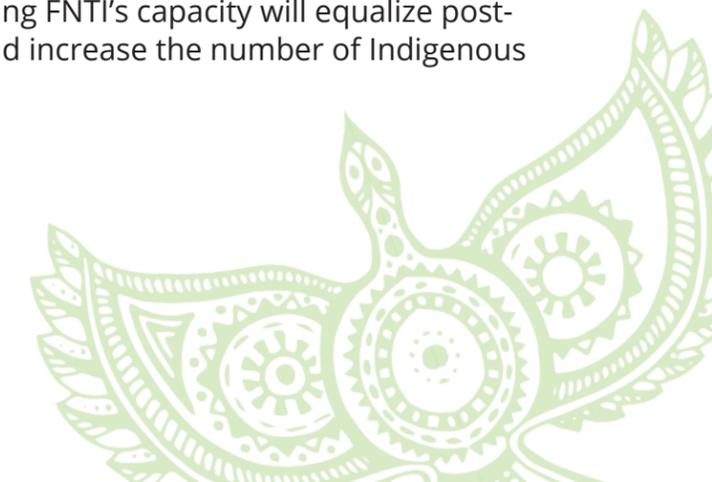
## Our Current Campus

FNTI has reached a point in growth where demand for programs greatly exceeds our current infrastructure to adequately train Indigenous learners. For the 2023-2024 academic year, applications nearly doubled enrollment targets, with some programs seeing an equal number of applications for a single year as there are total seats in all years of the program. Additionally, FNTI has received over 1000 expressions of interest for the upcoming standalone Indigenous programs, which cannot be launched until equity and parity has been reached on funding for students and infrastructure. The constraints FNTI is under to address growth in enrollment and worsening infrastructure needs limit the ability to serve students, impeding the future of Indigenous people and communities.

These limitations mean that eligible students who want to access post-secondary education and FNTI’s unique and transformative programming are simply not able to. This is particularly troubling when coupled with FNTI’s expertise in providing education to traditionally marginalized and underserved communities. Post-secondary education presents an opportunity for students to advance education, upgrade skills, join the workforce, develop economic opportunities and achieve their highest potential.

Culturally-responsive learning is essential for Indigenous communities to thrive. Tradition-based educational environments offer transformative opportunities for individuals who find personal, professional, and economic growth, benefitting both the student and the wider community. Much work still exists to undo the generations of historical abuse and racist neglect imposed by colonial structures.

FNTI has a 93.9% graduation rate, and over 98% of our graduates are employed after graduation. We are well-positioned to deliver unique, culturally-responsive, and invaluable educational programs for Indigenous students, but are currently limited by financial and infrastructural resources. Building FNTI’s capacity will equalize post-secondary education for Indigenous learners and increase the number of Indigenous professionals across all sectors of the economy.





## Main Campus Building

Our previous main campus building was a two-storey structure assembled in the early 1980s from modular units purchased second-hand from a local school board. The building was 6,250 sq. ft. per floor, including the main floor and basement level. With increased growth of 203% enrollment since 2015, the building had outlived its lifespan in all aspects and could no longer serve the academic and administrative demands as a result of a growing post-secondary institute.

As a result, FNTI has consolidated all campus activities into the Indigenous Learning Centre, (ILC), an existing learning facility located at the Aviation Campus. While the facility has been recently renovated into classrooms, at 9,000 sq ft., it is not large enough to accommodate all training and administrative requirements. Currently, the majority of FNTI's programs remain accessible in a virtual format, with the exception of health and aviation programming which must be delivered in person, on site. The current ILC is not able to accommodate both these programs.



## Indigenous Learning Centre

Located at the Aviation campus and constructed of steel, this single-story 9,000 sq ft. building was formerly used as a machine shop, maintenance storage facility, and gymnasium. Built in 1990, its use served the demands of the aviation program and technical training. In 2019, in response to a growing need for learner space, FNTI renovated this building to accommodate classrooms, briefing rooms and offices. Today, this building houses all necessary on-campus activities. FNTI seeks a dedicated building with adequate space to support students, staff and programs, to educate the next seven generations of Indigenous learners and leaders.



## Student Residence

FNTI's student residence is housed in interconnected ATCO construction trailers which were manufactured in 2011 and assembled on-site at FNTI in 2018 in urgent response to housing for aviation students. Indigenous students come from communities where construction trailers often form part of the infrastructure landscape and are insufficient as permanent, purpose-built student living. All students attending post-secondary education in Ontario and across Canada should expect an equitable quality of life and level of comfort and safety. This is essential to their academic success,

especially considering that many Indigenous students travel vast distances to attend campus. We envision a campus that is a true learning environment, where basic needs are met and learners can focus on education and personal development. The use of temporary, modular trailers falls short of standard student residential facilities found in other institutions across the country.



## Aviation Hangar

On February 24, 2022, FNTI's historic WW11 aviation hangar, training facilities and its entire contents were completely destroyed in a fire. The fleet of 13 planes, approved maintenance organization (AMO), equipment, dispatch, teaching spaces and offices were lost. The original concrete slab and foundations were deemed unstable due to the fire, and removed.



The aviation hangar was home to the only post-secondary Indigenous aviation training program of its kind in Canada. In less than 20 minutes, crucial training elements of that program were destroyed. FNTI began to immediately strategize a plan for recovery to ensure that training was uninterrupted for over 40 aviation students affected by the fire.

## Teaching Greenhouse

Built in 2019, this 1200 sq. ft. glass and steel frame teaching greenhouse serves FNTI's Indigenous Sustainable Foods Program and is the focus of a Grassland Stewardship Partnership Program between FNTI and the Nature Conservancy of Canada to remove invasive plant species, and protect and propagate rare and endangered Indigenous plant life. Water is sourced from two large 11,300-litre rainwater tanks collected from the roof of the Indigenous Learning Centre.





## Our Campus Vision

FNTI's aviation program has been building for 30 years, creating long-standing relationships and connections in the aviation industry. Partners showed a keen desire to support FNTI's recovery from the fire tragedy and believed in the importance of the program. Support for FNTI also responded to reconciliation commitments while furthering the inclusion of Indigenous pilots in the aerospace industry. KF Aerospace arranged for a temporary hangar structure to safely house aircraft which were leased from Seneca college to continue training onsite at FNTI. FNTI's aviation program has continued operations, with immediate plans to build a new hangar. FNTI has a funding gap to rebuild the hangar, and additional support is required to provide a training facility for students.



### Proposed: Net Zero Academic and Administration Building

FNTI has developed a comprehensive, passive, net-zero shovel-ready plan for a new campus building that is necessary to deliver innovative, and unique programs that will support and educate Indigenous learners for generations to come. This \$49,700,000 infrastructure project is a state-of-the-art education facility that will allow FNTI to triple student enrollment over the next 5-10 years. Any new Infrastructure program must be informed by key sustainability features, The following are FNTI's sustainable key features:

- wellness for people, the building, and the planet;
- building in harmony with the ecosystem;
- reciprocity with nature;
- long-term flexibility and adaptability; and
- endurance and longevity;
- sustainability for people and place.



It is designed to optimize building systems through passive design in heating/cooling/lighting, natural ventilation, as well as capitalizing on optimum use of PV panels as the primary source of power. Rain water will be captured, stored, and treated for potable use, while an indoor green medicine wall will enhance humidification and provide a year-round growing medium for the Indigenous food systems program.

This building will allow FNTI to expand its capacity to serve a broader range of Indigenous educational and community capacity-building roles within the local region, throughout Ontario and across Canada. It will be a critical component to further expanding FNTI's capacity as a leader in Indigenous post-secondary education, providing a campus to support an accredited Indigenous institution with degree-granting abilities. The new facility promises to be an exemplary project, recognized for its excellence in sustainability and resiliency locally, nationally and globally. We are asking for provincial and federal support to build infrastructure that supports Indigenous students in Indigenous post-secondary education.



## New Student Residence

FNTI visualizes a new student residence featuring spaces aligned with current standards of post-secondary education facilities with bedrooms, recreation areas, cooking and dining facilities, and other amenities that support student well-being. This facility will be designed as a highly-sustainable building with state-of-the-art technology, and powered by alternative energy systems. Students need a safe and comfortable place to rest, study, eat, and socialize, fostering an on-campus learning community and supporting student wellness. Students cannot learn if they don't have a safe place to live, and a new residence is a crucial component of our campus vision.

## Meeting Demand: Funding Proposal

FNTI is working to build relationships with both the provincial and federal governments to ensure we reach our campus vision and goals.

To date, the proposed new net-zero building has funding applications currently under consideration for the following programs:

Program	Amount
Infrastructure Canada's Green & Inclusive Community Buildings	<b>\$49.7 million</b>
Indigenous Affairs Ontario Indigenous Community Capital Grants Program	<b>\$7 million</b>

## Airfield Enhancement

FNTI's runways have degraded over time, with the majority of deteriorated runway surface dating to WW11. To bring the aviation training centre up to industry standard and to protect the airfield from trespass and intrusion by wildlife, new runways, fencing, lighting and surveillance for the airfield are required. This will contribute to the safety of FNTI students, staff and the wider community of Tyendinaga.



## Conclusion

FNTI provides unique, culturally-sensitive education for Indigenous learners across Ontario and Canada. Education is the best road to reconciliation and the most effective way to build resilient and passionate individuals and strong communities.

Our community-driven approach, coupled with effective program delivery methods, allows Indigenous learners to maintain connections to family and fulfill responsibilities to community, while they study and prepare for future career options. FNTI offers a variety of unique Indigenous-informed learning options including degrees, diplomas and micro-credentials.

FNTI has graduated generations of Indigenous learners and has been a valuable resource for Indigenous education in Canada. Given FNTI's history of success, strong relationships and levels of trust with Indigenous communities, FNTI is a much-needed resource for education and the pursuit of reconciliation in Ontario and Canada. FNTI is now at a crossroads where demand for programs continually exceeds capacity to educate.

In the current state, FNTI cannot meet the growing demand for programs. While the Indigenous programming and delivery model work well, FNTI now lacks resources both in terms of infrastructure and funding to meet the overwhelming demand for post-secondary programming.

These limitations mean that eligible students who seek to access FNTI's unique educational opportunities will continue to experience waitlists. This is particularly troubling due to the fact that FNTI's mandate is to provide Indigenous post-secondary education, to Indigenous people, that is of the same quality as Canada's mainstream post-secondary systems.

As such, we are asking the federal and provincial governments to support FNTI in our efforts to expand our programming to build stronger and more economically resilient communities.







— Sharing and Learning —

314 Airport Road  
Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory  
Ontario, Canada  
K0K 1X0

Phone: 613 396 2122  
Toll Free: 800 267 0637  
Fax: 613 396 2761

[www.FNTI.net](http://www.FNTI.net)