



# The Way Forward

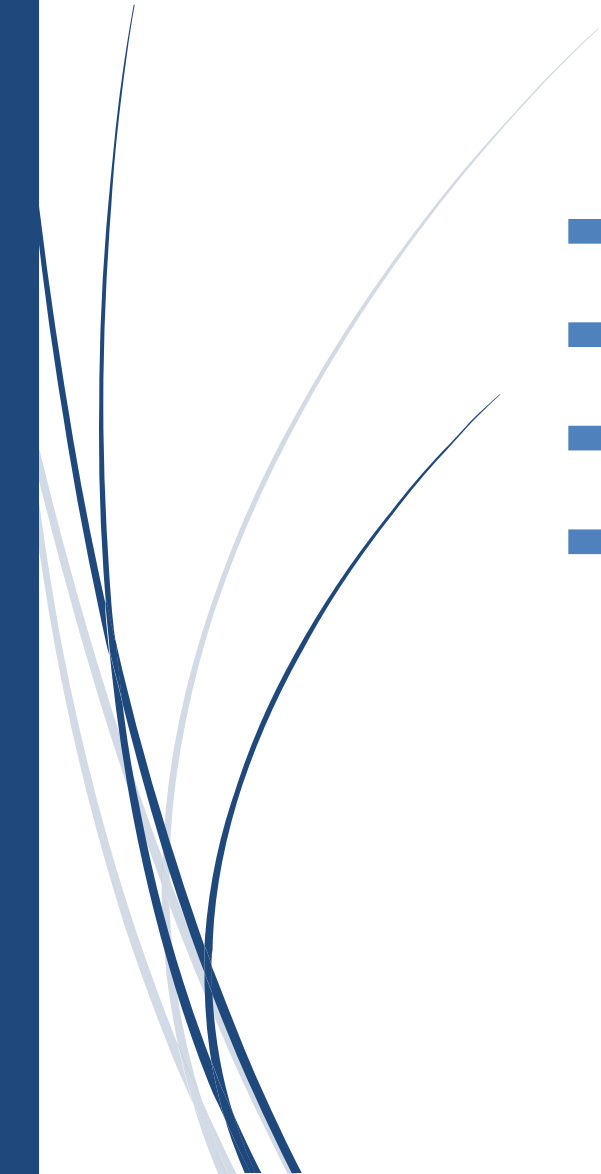
Reference Group on Aboriginal Education (RGAE)

Council of Ontario Universities (COU)

November 1, 2021



# Presentation Overview

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- ▶ RGAE Historical Context
  - ▶ Current Mandate & Membership
  - ▶ Emerging Challenges
  - ▶ Opportunities




# RGAE Historical Context

- ▶ With the goal of improving access and outcomes for Indigenous students at Ontario universities, COU established the Reference Group on Aboriginal Education in 2009.
- ▶ The Reference Group on Aboriginal Education grew out of the recognition that a forum is an effective medium to encourage communication and collaboration on Indigenous education initiatives and support programming for Indigenous students among Ontario Universities.
- ▶ The Reference Group acts as a focal point for dialogue with government and other stakeholders on issues relate to Indigenous education and serves as a place for discussion on issues of common interest across the Ontario university sector.



# Current Mandate

- ▶ RGAE is working to ensure the development and sustainment of Indigenization related-activities across Ontario universities. With the goal of improving access and outcomes for Indigenous students at Ontario universities, the Reference Group will provide a circle for:
    1. Discussion of issues of common interest across the Ontario university sector;
    2. Common policy development; and
    3. Dialogue with and response to government, as well as other stakeholders
  - ▶ The Reference Group provides updates to the Council of Senior Administrative Officers (CSAO), the Ontario Council of Academic Vice-Presidents (OCAV), Ontario Council on Student Affairs (OCSA) and Executive Heads as required.
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# Membership



- ▶ To ensure the group has strong and consistent leadership, the Reference Group has an Executive Committee, which includes representatives from the general membership.
- ▶ Each of the publicly assisted universities of Ontario, and the Royal Military College of Canada, are eligible to nominate a maximum of two representatives for general membership on the Reference Group.
  - ▶ Representatives are senior Indigenous staff, a faculty member, and/or student services staff engaged in direct service delivery to Indigenous students.
  - ▶ Senior, non-Indigenous staff or faculty members engaged in direct service delivery to Indigenous students, may be invited to join the Reference Group to ensure that Indigenous students are also represented in the Reference Group.




# Current Priorities

- ▶ Self-Identification and Ancestry Verification
  - ▶ University life during COVID-19
  - ▶ Truth and Reconciliation (university response and support; September 30)
  - ▶ Recruitment and Admissions
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# Emerging Challenges for PSE students

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- ▶ Student re-engagement, post- remote learning
  - ▶ Mental wellness and health
    - ▶ Anxiety
    - ▶ Racism in the classroom
    - ▶ socializing
  - ▶ Cost of living
  - ▶ Identity
    - ▶ self-identification and ancestry verification
    - ▶ Am I native enough?



# Opportunities

- ▶ Face-to-face connections
  - ▶ Easier to reach out and access services
  - ▶ Students using their voice
  - ▶ Pathways programs and micro-credentials
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