

USask creating pathways to help Indigenous students enter engineering and succeed

SASKATOON – The University of Saskatchewan’s (USask) College of Engineering today officially launched a program designed to help more Indigenous people enter the college and successfully complete their degrees. The new Engineering Access Program is part of the college’s Indigenous Peoples Initiatives Community (IPIC).

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“We want Indigenous young people to know that engineering is a great career option for them,” said Suzanne Kresta, dean of USask’s College of Engineering. “The IPIC Engineering Access Program is part of our commitment to support Indigenous students during every part of their journey toward completing their engineering degrees.”

The program supports prospective and current Indigenous engineering students in three specific ways:

- **Pathways to Engineering** – A year of academic upgrading for students that do not have the required pre-requisites to apply to the College of Engineering. Available through USask or Northlands College in northern Saskatchewan.
- **Summer Bridging Program** – Students spend several days on and around campus, in sessions focusing on academic preparation, navigating campus and transitioning to life in Saskatoon. Summer Bridging is required for students entering the College of Engineering through Pathways to Engineering and is also available to all Indigenous students entering Engineering.
- **Student Success Program** – Social, academic and financial supports are available for Indigenous students in the college. For first-year students, this includes meeting regularly with an academic advisor and attending first-year facilitated study sessions to help ensure their success as engineering students.

The commitment to increase the number of Indigenous students in the College of Engineering is included in its newly updated strategic plan, which identifies Indigenization as one of four strategic pillars. This mirrors the focus on Indigenization in the USask strategic plan.

The IPIC Engineering Access Program, which began offering programming in mid-2018, was created with support from the International Minerals Innovation Institute (IMII).

“IMII is pleased to support the College of Engineering in establishing the IPIC Engineering Access Program as one part of its efforts to help Indigenous students on their path to becoming professional engineers,” said Al Shpyth, IMII executive director. “It is important to the mining industry to help create new opportunities for Indigenous peoples in the minerals sector workforce. A degree in engineering provides these students with the tools and qualifications they need to become outstanding role models for the next generations of Indigenous engineers.”

About the College of Engineering: The College, founded in 1912, offers accredited programs in eight engineering disciplines and is home to 1672 undergrad students and 418 grad students.

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