

JUNE 23, 2025



# KINUK

## NEWSLETTER



### National Indigenous Peoples Day

We would like to acknowledge National Indigenous Peoples Day, observed this past weekend on Saturday, June 21.

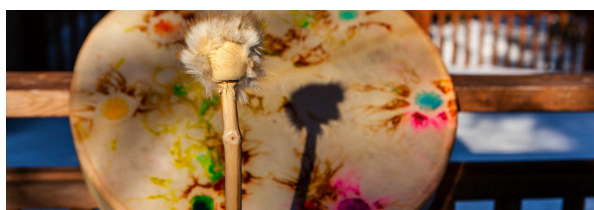
This important day provides an opportunity to recognize and celebrate the history, heritage, and diverse contributions of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples across Turtle Island.

Rooted in the Principles of Peace and Friendship, *Kinuk* affirms our shared responsibilities under the understanding that *We are All Treaty People*.

### Introduction

On behalf of Dalhousie University and the Office of the Vice-Provost, Indigenous Relations, we are proud to share the inaugural edition of our newsletter, ***Kinuk*** – meaning “Us” in Mi’kmaw.

*Kinuk* is an initiative aimed at strengthening communication with L’nu’k and the broader Indigenous community in Mi’kma’ki and the Wabanaki region. This newsletter reflects Dalhousie University’s ongoing commitment to deepening relationships with Indigenous partners by sharing newsworthy events, celebrating student achievements, highlighting research, and promoting on-campus activities involving Indigenous students, staff, and faculty.

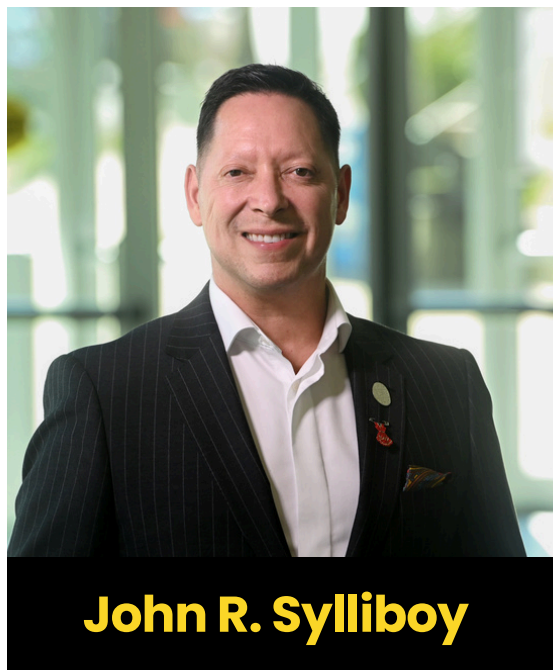


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## Welcoming John R. Sylliboy as Vice-Provost, Indigenous Relations

Dalhousie University is honoured to welcome John R. Sylliboy, a proud L'nu from the Millbrook Mi'kmaw Community, as its first Vice-Provost, Indigenous Relations (VPIR). This appointment marks a significant milestone in the university's commitment to reconciliation and Indigenous leadership.

John brings a wealth of experience in advocacy, education, and community engagement.



He is co-founder of the Wabanaki Two-Spirit Alliance and has worked extensively across Mi'kma'ki and internationally to advance Indigenous rights and inclusion. His academic and professional journey reflects a deep dedication to building bridges between communities and institutions.

As VPIR, John R. Sylliboy will be based in the Office of the Provost, but his work will span the entire university. He will collaborate closely with administrative units and Faculties to advance the priorities outlined in Dalhousie's Indigenous Strategy. His focus will include strengthening relationships with Indigenous communities and addressing systemic barriers faced by Indigenous students, faculty, and staff.

"Integrating into Dalhousie is a new opportunity," says John. "I've always worked from our community, being on the outside. In this case, I'm going across the line and bringing these skills into a setting where we already have really solid perspectives around building pathways and restructuring foundations."

"As the VPIR, I am committed to building stronger ties with L'nu'k and Indigenous community in the Wabanaki territory. It would be on the premise of Treaty Relations to explore ways in which that we contribute in developing positive educational impacts through its academic activities, research, community engagement and policy development. One way of enhancing our current partnerships and strengthening our future together is by communication. We offer Kinuk as a way for knowledge-sharing, communication, and reaching out to our Indigenous community on newsworthy activities. The Atlantic Policy of First Nations Chiefs Secretariat's Co-Chairs, Chief Bob Gloade and Chief Shelly Sabattis recommended that Dalhousie University explore ways to link with the Indigenous community, and we are exploring how to do just that with this newsletter platform called Kinuk. Kinuk means 'us' in Mi'kmaw."

Please join us in welcoming John and supporting his work to build stronger, more inclusive pathways for Indigenous communities at Dalhousie and beyond.



### **Student Highlight: New Graduate Suzanne Monique Patles**

Suzanne writes: Graduating from the Schulich School of Law at Dalhousie University and receiving the Donald Marshall Jr. Memorial Award was one of the most humbling and powerful moments of my life. It's hard to put into words what it feels like to stand in the very institution where our people once fought for recognition and to walk across that stage carrying their spirit with me.

However, to be recognized not only as an activist but as a legal professional and honoured with an award in the name of Donald Marshall Jr., a man whose life reshaped the very system that tried to break him, is nothing short of profound.

This journey from the ground to the doors of the Weldon Law Building is a testament to the strength of our ancestors, and to the responsibilities we carry as leaders, as advocates, and as Mi'kmaq. The legal world isn't where our fight ends; it's where our stories, laws, and sovereignty find new ground to stand on.

Wela'liog for believing in me, and for believing that our warriors belong everywhere: even in the law.

## **Indigenous Student Enrollment**

In the 2024-2025 academic year, Dalhousie had 732 Indigenous students, including 267 Mi'kmaq students. 30 graduates this year identified as status Mi'kmaq and 9 as non-status.

## **Millbrook Career Fair**

Dalhousie University representatives from People and Culture and Student Recruitment teams attended the Millbrook Career Fair on June 10 at the Nora Bernard Community Centre. The People and Culture team members were there to share information about working at Dal, the Talent Pathways employment program, and current available jobs at Dalhousie. Student Recruitment was there to talk about programming, bursaries and scholarships, and pathways to university.



## Indigenous Recruitment/Onboarding Resources

The People and Culture Recruitment team is developing comprehensive resources to support hiring managers in recruiting and onboarding Indigenous employees. This resource will provide guidance throughout the hiring process and ensure a smooth transition as new employees begin their careers at Dalhousie.

## Indigenous Stories from Dal News



### New Indigenous Garment

Dalhousie introduced a new item for Indigenous students to wear at graduation. This story features Kristan Belanger, a Mi'kmaw student and three-time Dal grad from Glooscap First Nation, as she talks about what it meant to her to wear the new stole, a red, scarf-like garment covered in symbols:

"Being able to walk across the stage wrapped in the stories, the strength, and the identity of my family and my community really reminded me and hopefully others in the crowd that I didn't walk the path of academia alone," she says. "Frankly, I would have never been able to make it to where I am today without the support of my entire community behind me."

[Read More Here](#)



### Paintings by Alan Syliboy purchased for the Law School & Dalhousie Art Gallery

Allan Silverman (LLB'64) purchased eight Alan Syliboy paintings from the estate of Marcia Hennessy and donated them to Dalhousie. These paintings were included on loan in the recent exhibition of Syliboy's work at the Dalhousie Art Gallery, and because of the purchase and donation they now get to stay and are hanging in the Schulich School of Law. Alan Syliboy says, "It's exciting that we get to keep some of the work here, but it's also like Marcia's here. It was a unique relationship, and it had to be made into something lasting. This is the perfect vehicle for it."

[Read More Here](#)

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## Indigenous Stories from Dal News



### **Dalhousie Master's Student from Wasoqopa'q First Nation Takes on Role at Tajikeimik**

Courtney Pennell, a proud member of Wasoqopa'q First Nation, stepped into her new role with Tajikeimik as Mi'kmaq Indigenous Nurse Education Specialist. Currently completing a Master of Science in Nursing degree, through her new role she supports Indigenous nursing students from recruitment to graduation, helping them navigate everything from academic resources and funding to cultural support and research opportunities.

[Read More Here](#)

## Indigenous Relations at Dalhousie

As we mark National Indigenous Peoples Day, we acknowledge that Dalhousie University operates in the unceded territories of the Mi'kmaw, Wolastoqey, and Peskotomuhkati Peoples. These sovereign nations hold inherent rights as the original peoples of these lands, and we each carry collective obligations under the Peace and Friendship Treaties. Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982 recognizes and affirms Aboriginal and Treaty rights in Canada.

To learn more about Indigenous relations at Dalhousie, visit the Mi'kmaq and Indigenous Relations website:

[Read More Here](#)

Wela'lin

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