

SSU Reconciliation Studies Principles & Values (SSU Certificate Program)

April 18, 2022*

Based on consultations with Indigenous (and non-Indigenous) friends, neighbours, and colleagues, we commit ourselves and this program to the following principles and values:

1. We will base our program on the basic [principles of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission](#) (2015) and as a response to the invitation of the [Calls to Action](#). See details below.
2. We understand “reconciling” as a verb (demonstrated by actions) rather than a noun — as in *Piluwitahasuwawsuwakon*, a Wolastoqey term meaning: “*Allowing your thinking to change so that action will follow in a good way toward truth.*”
3. We see truth-telling about history, and honesty in the present, to be at the heart of this educational journey.
4. We will learn together in a gracious space that allows mistakes to be made and relationships to be repaired.
5. We understand our shared humanity to be fundamental; therefore, we will seek a full appreciation and acceptance of the deep giftedness of all peoples while acknowledging our weaknesses.
6. We see the best education as an experiential and relational activity.
7. We believe that the most appropriate approach for this program is to ensure that abstract principles are integrated with concrete application, including our shared relationship with the Lands and Waters that sustain our lives.
8. We will begin with local engagement that is integrated with national and global awareness and sensitivity.
9. We understand that we are all spiritual beings — oriented toward meaning within and beyond our material existence — and there should be opportunities to integrate Indigenous and non-Indigenous spiritualities and worldviews into the educational experience.
10. We are committed to having this program shape and influence the University and curriculum of SSU as a whole so that we equip all of our students to be participants, engaged with integrity in reconciling relationships.

* We hope that this will be improved and updated each semester. Your suggestions are encouraged.

The TRC's Principles of Reconciliation

1

The [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) is the framework for reconciliation at all levels and across all sectors of Canadian society.

2

First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples, as the original peoples of this country and as self-determining peoples, have Treaty, constitutional, and human rights that must be recognized and respected.

3

Reconciliation is a process of healing of relationships that requires public truth sharing, apology, and commemoration that acknowledge and redress past harms.

4

Reconciliation requires constructive action on addressing the ongoing legacies of colonialism that have had destructive impacts on Aboriginal peoples' education, cultures and languages, health, child welfare, the administration of justice, and economic opportunities and prosperity.

5

Reconciliation must create a more equitable and inclusive society by closing the gaps in social, health, and economic outcomes that exist between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians.

6

All Canadians, as Treaty peoples, share responsibility for establishing and maintaining mutually respectful relationships.

7

The perspectives and understandings of Aboriginal Elders and Traditional Knowledge Keepers of the ethics, concepts, and practices of reconciliation are vital to long-term reconciliation.

8

Supporting Aboriginal peoples' cultural revitalization and integrating Indigenous knowledge systems, oral histories, laws, protocols, and connections to the land into the reconciliation process are essential.

9

Reconciliation requires political will, joint leadership, trust-building, accountability, and transparency, as well as a substantial investment of resources.

10

Reconciliation requires sustained public education and dialogue, including youth engagement, about the history and legacy of residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal rights, as well as the historical and contemporary contributions of Aboriginal peoples to Canadian society.

SSU understands our Certificate in Reconciliation Studies program to be a response to the [TRC Calls to Action](#) (2015), most specifically, *as a post-secondary institution with a Christian heritage*, we take note of the following:

- Encouragement for full repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery (#49)
- Education of public servants (and others) “on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.” (#57)
- Education on the need to “respect Indigenous spirituality in its own right, the history and legacy of residential schools and the roles of the church parties in that system, the history and legacy of religious conflict in Aboriginal families and communities, and the responsibility that churches have to mitigate such conflicts and prevent spiritual violence.” (#60)
- Education for business leaders to become familiar with the Calls to Action (#92)

Finally, we see the principles and values of this program to be integrated with SSU’s mission statement:

The Mission of St. Stephen’s University is to prepare people, through academic, personal, and spiritual development, for a life of justice, beauty, and compassion, enabling a humble, creative engagement with their world.