



**Algoma University's Statement on Truth and Reconciliation Commission
of Canada's Calls to Action and *Beyond*...
February 2, 2017**

Algoma University has a special mission, as articulated in the *Algoma University Act* (2008), 'to be a teaching-oriented University' and 'to cultivate cross-cultural learning between Aboriginal communities and other communities, in keeping with the history of Algoma University College and its geographic site', the site of the Shingwauk Indian Residential School from 1874 to 1970. In relocating to the Shingwauk site in 1971, in partnership with the Keewatinung Anishinaabe Institute, Algoma embraced a commitment to working with Anishinaabe and other Canadian communities, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, regionally and nationally, with affinitive ties to the site, to achieve the true realization of Shingwauk's Vision of the Teaching Wigwam.

Longstanding members of our Algoma University community have helped us to understand how the Residential School Survivor community and their dedication to supporting one another has helped us grow as an institution and as a community. Despite many challenges over many years, we have moved forward together and have much to celebrate, including: the establishment of the Shingwauk Project in 1979; the first Shingwauk Reunion in 1981, and the many Reunions and annual Gatherings continued since; the First Nations/Canadian Cross-Cultural Development Policy in 1991; the CSAA/AU Partnership Agreement, and the Covenant with the Shingwauk Education Trust in 2006; the development of Shingwauk Kinoomaage Gamig, and Algoma's Charter of Independence in 2008; and the bequest of the project and research legacy of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation in 2012.

Today, Algoma University's Board of Governors, with the support of its many partners, but notably the Children of Shingwauk Alumni Association and the Shingwauk Education Trust, proclaims its profound support for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 *Calls to Action*...and beyond.

This statement of support has been guided by our Anishinaabe partners. We have

thought carefully about how over the years our Anishinaabe partners have helped the University take shape, about the role and connection our University (in partnership) has had through the TRC process, and about our unique position and responsibility moving forward.

During the Shingwauk Gathering and Conference of 2012, Algoma University was pleased to join in partnership with the Children of Shingwauk Alumni Association and the Shingwauk Education Trust in unveiling two special plaques declaring our shared site as a national memorial to all the children who attended Residential Schools in Canada. Our commitment in 2012, as articulated so eloquently on those plaques, was as follows:

"In keeping with the spirit and intent embodied within the Shingwauk site, the Children of Shingwauk Alumni Association, Shingwauk Education Trust, and Algoma University hereby designate these lands as a National Memorial to all those who attended one or more of the many Residential Schools across Turtle Island. We hold a special place in our hearts for those children who never returned home. May their memories live on."

Over the years, we were privileged to have hosted the Truth and Reconciliation Commission several times. Both Dr. Marie Wilson and Senator Murray Sinclair, leaders of the TRC, appeared as keynote speakers, as well as senior staff and special guests, at Gatherings in 2012, 2014, and 2015. In 2016, Algoma University presented Senator Sinclair with an honorary doctorate. At that ceremony, Senator Sinclair spoke of the important role our University will play moving forward:

"Algoma University is a place we should all be proud to be connected to. It has been one of the first institutions that has reached out to engage with the Survivor community, because it is located in a building that used to be a residential school. It, among all the universities in this country, has a strong connection to that residential school past. But it also has a strong role to play in showing the way to reconciliation to ensure that the Survivors in this community (are) involved in what this institution does ... and if this institution can show the rest of this country, then we will all be proud of it." (Sinclair, May 30, 2016)

Today, Algoma University officially proclaims our support for the *Calls to Action*... and beyond. We pledge to our partners that we will continue to work with you to bring Survivors and those affected intergenerationally to our campus to continue the work of healing and reconciliation through the educational work that you started

initially through the Keewatinung Institute, and formally with us in 1979 with the Shingwauk Project.

We will adhere to our recently approved Strategic Plan, which prominently features the Seven Grandfather teachings of *Nibwaakaawin* (Wisdom), *Zaagi'iidiwin* (Love), *Minaadendamowin* (Respect), *Aakode'ewin* (Bravery), *Gwayakwaadiziwin* (Honesty), *Dabaadendiziwin* (Humility), and *Debwewin* (Truth). We will position Anishinaabe *Inendamowin* (Thought) as one of the key strategic priorities for the institution.

During 2017, a year marking the 150th anniversary of Canadian Confederation, in collaboration with the Children of Shingwauk Alumni Association, we will install a museum exhibition throughout the main floor (third floor) of Shingwauk Hall to commemorate the history of the Shingwauk Indian Residential School and the Survivors. (Call to Action: Museums and Archives.) This will bolster our capacity to provide public education on the history of the Shingwauk site and the larger national Residential Schools and colonial contexts. (Calls to Action: Commemoration.)

Since the signing of the Covenant with the Shingwauk Education Trust in 2006, Algoma University has been working with Shingwauk Kinoomaage Gamig, a sister institution on the Shingwauk site, to further Anishinaabe control of Anishinaabe Education. We offer the first and only full university degree in an Aboriginal language in Canada, the Anishinaabemowin degree. With Shingwauk Kinoomaage Gamig, we are working towards an Anishinaabe Studies degree and other specialized programming around Anishinaabe issues. We pledge to continue to work closely with Shingwauk Kinoomaage Gamig towards the true realization of Chief Shingwauk's "Teaching Wigwam" vision. (Calls to Action: Language and Culture.)

Algoma University will continue to develop programming using advisory committees with significant Anishinaabe membership and including significant Anishinaabe content, such as our Community Economic and Social Development degree and our Bachelor of Social Work. In 1986, a community committee, the Aboriginal Education Committee, started the development on campus of what is today a full range of support services for Anishinaabe students. We will seek continual improvement of these services, including supports for transition into the workplace. As well, we will bolster our capacity to engage in research and education that supports healing and reconciliation. We will build on our significant archival and library collections and we will hire a research chair in Healing and Reconciliation. (Calls to Action: Education.)

We will review our policies and practices through an UNDRIP lens (United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples). (Calls to Action: Settlement Parties

and UNDRIP.)

We will use our influence to support local, regional, and national efforts across different sectors to realize true reconciliation. We have both the grassroots and scholarly expertise and experience to assist many others in their efforts to address the Calls to Action and beyond. (Calls to Action: Education for Reconciliation.)

Through the work of the Shingwauk Residential Schools Centre, we pledge to support all parties interested in honouring the children who never returned home and in supporting their families. Our ongoing efforts to commemorate and memorialize can also inform others' work toward those ends (Calls to Action: Commemoration.)

Most importantly, we pledge to go beyond the Calls to Action and to work with the Children of Shingwauk Alumni Association and Shingwauk Kinoomaage Gamig to define what this will mean for us.

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Our thanks