



INDIGENOUS INNOVATION SUMMIT 2026 SEPTEMBER 22-24



**OFFICE OF INDIGENOUS
INITIATIVES AT MCGILL**



The Indigenous Innovation Summit is designed to showcase Indigenous leadership in innovation, highlight leading practices, and foster a shared understanding of where Indigenous research and innovation are emerging both nationally and internationally. The Summit brings together leaders from Indigenous business, academia, and industry to explore how collaborative approaches are shaping new pathways for economic transformation, employment, and community well-being.

The inaugural Indigenous Innovation Summit was co-hosted with Northern Arizona University in January 2025 at the Gila River Indian Community. This year, we are pleased to have the Desautels Faculty of Management and McGill University as our co-hosts.

The key goals of the 2026 Indigenous Innovation Summit are threefold:

- To showcase and share stories about real-time knowledge, practices, and research collaborations from the academic community, business schools, agriculture and pracademics.
- To co-design and co-develop new collaborative models and practices to accelerate knowledge mobilization, networks, and research collaborations.
- To share the findings of the 2nd Annual Business School Indigenous Engagement Survey and how it can help to advance engagement strategies and networks among academics, business schools, and the Indigenous business community to grow the Indigenous innovation ecosystem in Canada, the USA, Australia, New Zealand, and beyond

All times are in EST	Draft Agenda (06-11-2026)
Date/Time	Description
Tuesday, Sept. 22	Deans and Senior Academic Leaders Forum and Reception
2:00 - 5:00 pm	<p>Pre-Summit Forum for Business School Deans & Senior Academic Leaders: Indigenous Engagement Strategies & New Collaborative Models for Research and Pedagogy</p> <p>Hosted by Dean Yolande Chan of Desautels Faculty of Management, McGill University, along with facilitators Dean Lisa Watson of Schwartz School of Business, St. Francis Xavier University and Dean Keith Willoughby of Edwards School of Business, University of Saskatchewan.</p> <p>This pre-summit workshop brings together deans and senior academic leaders to explore strategic approaches to advancing Indigenous engagement within business schools and post-secondary institutions. It will build upon the IGNITE Academic Leadership Forum hosted online on February 25th, 2026, with more than fifty Deans and Academic Leaders in attendance [link here to view recording].</p> <p>Designed as a focused, peer-driven workshop session, it will provide space to discuss current practices, share insights, and identify opportunities for meaningful, system-level change. Grounded in findings from Luminary’s Indigenous Engagement Survey, the workshop will examine where institutions are making progress on their Indigenous engagement strategy, and where opportunities exist, in areas such as curriculum, research, student engagement, and partnerships with Indigenous communities, entrepreneurs, and Economic Development Corporations (EDCs). Participants will engage in facilitated discussions on how to move from intention to action by reviewing proven strategies that are accountable and aligned with Indigenous priorities.</p> <p>Click to Register</p>
5:00 - 8:00 pm	<p>Registration/Welcome Reception</p> <p>To launch the 2nd Annual Indigenous Innovation Summit, we will host the opening reception on Tuesday night. This event will bring together Indigenous Leaders, academia, and government delegates from across Canada and around the world.</p> <p>Click to Register</p>

Wednesday, Sept. 23	Day 1
8:00 - 9:00 am	Registration/Breakfast
9:00 - 9:45 am	Welcoming, Opening Prayer, Overview of Agenda, Icebreaker Activity Kelly Lendsay, Chief Transformation Officer and Terri Lynn Morrison, Executive Director
9:45 - 10:15 am	Business School Indigenous Engagement Report – Key Findings, Opportunities and Gaps Dr. Tasha Brooks, Senior Research Lead Business School Dean(s) This presentation will share key insights from Luminary’s 2025 and 2026 Business Schools Indigenous Engagement Report, highlighting current practices, emerging strengths, and critical gaps across Canadian business schools in advancing Indigenous engagement, curriculum, and research. Learn from Deans who will share how institutions can leveraging the survey and benchmarking information to advance their engagement strategies, and identify new opportunities to better support Indigenous students, integrate Indigenous knowledge, and strengthen research partnerships with Indigenous communities and businesses.
10:15 - 10:35 am	Networking Break
10:35 - 11:30 am	<i>Igniting Indigenous Innovation – What Are the Sparks?</i> This session explores the key forces driving Indigenous innovation today and where it’s headed next. Bringing together Indigenous leaders and innovators, the conversation will highlight the “sparks” behind meaningful change, including Indigenous knowledge, partnerships, access to capital, and youth leadership. Panelists will also look ahead to emerging opportunities across sectors and discuss how to move from momentum to sustained, system-wide impact. Participants will gain insights into the future of Indigenous-led innovation and the actions needed to strengthen a thriving Indigenous innovation ecosystem.
11:30 - Noon	IGNITE Engagement Exercise
Noon - 1:00 pm	Networking Lunch
1:00 - 2:30 pm	Concurrent Breakout Sessions Academic & Institutional Innovation Showcases
a.	Research Collaborations: Practices, Principles and Partnerships Business Schools & Academic Institutions and Indigenous community partners This session explores how meaningful research collaborations between Indigenous entrepreneurs, Economic Development Corporations (EDCs), communities, and business schools can be built, strengthened, and sustained. Moving beyond traditional academic models, the discussion will highlight community-driven, Indigenous-led approaches that prioritize shared value, trust, and long-term impact.

	<p>Panelists will share practical examples of partnerships where EDCs, communities, and academic institutions are co-developing research that responds directly to Indigenous economic priorities—such as business growth, innovation, workforce development, and community wellbeing. The session will also examine how these collaborations can bridge gaps between research and real-world application, ensuring that knowledge is mobilized into actionable outcomes.</p>
b.	<p>Curriculum & Pedagogy: Promising Practices & Approaches</p> <p>This session explores how business schools are advancing Indigenized curriculum and pedagogy through meaningful collaboration with Indigenous Economic Development Corporations (EDCs), communities, and knowledge holders. Moving beyond awareness, the focus is on embedding Indigenous perspectives, economic priorities, and ways of knowing into business education in ways that are authentic, applied, and community connected.</p> <p>Panelists will highlight promising practices where institutions and Indigenous partners are working with Luminary’s new Knowledge Keepers Lodge to co-develop case studies, curriculum, and training experiences that reflect real-world Indigenous economies. These approaches support students in gaining a deeper understanding of Indigenous business, governance, innovation, and community wellbeing—while also creating direct pathways between the classroom and Indigenous communities.</p>
c.	<p>Partnerships & Relationships: Indigenous business, economic development corporations, and communities</p> <p>This session focuses on the foundation of strong, respectful partnerships between Indigenous businesses, Economic Development Corporations (EDCs), communities, and business schools. It will explore how these relationships can move beyond transactional engagement toward long-term, trust-based collaboration that supports shared economic and innovation goals.</p> <p>Panelists will share insights and examples of how Indigenous organizations and academic institutions are working together to co-create opportunities in research, education, and business development. These partnerships are critical in ensuring that initiatives are grounded in community priorities, while also creating pathways for knowledge exchange, capacity building, and sustainable economic growth.</p>
d.	<p>Mini-Ted Talks (Call for Speakers)</p> <p>Luminary invites expressions of interest from speakers, panellists, facilitators, researchers, Indigenous leaders, practitioners, Economic Development Corporations (EDCs), students, and collaborators to participate in the 2nd Annual Indigenous Innovation Summit.</p>
2:30 - 3:00 pm	Networking Break

3:00 - 4:15 pm	<p>This session introduces the Knowledge Keepers Lodge for Case Study and Curriculum Research and Development</p> <p>The Indigenous Business Case Lodge is founded on the conviction that the problem is not the absence of Indigenous content in existing case repositories. The problem is the absence of an epistemologically adequate methodology for producing and teaching that content. Filling the gap requires a new methodology — one that draws its structure, its standards, and its purpose from Indigenous knowledge systems themselves.</p> <p>The Lodge is not just a repository. It is a new school of thought in management education — one that argues Indigenous ways of knowing are not supplementary to business education but generative of a better version of it. It draws on five Indigenous knowledge and worldviews spanning four countries, structured around twelve interdependent methodological principles we call braided knowledge strands. This methodology is a ‘living and dynamic’ system that allows for Indigenous worldviews, knowledges and teaching to be woven into the framework of the braided knowledge circle. It is truly an inclusive methodology that is Indigenous led.</p>
4:15 - 4:30pm	Wrap Up of Day 1

Thursday, Sept. 24	Day 2
Time/Format	Description
8:00 - 8:30 am	Breakfast/Networking
8:30 - 8:45 am	Welcoming, Overview of Agenda, Introduction of panelists
8:45 - 9:30 am	<p><i>Two-Eyed Seeing & Innovation Fireside Chat with Elder Dr. Albert Marshall</i></p> <p>This fireside chat explores how Two-Eyed Seeing—bringing together Indigenous and Western ways of knowing—can shape new approaches to innovation, research, and economic development. By valuing both perspectives equally, organizations and institutions can create more holistic, inclusive, and sustainable innovation models.</p> <p>Panelists will share how integrating knowledge systems leads to more effective solutions across sectors such as entrepreneurship, research, and community development. The discussion will highlight how Indigenous knowledge—grounded in relationships, land, and long-term thinking—can complement Western frameworks focused on scale, systems, and commercialization.</p>

9:30 - 10:30 am	<p><i>Indigenous Well-being: Global perspectives on innovation, research, and Indigenous well-being concepts.</i></p> <p>Indigenous peoples globally seek self-determination and prosperity rooted in their own cultural values — not simply economic growth measured by GDP. For Indigenous communities, wellbeing is holistic, encompassing land, water, animals, climate, language, family, elders, and future generations. Despite pockets of progress, socio-economic gaps persist, and no comprehensive Indigenous-defined wellbeing index or set of indices yet exists. Frameworks from diverse Indigenous worldviews and practices — including Navajo Hózhó (harmony and balance), Māori whakapapa (interconnectedness across generations), Two-Eyed Seeing (honouring both Indigenous and Western knowledge systems together), the Medicine Wheel, and Inuit IQ principles — offer a rich foundation for developing a new wellbeing index.</p> <p>Globally, more than 22 countries have moved beyond GDP to measure wellbeing more broadly, and New Zealand's integration of Māori values into its Living Standards Framework offers a key model. This session will explore Indigenous wellbeing and possible index concepts that would serve as a compass for policy, investment, and nation-building ensuring that economic innovation and progress reflects Indigenous philosophies, innovation, and ecological responsibility that could be a model for all economies.</p>
10:30 - 11:00 am	<i>Networking Break</i>
11:00 am - Noon	<p><i>Designing and Building Indigenous Innovation Solutions (table discussions)</i></p> <p>To explore new collaborative models and approaches to co-design practical solutions that address real academic and Indigenous economic priorities.</p>
Noon - 1:00 pm	<i>Networking Lunch</i>
1:00 - 2:25 pm	<i>Concurrent Breakout Sessions:</i>
a.	<p><i>Indigenous AI Innovation – How are Indigenous communities leading the way</i></p> <p>This session explores how Indigenous communities are shaping the future of artificial intelligence (AI) through leadership grounded in Indigenous knowledge, values, and priorities. As AI continues to transform industries and economies, Indigenous innovators are advancing approaches that emphasize data sovereignty, ethical use, community benefit, and long-term sustainability.</p> <p>Panelists from Indigenous communities, Economic Development Corporations (EDCs), and technology sectors will share how AI is being applied across areas such as economic development, environmental stewardship, language revitalization, and community services. The discussion will highlight how Indigenous-led initiatives are not only adopting AI, but redefining how it is developed and used.</p>

b.	<p><i>Indigenous Partnerships & Innovation - Highlighting research and innovation</i></p> <p>This session explores how Indigenous communities, Economic Development Corporations (EDCs), and partners are advancing agriculture and agri-food innovation through collaborative research and practice. Grounded in Indigenous knowledge systems and land-based approaches, these partnerships are creating new opportunities for sustainable food systems, economic development, and community wellbeing.</p> <p>Panelists will share examples of how Indigenous-led initiatives and cross-sector collaborations are driving innovation in areas such as regenerative agriculture, food security, agri-business development, and emerging technologies. The discussion will highlight how research partnerships with business schools and institutions can support Indigenous priorities while translating knowledge into practical, scalable solutions.</p>
c.	<p><i>Multi-Disciplinary Research Collaborations – Building an Indigenous Seaweed Industry</i></p> <p>Through the Pacific Seaweed initiative and Luminary’s national network, partners are working together to unlock new opportunities in sustainable aquaculture, product development, and Indigenous-led economic growth.</p> <p>Panelists will explore how integrating expertise across fields—business, science, environmental studies, and Indigenous knowledge—enables more holistic and impactful approaches to innovation. Grounded in Indigenous stewardship and community priorities, these collaborations are supporting the development of new markets, value-added products, and scalable business models within the seaweed industry.</p>
d.	<p><i>Other areas for Community Innovation:</i></p>
2:25 - 2:45 pm	<p><i>Networking Break</i></p>
2:45 - 3:30 pm	<p><i>Panel Discussion – Indigenous Scholars/Indigenous Business Students – A way forward through Indigenous-led research, Indigenous curriculum, and community partnerships</i></p> <p>Indigenous Business School Reps (Evanne Bell, National Advisory Council) his panel brings together Indigenous scholars and business students to explore the future of business education through the lens of Indigenous-led research, Indigenous curriculum, and community-driven partnerships. Centering lived experiences and emerging leadership, the conversation will highlight how students and scholars are shaping more inclusive, relevant, and impactful learning environments.</p> <p>Panelists will share perspectives on navigating business education systems, advancing Indigenous knowledge within academic spaces, and building meaningful connections with Indigenous communities and Economic Development Corporations (EDCs). The discussion will also examine how institutions can better support Indigenous student success while creating opportunities for engagement in research, innovation, and economic development.</p>

<p>3:30 - 4:00 pm</p>	<p><i>Indigenous Innovation: Advancing Canadian and Global approaches to wicked problems.</i></p> <p>Complex challenges such as climate change, economic inequality, food security, health outcomes, reconciliation, and sustainable development require new ways of thinking and new ways of working together. This keynote explores how Indigenous innovation, knowledge systems, and community-driven approaches offer valuable insights for addressing some of the most pressing “wicked problems” facing Canada and the world.</p> <p>Drawing on examples from Indigenous communities, research partnerships, business, and economic development, this session will examine how Indigenous leadership, relational approaches, long-term thinking, and stewardship can inform more effective and sustainable solutions. Participants will gain insight into how Indigenous and Western ways of knowing can work together to strengthen innovation, build resilient communities, and create pathways toward shared prosperity and well-being. The keynote will challenge conventional approaches to innovation and highlight the opportunities that emerge when Indigenous perspectives are recognized as essential contributors to solving local, national, and global challenges.</p>
<p>4:00 – 4:30 pm</p>	<p><i>Your Takeaways/Next Steps</i></p> <p><i>Closing Ceremony/Prayer</i></p>