



Statement by the Métis Nation–Saskatchewan on Fraudulent Claims of Métis Identity

False or insufficient claims to Indigenous ancestry are a serious concern in the arts, academics, and public services where funding, employment, advisory positions, and other opportunities are targeted for Indigenous peoples. These kinds of ameliorative opportunities and programs are an important part of addressing the historical disenfranchisement and silencing of Indigenous peoples and their voices, including the Métis. They are one aspect of needed reconciliatory efforts that acknowledge the collective injustices of colonialism and its legacy that we continue to live with today.

The Métis Nation–Saskatchewan (MN–S) has established a secure and objectively verifiable registry of Métis citizens as well as an objective process for determining who is eligible for citizenship based on an accepted common definition of Métis across Métis Nation governments.

Fostering space for Indigenous identity, culture, values, and language in society requires engaging with the Indigenous governing bodies to verify eligibility of Indigenous identity, as reconciliation is a collective process of repair and amends. Métis Nation–Saskatchewan President Glen McCallum stated, “In Saskatchewan, determining ‘Who is a Métis citizen’ is the sole determination of the Métis Nation–Saskatchewan and no one else.”

Being Indigenous cannot be reduced to a matter of individual choice or self-identification alone. It is about shared culture, heritage, and history. By its very nature, this is a collective experience and should not be left to individuals divorced from the Indigenous Nations to which they claim ancestral ties and shared experience. These situations require respect for Indigenous self-determination and the sovereignty of Indigenous Nations to define our own citizenship through collective decision-making, shared history, and kinship connections. Fraudulent appropriation of Indigenous identity disregards the fundamental principles of self-determination and sovereignty that must lie at the heart of reconciliation for it to be honest and meaningful.

Recognizing the challenges faced by institutions grappling with claims of Indigenous ancestry and the inability of such institutions to address such claims meaningfully, the MN–S Métis Nation General Assembly passed a resolution in November 2019 that:



“The Métis Nation–Saskatchewan:

- 1. Communicate to academic institutions, industry, and governments:
 - a. What our citizenship requires.*
 - b. To ask them to respect processes for verifying citizenship; and*
 - c. To ask them to comply with our vetting process in their process for selecting applicants and candidates; and**
- 2. That recognition of and compliance with our citizenship requirements with respect to people claiming to be Métis be a clause in all future memorandums of understanding signed by the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan.”*

In June 2020, Métis Nation–Saskatchewan asked all post-secondary education institutions in Saskatchewan to adopt our definition of Métis citizenship for the purposes of employment, scholarships and other programs. To date, none have done so; however, through our memorandum of understanding with the University of Saskatchewan, we are working in a positive manner to advance this important matter in a real way.

Métis Nation–Saskatchewan, as the *apihtawikowisan okimawiwini* – the Métis government – of Saskatchewan continues to call on all institutions to work with us and to honour their obligations to engage meaningfully in collective reconciliation efforts. This must include addressing false or misleading claims of Métis ancestry with honesty and respect for the will of our Métis citizens.

