

Agreement to Establish Distinction Based Approaches to Research and Planning

between

MÉTIS NATION-SASKATCHEWAN GOVERNMENT (MN-S)

and

THE UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN (USask) The University of Saskatchewan, a statutory body corporate continued under *The University of Saskatchewan Act, 1995*, SS 1995, c U-6.1 ("USask")

This Agreement between Métis Nation-Saskatchewan (MN-S) and the University of Saskatchewan (USask) (each a "Party" and collectively the "Parties") articulates the commitment of the Parties to establish a Métis Nation – Institute for Research and Governance (MN-IRG).

I.CONTEXT

The MN-S government and USask continue to build on the *Memorandum of Understanding: Advancing Metis Post-Secondary Education* dated November, 19th, 2019 and an *Agreement for Recognizing Métis Nation Citizenship* dated November, 27th, 2021 to create research, programming and educational opportunities for Métis citizens. This Agreement fits within the broader context of the 2019 MOU and ongoing relationship between the MN-S government and USask with an intent to foster cross-cultural understanding and inclusion of the distinction of Métis identity, culture, values and language within research.

Both parties recognize:

- 1) the importance and value of working together in true reconciliation to advance and create impactful research that leads to the development of evidence-based programs and services, delivered by the MN-S government, for Métis citizens;
- 2) the term "research" is diverse, and encompasses research, scholarly and artistic works;
- 3) USask has made an institutional commitment to work with Indigenous governments for the Indigenization of academia and has integrated this commitment into its University Plan 2025; as well as in its agreements it has made with the MN-S government.
- 4) it is timely and appropriate to work from these agreements and to establish a system to oversee and manage research activities in a way that is determined by the MN-S government as furthering the interests and well-being of the Métis citizens in Saskatchewan.

II. PRINCIPLES

The Parties agree that the Métis Nation – Institute for Research and Governance (MN-IRG) will be based upon the following principles. The parties will:

1. respect the jurisdiction of the MN-S government as established by the Constitution of the Métis Nation - Saskatchewan as the representative government of the Métis in Saskatchewan, and protected by section 35, *Constitution Act, 1982*;

2. respect the rights of the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan government in various matters, including the crucial aspect of data sovereignty;
3. acknowledge the central importance of academic freedom within the governance processes and in research, scholarly and artistic works at USask. This acknowledgment should emphasize the reinforcement of MN-S self-governance and self-determination, rather than detracting from our shared goals that recognize the distinctiveness of Indigenous governments and institutions in reconciliation:
 - a. MN-S government has a responsibility to build its capacity to govern the Métis;
 - b. MN-S government has a desire to partner with USask to foster awareness and educate the scholarly community on the importance of Métis identity, culture, values and language, as well as how they inform and shape research, scholarly and artistic efforts;
 - c. USask has a commitment to:
 - i. embrace cross cultural understanding and partnership building with the MN-S government;
 - ii. recognize the complementary expertise that exists at USask and the MN-S government;
 - iii. facilitate the development of research, scholarly and artistic networks that assist the MN-S government in addressing the needs of its citizens;
4. strive to create a respectful and inclusive environment where knowledge is co-created and shared, history is honoured, and the future is shaped together;
5. establish clear and reciprocal expectations between researchers and community;
6. provide collective oversight of the MN-IRG.

III. VISION

The Métis Nation Institute for Research and Governance (MN-IRG) will:

- Build on the relationship between USask and the MN-S government that is grounded in agreements to protect and promote Métis values of trust, respect, feeling, caring, tolerance, understanding, acceptance, and forgiveness;
- Identify high impact community research projects, under guidance and priorities of the MN-S government;
- Ensure that the MN-IRG not only builds on relationships but also actively works towards the preservation and promotion of Métis culture, language, and values through its research and governance activities, as directed by the vision of the MN-S government being a self-sustaining sovereign nation rooted in Métis identity, culture, language and values.
- Establish principles for research that respect Métis identity, culture, values, language, and leadership.
- Develop and employ programming that trains the next generation of scholars (USask) and nurture leaders (MN-S) by co-creating curricula that develops the skills necessary to support the policy goals of the MN-S government;
- Serve as a clearinghouse for potential research, scholarly and artistic works with the capacity to hold and distribute funding (e.g., Mitacs, SHRF, Tri-Agency: Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR); the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC); and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC). Etc.)
- Collaborate closely with the University of Saskatchewan to strengthen and expand the influence and authority of the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan government within the research ecosystem, including local, provincial, federal, and international levels.

- Influence and make recommendations that improve USask's institutional research frameworks and processes.
- Safeguard and improve ethical research practices to reflect the interests of Métis citizens as represented by the MN-S government.

IV. PILLARS OF ACTIVITY

The work of MN-IRG will be focused on two pillars of activity:

Pillar 1: Impact and Innovation

Research developed through the MN-IRG will affirm Métis identity, culture, values and language and use a distinction-based approach to explore issues of critical importance to Métis nation building. Projects will advance impactful, evidence-based research, programing, and education to further Métis policy/governance objectives and citizen needs.

MN-IRG will take the lead in reviewing policy and processes to advocate transformative change at USask. This will be accomplished in respect of section 35 rights holders, as represented by the MN-S government, through responsible research practices.

The Policy Transformation Program will be specifically tailored to enhance the synergy between research initiatives and Métis government policies. This program will equip the MN-S government staff and directors with the necessary tools and insights to understand and evaluate research outcomes effectively. It, by facilitating informed dialogue and collaboration, aims to ensure that these outcomes are strategically aligned with the policy objectives of the MN-S government. This program bridges the gap between academic research and practical policy applications, harmonizing research efforts with the strategic goals, cultural values, and governance principles of MN-S.

The MN-IRG will become the entity through which the MN-S government, and USask will co-develop a Métis data repository in a way that reflects a strong commitment to data sovereignty, ensuring that data related to Métis citizens and their communities is managed and controlled in a manner consistent with the principles and policies of the MN-S government.

Pillar 2: Training

Métis Research Training Program aims to: (a) offer comprehensive training and micro-credentials to scholars; (b) ensure that scholars are adequately prepared to engage with Métis government and conduct Métis-focused research, and; (c) ensure that Métis-focused research represents and addresses the needs of Métis Nation, and is provided through cultural appropriate teachings as determined by the MN-S government.

Métis Governance Training Program will be delivered by USask and the MN-S government, providing the administration and elected officials of MN-S access to co-developed micro-credentials focused on Métis governance and service provision.

The *Métis Internship Program* will provide students and postdoctoral fellows internship opportunities with Métis government. Program participants will develop research and professional skills that support program and service delivery for Métis communities.

V. OVERSIGHT

- A Joint Oversight Committee (JOC) will guide the development of the Métis Nation – Institute for Research and Governance (MN-IRG).
- Membership of the JOC will include:
 - Three representatives from MN-S: Director of Education, Deputy Chief Self-government, Policy and Self-Determination and Research, representation from Legal
 - Three representatives from USask: the Research Chair of Métis Governance and Policy, the Associate Vice President Research (Engagement), and Manager, Executive Initiatives and Projects.
- The JOC will be led by two co-chairs representing MN-S and USask determined by each Party.
- The Research Chair in Métis Governance and Policy will serve as the Director of MN-IRG and will report to the JOC in that capacity.
- USask and MN-S will provide administrative support for the JOC.
- Any changes to the membership of the JOC, will be undertaken in consultation with and agreement from MN-S, ensuring alignment with the shared objectives and principles of the MN-IRG.
- The JOC will report to the Vice-President Research, USask and the CEO of MN-S.
- The JOC will regularly communicate on its activities through the Director of MN-IRG to the MNS-USask MOU Implementation Committee.
- The JOC has the discretion to invite external experts or advisors as needed, to provide specialized knowledge or perspectives that support the goals and activities of the MN-IRG.
- Members of the JOC will work to ensure that the JOC operates with a commitment to putting service to the Métis people ahead of self-interest and honoring the spirit of the Creator and the Métis Nation, reflecting a commitment to service and spiritual connectivity. The JOC will create workplans for each of the two pillars to ensure the successful implementation of the Institute.
- The JOC will work to ensure the institute operates under a model of fiscal responsibility and sustainability.

VI. GENERAL

This Agreement comes into force upon execution as of the date first written above.

The Parties agree that any specific commitment of time, resources and/or funds will be set out in a separate, formal agreement.

The Parties agree that the creation and operation of MN-IRG will respect the direction and oversight of academic and research activities of USask and MN-S and will work in compliance with all relevant policies of USask and MN-S.

Nothing in this Agreement is intended to, or is to be interpreted so as to, affect, amend, create, define, deny, limit, or recognize any rights, duties, or obligations of any of the Parties.

This Agreement may be amended upon the written agreement of the Parties. This Agreement may be terminated by either Party upon 30 days written notice to the other Party.

Signed by MN-S this 25 day of May, 2024

MÉTIS NATION-SASKATCHEWAN GOVERNMENT (MN-S)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Glen McCallum', written over a horizontal line.

Glen McCallum

President

Signed by USask this 25 day of May, 2024

The University of Saskatchewan

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Baljit Singh', written over a horizontal line.

Baljit Singh

Vice-President Research