

## **Acadia Names New Indigenous Student Advisor**

### **Dion Kaszas, Nlaka'pamux artist, teacher, and scholar, begins new role on November 5**

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When Acadia President Dr. Peter Ricketts released Acadia University's response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Report in March 2018, a significant goal of the broad ranging strategy was to strengthen Acadia's support for Indigenous students and deepen its connection to Indigenous communities. The strategy included an explicit call for Acadia to create a full time position focused on Indigenous student support and advising as well as to act as a coordinator for all campus activities aimed at meeting the challenges outlined by the TRC.

Today, Acadia announced that Dion Kaszas has been named Acadia's Coordinator of Indigenous Affairs and Student Advising starting November 5, 2018. Kaszas is a Nlaka'pamux artist, teacher and scholar from British Columbia who has recently graduated with a Master's Degree in Interdisciplinary Graduate Studies, with a specialization in Indigenous Studies, from UBC. He holds a Bachelor of Arts, Indigenous Studies also from UBC and throughout his academic career has earned numerous significant scholarships, fellowships, and awards.

Over the past three years, Kaszas has helped plan and lead the facilitation of the Earthline Tattoo Training Residency at UBC Okanagan, a project to teach Indigenous artists the practice of cultural tattooing. His academic research interests include Indigenous identity and pedagogy, and his work as a research assistant has provide him with opportunities to support archival efforts of artifact holdings and visual and material culture. He has also consulted on a SSHRC documentary film project and acted as research consultant for a television series, Skindigenous, to ensure accuracy and cultural sensitivity.

"Finding the right candidate to lead our Indigenous student support services has been a priority," says Ricketts. "On Treaty Day here in Nova Scotia, I am very pleased to welcome Dion to Acadia and fulfilling one of the most important elements of our Decolonization strategy. Dion was overwhelmingly well-received by students during the search process which is extremely important to me. The goals we have for

meeting the challenges outlined in the TRC report are ambitious, and I am anxious to get going in building more relationships with our neighbouring communities and reaching out to Indigenous students for whom Acadia would be an ideal post-secondary choice.”

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