



UNIVERSITY OF
SASKATCHEWAN

Building Bridges:

Connecting Indigenous and International
Students through Culture

Presenters

Amaranta (Amy) Sokol Como

Student Development Coordinator

Aboriginal Students' Centre

a.sokolcomo@usask.ca

Chantal Hanson

International Education Officer

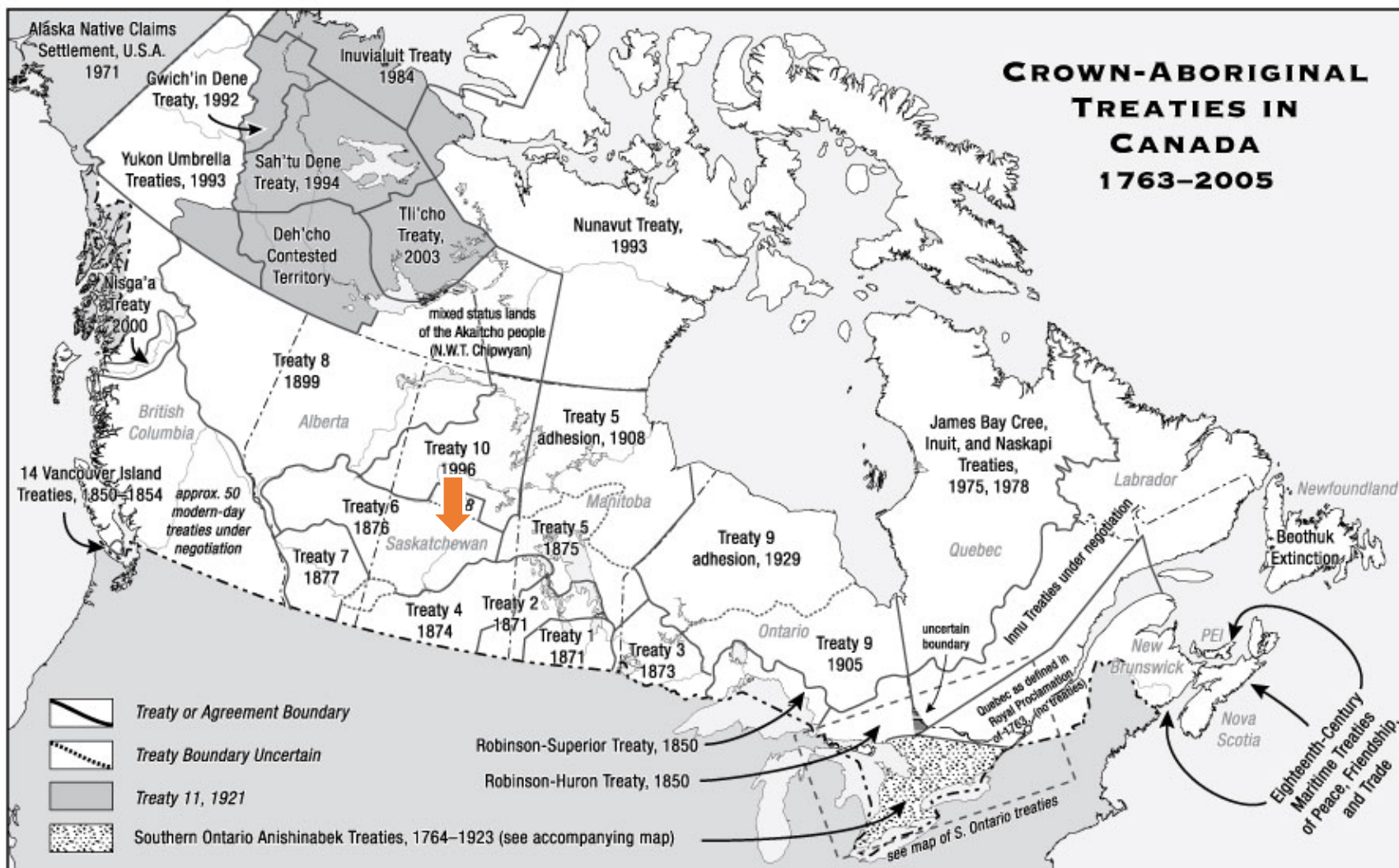
International Student and Study Abroad Centre

chantal.hanson@usask.ca

Outline

1. Saskatchewan
2. University of Saskatchewan
3. Building Bridges
4. Usask Commitments
5. Redevelopment of Building Bridges
6. Discussion







The Saskatchewan Context



- Indigenous history dates back 6000 years
- Extermination of buffalo, reserves, pass system, residential schools
- 1885 Resistance
- History of colonization intensified following WWI
- 16.3% of population identify as Indigenous (2nd highest in Canada)
- 76+ First Nations communities & Métis communities
- Racism still prevalent in society

University of Saskatchewan

Located on Treaty 6 territory and Homeland of the Métis

- 2018-2019:
 - Over 25,000 students
 - 3,320 self-declared Indigenous students, an increase of 7% from 2017-2018
 - 12.9% of student population is Indigenous, one of the highest percentages in Canada
 - 3,403 International students, an increase of 10.9% from 2017-2018





Building Bridges History

- Aboriginal Student Centre (ASC) - International Student and Study Abroad Centre (ISSAC) partnership
- Started in September of 2013
- Provide programming for the campus community with a focus on Indigenous and non-Indigenous (international and domestic) relations and cultural understanding
- Over the past 5 years this partnership has engaged over 1500 students, staff, faculty, and community members





Structure and Application of Program

- Sharing Circles
- Presentations
- Workshops
- Social Events



“It is a safe, comfortable space. There is a sense of honour and respect.”

2018-2019 Building Bridges Program

Fall

- Discover Saskatoon & Wanuskewin Heritage Park
- Land, Governance, and the Politics of Belonging
- Reconciling Worldviews – Indigenous Knowledge & Science
- Adapting to Education where Cultures Collide
- Celebration: Filipino Fiesta
- Family movie night: Coco
- Cultural holiday potluck

Winter

- Woodland Cree & Ways of Knowing
- Racialized Immigrants, Indigenous People & Multiculturalism
- Round Dance information session
- Celebration: Chinese New Year
- Preservation & Revitalization of Languages
- Family Night: Role Modelling, Positive discipline & Parenting
- Documentary: Reel Injun

Student Leadership



- Student-led programming
- Student Coordinators
 - Skills
 - Disposition
 - Personal and professional experience
- Community building is centered around the student assistants
- Transition year



Successes

- Long-lived program
- One of the only places where international and Indigenous students come together
- Engagement (students, faculty, staff)
- Increasing Indigenous student participation
- Creating a safe space
- Co-curricular Record (CCR)





Challenges

- Maintaining a safe space
- Different levels of awareness
- Confronting difficult topics
- Political climate on- and off- campus
- Engagement
- Indigenization has different forms



University Initiatives

- The University of Saskatchewan has committed itself to Indigenization and internationalization
 - University Plan 2025
 - Indigenous response still in development phase
 - International Blueprint
- Building Bridges already corresponds well with these initiatives





Building Bridges 2020

- Incorporate a yearly theme and a strong experiential element to reinforce the content addressed during the regular academic year.
 - Climate change for 2020
- Further aligning with University Plan 2025 and the International Blueprint.
- Acknowledging the connection between Indigenization and internationalization
- Creating an opportunity to facilitate change based on a shared present and future





Discussion

- Why is the relationship between Indigenous, non-Indigenous, and international important on your campus?
- What are some barriers to creating a similar program on campus?
- What supports exist on your campus that you can engage with?
- What might your program address that is unique to your campus or context?



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Thank you!

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