



# Media Release

Wednesday, February 28th, 2024

**For Immediate Release**

## **First Nation Leaders Remain Optimistic Despite Federal Funding Setback for FNUniv Northern Campus**

(Pre-Confederation, Treaty 5, 6, 8 & 10) Prince Albert, Sask. – First Nations and First Nations University of Canada (FNUniv) leaders are confident in the government's support of a new Northern Campus in Prince Albert, despite a recent funding turndown from Ottawa. This project is crucial for increasing access to post-secondary education for students in Saskatchewan's central and northern regions and for stimulating social and economic development within these northern communities.

“The FNUniv has been in Prince Albert for over 20 years, and in all this time, there has been a need for a facility that would allow us to grow in student enrolment, provide even more innovative programming, and enable us to host community gatherings. The Northern Campus is a testament to our enduring commitment to providing an education that is receptive to Indigenous community needs, grounded in Indigenous knowledges, and culturally strong in the heart of the North—where it's most needed,” said Dr. Ottmann.

“I see FNUniv and culturally strong post-secondary education as a solution to many of the social challenges that our communities are experiencing today. I would like to acknowledge the ongoing support from PAGC, FSIN, and the City of Prince Albert,” said Dr. Ottmann.

With a funding request of \$25 million submitted under Infrastructure Canada's Green and Inclusive Community Buildings (GICB) Program, FNUniv demonstrated its commitment by allocating over \$8 million from its internal reserves, targeting \$5 to \$10 million through fundraising efforts, and obtaining financing for the remainder of the estimated \$50 million campus build. The City of Prince Albert has committed five acres of land in a strong demonstration of support for the project.

Grand Chief Brian Hardlotte of the Prince Albert Grand Council (PAGC) expressed confidence in governmental recognition of the project's value, despite the disappointing news on the recent funding bid.

"The leaders of our 12 member nations are unanimously committed, highlighting our determination to complete this project. While this most recent funding bid may not have been successful, we are certain that both levels of government will recognize the immense value and importance of a new FNUniv Northern Campus," said Grand Chief Brian Hardlotte.

The project has gained solid support from the 12 Chiefs of PAGC who passed a resolution endorsing the campus' construction in Prince Albert. This resolution was passed yesterday by the Chiefs of Saskatchewan at FSIN's Winter Session of the Legislative Assembly, held from February 27-28 at the Queensbury Centre in Regina.

"This campus is more than a building; it is an investment in our youth, our culture, and our future. This campus is envisioned as a hub for Indigenous scholarship, reflecting our commitment to education as a means of sustaining our culture and communities," said Chief Bobby Cameron of the Federations of Sovereign Indigenous Nations. "We urge federal decision-makers to act swiftly in funding this critical initiative."

With substantial resources dedicated and backing from key partners, the leadership is hopeful about gaining the necessary government support to move the project forward, making a significant impact on Indigenous education and economic development in the region.

#### **About Prince Albert Grand Council:**

The Prince Albert Grand Council is one of the largest tribal councils in Canada with a membership of over 44,000, representing 12 First Nations and the 28 northern communities in the territories of Treaty 5, 6, 8 & 10. To learn more, visit [pagc.sk.ca](http://pagc.sk.ca).

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