

MEMORANDUM

To: Students, Staff, Faculty, and Librarians, University of Toronto Scarborough
From: Professor Suzanne Sicchia, Acting Vice-Dean Teaching, Learning & Undergraduate Programs
Professor Jessica Fields, Vice-Dean Faculty Affairs, Equity, & Success
Date: 19 September 2023
Re: **National Day for Truth and Reconciliation Events - U of T Scarborough**
Note: For broad distribution

Dear Students, Staff, Faculty, and Librarians:

We are writing to let you know of upcoming events at the University of Toronto Scarborough related to the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, on **30 September**. We encourage U of T Scarborough students, staff, faculty, and librarians to take time on this day to reflect and to consider individual and collective actions in response to the [94 Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission](#), the final report of the University of Toronto's steering committee, [Answering the Call: Wecheehetowin](#), and the recommended actions of the [UTSC Campus Curriculum Review Working Circle](#).

For Indigenous members of our campus community and their families, **30 September** may be a particularly difficult day. We encourage students, staff, faculty, and librarians to take the time they need on this day. For faculty who are teaching, we encourage you to be flexible in your planning, particularly around scheduled assessments, both to support students' and your own accommodation needs, and to create space for reflection and learning.

The story of the orange shirt began when Phyllis (Jack) Webstad was taken to residential school at the age of six. Her orange shirt, bought by her grandmother, was taken from her along with her hair, language, culture, community, and rights. Phyllis's story has grown into the [Orange Shirt Society](#) which supports Indian Residential School Reconciliation; creates awareness of the individual, family and community inter-generational impacts of Indian Residential Schools; and creates awareness of the concept of "Every Child Matters."

Several initiatives will take place at U of T Scarborough and the tri-campus University of Toronto in the days leading up to **30 September** to celebrate Indigenous excellence, support learning, and facilitate shared conversations in the spirit of reconciliation—including the importance of confronting difficult truths as the crucial first step in that process. Thanks to the UTSC Library; the Department of Sociology; Information & Instructional Technology Services Audio Visual, Facilities Management, First Nations House, and the UTSC Bookstore for coordinating these opportunities. They include:

Wednesday, 27 September - U of T Indigenous Book Club (Part 1)
12pm-2pm, Catalyst Centre, EV151-152

Learn about books, podcasts, and other media by Indigenous peoples of Canada. Join the U of T Indigenous Book Club in person for Part 1 to support the University's commitment to Truth and Reconciliation. The event will include a sharing circle where participants will select 3 items to read or listen to for Part 2, taking place on **Thursday, 9 November**. The book club meetings provide a safe and welcoming space for engaging with

Indigenous knowledge and narratives, and you will have the opportunity to learn from Indigenous leaders and experts. By integrating the book club into courses, offering bonus marks, or promoting it to students, faculty will actively contribute to increasing awareness and understanding of Indigenous cultures, histories, and contemporary issues. For more information - [Register online](#).

Wednesday, 27 September - [Orange Shirt Day: A Critical Reading Event](#)

1pm-3pm, First Nations House, St. George Campus (UTSC Students welcome)

Join an in-person, collaborative event between Academic Success and First Nations House, where participants will explore a critical reading process aimed at improving critical reading skills and reading comprehension. Engage with a supportive learning community and gain insight into the importance of Orange Shirt Day by participating in a sharing circle guided by two Indigenous staff members, **Carol Ducharme** and **Elizabeth Jeffrey**. A light lunch will be provided, along with Orange Shirts, courtesy of the Office of Indigenous Initiatives. This event will include smudging, involving the burning of sacred herbs. For more information to attend in this in-person event if you are a UTSC student, contact [Rahul Bhat](#) to be manually registered.

Thursday, 28 September - Orange Shirt Beading Workshop

2:30pm-4:30pm, Catalyst Centre

EV151-152, Environmental Sciences & Chemistry Building (*NEW location)

This hands-on orange shirt beading workshop offers an opportunity for Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples to have healthy conversations about the Indian Residential School system in Canada. All people are welcome, and no previous experience is necessary. Participants will learn about the practice/tradition of beading, while listening to stories of Indigenous peoples as they bead. The workshop is facilitated by Indigenous students from U of T Scarborough. Participants will be provided with all the materials and instruction to create a beaded pin of an orange shirt that they can keep. The workshop will begin with a smudging ceremony. Participants must have use of their hands/fingers as some fine motor skills are required for beading. This workshop is not accessible to some people with visual impairments. For more information - [Register online](#).

Friday, 29 September - Indigenous Garden livestream

8:30am-7pm - [You Tube](#)

Once again, this year the Office of the Vice-Principal Academic & Dean is partnering with the Department of Sociology, Information & Instructional Technology Services (IITS), and the Campus Farm to set up a livestream of the Indigenous Garden to enable reflection for members of the campus community. Faculty teaching on that day are welcome to include it in their classes - [Indigenous Garden livestream](#).

Friday, 29 September - Tri-Campus Event

10:30am-12pm - [Online](#)

Honour the experiences of residential school survivors by joining a University-Wide event to recognize the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation - [Register online](#)

[2023 Orange Shirt Day and National Day for Truth & Reconciliation Commemoration | University of Toronto Alumni \(utoronto.ca\)](#)

Friday, 29 September and Saturday, 30 September - Every Child Matters Flags Lowered

All day, all U of T campuses

The 'Every Child Matters' flag has been raised on all three campuses as part of our university-wide recognition of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. All flags will be lowered to half-mast on 29 and 30 September to acknowledge this important day.

UTSC Library staff and librarians have curated a list of resources to encourage learning and reflection on past events, but also to support action toward our shared responsibility for reconciliations. For more information - [National Day for Truth and Reconciliation](#).

UTSC Bookstore has the [U of T 2023 Orange Shirt Tee](#) available in a range of sizes. This year's shirt features artwork by **MJ Singleton**, the winner of a tri-campus design contest. MJ is an Ojibwe, two-spirit student from Migiši Sahgaigan First Nation who is currently studying at the University of Toronto's Mississauga campus. Their design, titled **noojimo'iwē**, emphasizes the importance of healing the intergenerational trauma of residential schooling by supporting and loving those around you. \$10 from the sale of each shirt will be directed to the [Orange Shirt Society](#). For departmental orders, contact [Tammy Little](#), UTSC Bookstore Manager.

Please watch for further initiatives and opportunities for engagement in the coming days.

Warm wishes,



Suzanne Sicchia

Acting Vice-Dean Teaching, Learning &
Undergraduate Programs



Jessica Fields

Vice-Dean Faculty Affairs, Equity, & Success