

# NAIT Aboriginal Student Handbook



A LEADING POLYTECHNIC  
COMMITTED TO YOUR SUCCESS





At NAIT, we honour and acknowledge that the land on which we learn, work and live is Treaty Six territory.

We seek to learn from history and the lessons that have come before us, and to draw on the wisdom of the First Peoples in Canada. Only through learning can we move forward in truth and reconciliation, and to a better future together.

[nait.ca/landacknowledgement](https://nait.ca/landacknowledgement)



## Derek Thunder

Tansi, and welcome from the Nîsôhkamâtotân Centre!

I'm proud to share this NAIT Aboriginal Student Handbook to help you along with your academic journey. Within the handbook, you will find useful information on how to access the support to succeed at NAIT.

At the Nîsôhkamâtotân Centre, you'll find a welcoming community that celebrates First Nations, Métis and Inuit culture and experiences. We welcome you to visit us to access resources, attend events and more.

Within the Nîsôhkamâtotân community, there are so many stories of perseverance and success. We're proud to celebrate Aboriginal students and share their educational journeys with you. Learn more about our programs and the opportunities available to help you find your path to success.

Thank you for including NAIT in your post-secondary journey. I encourage you to become part of the NAIT community and get involved with the Nîsôhkamâtotân Centre.

### –Derek Thunder

Manager, Nîsôhkamâtotân Programs and Services,  
NAIT Nîsôhkamâtotân Centre



## Laura Jo Gunter

I am honoured to contribute to this handbook, which offers valuable resources for the success of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students alike. The information and guidance within these pages are essential, and I extend my gratitude to everyone who has provided their knowledge and support.

The NAIT community draws strength from Aboriginal ways of knowing and understanding. Our unwavering commitment lies in nurturing an environment and culture that embodies the values of equity, diversity and inclusion. We embrace the unique perspectives that First Nations, Métis and Inuit students bring to the institution and remain focused on supporting their education journeys and future careers.

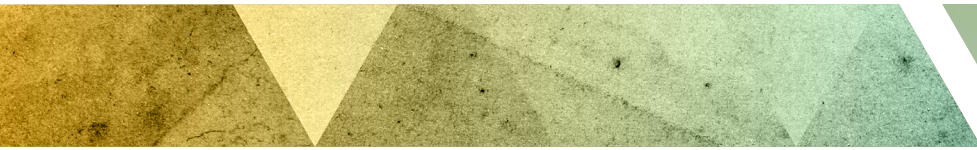
The meaning of the Cree word Nîsôhkamâtotân — let's help each other — exemplifies the collaborative spirit of the NAIT community. We are here to learn from one another and provide mutual support.

I also wish to recognize the Nîsôhkamâtotân Centre for championing the success of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students, both within and beyond the classroom. These resources hold great value in making sure that everyone feels safe, welcomed and included in the NAIT community.

Sincerely,

### –Laura Jo Gunter

President and CEO, NAIT





## NAIT is dedicated to supporting Aboriginal student success.

Nîsôhkamâtôtân [Nee-so-ka-ma-to-tan] is a Cree word meaning “let’s help each other.”

The Nîsôhkamâtôtân Centre on Main Campus is a community space for Aboriginal students.

We welcome all students to network, study, share their post-secondary learning experiences, and be part of the community. It is a place where culture and tradition are welcome, encouraged and shared.

Our purpose is to strengthen NAIT by creating an inclusive community, honouring the traditional ways of knowing and teaching, and drawing strength from Aboriginal communities.

We encourage you to drop by and experience the warm, welcoming environment the Centre has to offer.

Learn more at [nait.ca/nisohkamatotan](https://nait.ca/nisohkamatotan)

### NAIT student success and advice



#### Drea Halfe

Culinary Arts  
Saddle Lake Cree Nation, AB

#### Favourite quote

*“Trust the timing of your life.”*

#### Advice to future students

Follow your passion. Find what makes you happy and make that your career. Do it for you and you will succeed.

#### Future goals

My future goals would be to own a food truck and a bakery. I would also love to travel with my family and teach my 2 sons how to cook.



## Meet the team

At the Nîsôhkamâtotân Centre, we are dedicated to helping students succeed in everything they do. Our team combines many years of experience working with Aboriginal students. We can't wait to meet you and answer any questions you may have!

Get to know us at  
[nait.ca/meet-the-team](http://nait.ca/meet-the-team)

Top Row Left to Right

**Derek Thunder**

Manager, Nîsôhkamâtotân Centre  
Programs and Services

**Camille Louis**

Aboriginal Liaison Specialist

**Sharyn Cree**

Nîsôhkamâtotân Centre Support

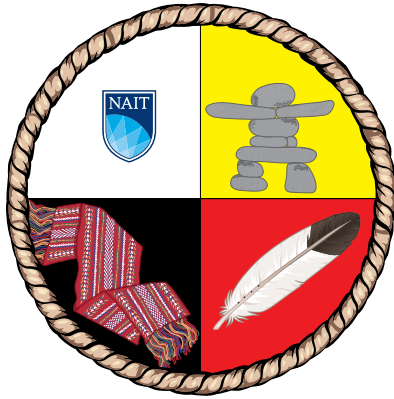
Bottom Row Left to Right

**Verna Orr**

Elder

**Lonny Potts**

Cultural Advisor



## Connecting the Four Directions

Through our Connecting the Four Directions strategy, we are focused on creating inclusiveness and belonging for Aboriginal students by representing Aboriginal culture and celebrating student success.

We seek to create a bridge between the traditional teachings of the Aboriginal communities and the current ways we teach in post-secondary education. The Seven Grandfather Teachings are at the heart of the strategy and acknowledge world views that have been passed down through generations.

Learn more at  
[nait.ca/fourdirections](http://nait.ca/fourdirections)

### NAIT student success and advice



#### Brett Landry

Business Administration –  
Human Resource Management  
Okanese First Nation Treaty 4, SK

#### Favourite quote

*“Stay gold, Ponyboy” – The Outsiders*

#### Advice to future students

I did my best when I attended EVERY SINGLE CLASS. Try to stay focused on self-care and doing healthy things to improve your outcomes in school. Establish a system of supports to help you through the hard times.

#### Future goals

Start my own employment equity programming to help increase Indigenous peoples in the workforce.

## The Seven Grandfather Teachings

**Wisdom:** To cherish knowledge is to know wisdom.

**Love:** To know love is to know peace.

**Respect:** To honour all of creation is to have respect.

**Bravery:** To face life with courage is to know bravery.

**Honesty:** To be honest in action and character—to walk through life with integrity is to know honesty.

**Humility:** To accept yourself as a sacred part of creation is to know humility.

**Truth:** To know these things is to know truth.



## Join our inclusive community

Being part of a safe, welcoming and inclusive community is an important part of the student journey.

We have activities and events all year round to welcome and encourage culture and tradition.

Our events include:

- Stew & Bannock
- P̓iskwet̓n (Let's Talk) Sharing Circle Series
- Men's Pipe Ceremonies and Women's Circles
- National Day for Truth and Reconciliation
- Honouring your Success Year-End Celebration
- First Nation, Métis & Inuit (FNMI) Student Career Fair

Learn more at [nait.ca/centre-events](https://nait.ca/centre-events)





Students can also access several services at the Nîsôhkamâtôtân Centre, including:

- Aboriginal Liaison Specialists for prospective and current students
- Elder Services and Cultural Advising
- Computers and courtesy phone
- Microwave and fridge
- Scholarship and bursary information
- Student development opportunities

## NAIT student success and advice



### Tiffany Marten

Chemical Technology  
Mikisew Cree First Nation

#### Favourite quote

*"We've come for everything we were told we couldn't have. We have arrived."*

– Danielle H. Morrison

#### Advice to future students

If you ever struggled focusing during class, following oral instructions, you keep asking for someone to repeat themselves, or if you can't stop procrastinating, get assessed for a learning disability and apply for accommodations for your studies. It helps tremendously and NAIT has amazing resources for students.

#### Future goals

I plan on getting into Environmental Chemistry and I want to help my community with the skills that I've learned as a Chemical Technician. I also want to inspire Indigenous youth to become interested in science, technology, engineering and math programs because I think we need more representation in the Sciences.

## NAIT student success and advice



### Robert Bergeron

Automotive Service Technician '22,  
Heavy Equipment Technician '17  
Driftpile Cree Nation, AB

#### Favourite quote

*"Success is not final, failure is not fatal, the courage to continue is where it counts." – Winston Churchill*

#### Advice to future students

Never hesitate to ask for help. There are great people and resources at the Nisôhkamâtôtân Centre.

#### Future goals

My future goals are to expand my business and work with Driftpile Cree Nation to be a mentor to young people within my nation who might be interested in trades.



## We're here to support you

At NAIT, we offer a variety of support services to help you reach your potential. We're here to help you succeed both inside and outside the classroom. Access employer connections, stay on top of your physical and mental well-being, have fun, meet new people and explore your future.

#### Academic supports

Get the learning tools and resources you need including tutoring, learning strategy sessions, assistive technology, exam support, Learning Services, study groups and more. [nait.ca/academicsupport](http://nait.ca/academicsupport)

#### Financial aid

With student aid, awards, scholarships and bursaries, loans, employment opportunities and more options available, there are many ways to help pay for your education. [nait.ca/financialaid](http://nait.ca/financialaid)

#### Health and well-being

Your health and well-being are top priorities at NAIT. We have counselling services, peer support, recreation programs, a fitness facility and more. [nait.ca/well-being](http://nait.ca/well-being)

#### On campus

Whether you want to get a bite at one of the many *eat AT NAIT* locations, find housing, discover student parking options or pick up your OneCard, learn what's available on campus. [nait.ca/onclick](http://nait.ca/onclick)

Visit [nait.ca/aboriginal-students](http://nait.ca/aboriginal-students) for more information about supports, resources and opportunities for Aboriginal students



## Your pathway to NAIT

We offer admissions pathways for Aboriginal applicants to help you pursue your education goals and aspirations at NAIT. Review your program page on [nait.ca](https://nait.ca) for details on competitive requirements or the interview process to apply.

### **Competitive entrance programs pathway**

Aboriginal applicants who meet the minimum entrance requirements for a competitive program but have not met the program's competitive entrance requirements will be considered for direct admission according to the date your application was completed.

### **Admissions interview programs pathway**

For programs with an interview requirement, Aboriginal applicants who meet the minimum entrance requirements do not need to participate in a program interview or meet the competitive academic average required for high school courses. Instead, applicants will be invited by the program to share their personal story with a small NAIT committee, which includes an Aboriginal community member from NAIT. Your story can be provided as a written or oral submission as Aboriginal people have always been storytellers through oral traditions.

### **Tuition deposit**

Aboriginal applicants are not required to provide a tuition deposit. Instead, after receiving an offer of admission, a seat in your program will be secured for you.

Visit [nait.ca/aboriginal-applicants](https://nait.ca/aboriginal-applicants) for more information

## **Nísôhkamâtôtân Centre**

Office E121 | NAIT Main Campus

11762 - 106 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T5G 2R1

Hours: 8:00 AM - 4:30 PM | Monday - Friday\*

\*Fridays closed for lunch 12:00 PM - 1:15 PM

Phone: 780.491.3917 | Email: [aboriginalcentre@nait.ca](mailto:aboriginalcentre@nait.ca)

[nait.ca/nisohkamatotan](https://nait.ca/nisohkamatotan)

## **Questions about programs, pathways and supports?**

Sharyn Cree, Nísôhkamâtôtân Centre Support,  
[sharync@nait.ca](mailto:sharync@nait.ca)

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