

SaskCulture Inc. Backgrounder on the Proposed Constitutional Changes to its Principles and Values

April 25, 2019

An organization's principles and values identify what the organization stands for. They are foundational and key to its success. Every aspect of an organization's outputs are based upon its principles and values. Volunteers and staff, as well as membership, have a responsibility to understand those values and principles and to demonstrate them in their day-to-day actions and interactions on behalf of the organization.

Values are fundamental beliefs. The strengths of an organization are built on these core values. They are the essence of the organization.

Principles are guides to behaviours. They guide how an organization lives its values. In everything an organization does, its principles are applied, with balance.

The SaskCulture Board of Directors would like to provide the membership with some background on the changes being proposed to the Principles and Values within its Constitution. The proposed changes are timely because SaskCulture has spent the last year reflecting on its first 20 years and is now looking forward to the next 20 years. The organization has been significantly impacted by the June 2, 2015 release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Report, its 10 Guiding Principles and 94 Calls to Action and has been working diligently to respond to the report. As well, SaskCulture is being responsive to the changing demographics of the province which includes a significant increase to the number of newcomers over the last 10 years. All of these efforts are components within SaskCulture's own Diversity and Inclusiveness Strategy.

When the report was first released, SaskCulture took time to talk internally about the report, in order to better understand its impact on the organization and the communities it serves. We reflected on the actions that have been taken in the past few years that connect to the Calls, as well as to consider future actions. It was evident that the TRC Report and the subsequent Calls to Action spoke to many areas of the SaskCulture's work. Of the 94 Calls to Action outlined by the Commission, a significant number of them land squarely on culture. Therefore, as SaskCulture continues work on its own Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, it acknowledges that the report challenges SaskCulture, the cultural organizations that it works with and Saskatchewan residents to not only be aware of the Calls to Action, but to also consider how we are all implicated in the cultural sector to be responsive and to be part of the reconciliation process. As the commission noted, "this is not an Aboriginal problem this is a Canadian problem."

Internally SaskCulture has made gains in securing Indigenous peoples in leadership positions at all levels of the organization: on our board, within our staff and volunteer assessors. Nearly half of our volunteer

program fund assessors are Indigenous peoples. 40% of the current board are Indigenous. Our project funding has also closed the gap and roughly 41% of SaskCulture's program funding is allocated to the cultural priorities identified by Indigenous peoples in communities throughout the province. Externally, we have begun to impress the importance of diversity and inclusion with all groups that we support for funding and have begun a process of assisting cultural organizations with their own inclusion and diversity planning. We have seen a steady uptake from First Nations Bands, Tribal Councils and Indigenous Cultural Agencies who are accessing funds to address the action items of the TRC in their own communities. We have seen an uptake of cross-cultural programming designed to build cultural awareness for everyone but there are still lots more to do to support the reconciliation process.

The release of the TRC Report has provided us with a window of opportunity to share in the responsibility of establishing and maintaining mutually respectful relationships as Treaty people. SaskCulture strongly believes that, we need to work together to actively engage in that process in Saskatchewan to ensure our children, and those children yet to come, will have a truly diverse and inclusive cultural community that we have helped prepare for them. True reconciliation cannot be an isolated short-term special initiative, a grant program or a single item on a three-year plan. What is being called for is systemic change to assist in repairing the damaged relationship between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous peoples in Canada that has taken place over the course of generations. The Calls to Action are an appeal to mobilize all levels of government, organizations and individuals to make concrete changes in society that will have lasting impact for generations to come. For SaskCulture, that means enshrining the Principles of Reconciliation within SaskCulture's foundational document, its Constitution, in the **Principles and Values** section to assert it as being central to our identity as an organization as well as a guide for the work to come.

We are encouraged that we are not alone in this effort. In the fall of 2018, SaskCulture surveyed its member organizations on numerous themes and topics to help it identify needs and priorities of its members. One of the survey questions was regarding what priorities, or top issues, do cultural organizations identify as areas that need support. Several categories were presented to members for them to prioritize. In [Chart A](#), the blue column signifies the priorities identified in the 2018 survey. The orange column shows the priorities from a similar survey in 2014. Sustainability and TRC were not categories in the 2014 survey but were included as "new" areas to obtain feedback from community in 2018. The top 5 issues identified were:

1. Sustainability
2. Access to Funding
3. First Nation and Métis Participation
4. Truth and Reconciliation
5. Newcomer participation

SaskCulture believes that these top issues relate to one another and are not separate silos of priority. These priorities are also additional evidence that SaskCulture is on the right path in the effort to integrate these top issues as foundational.

CHART A

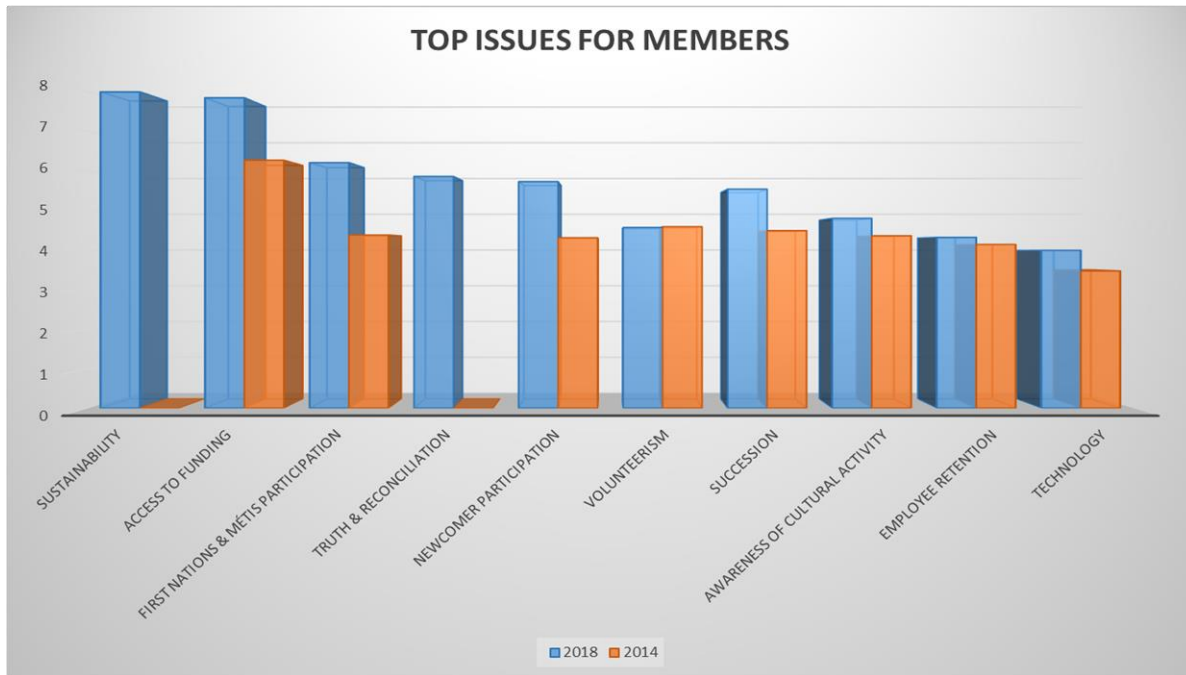
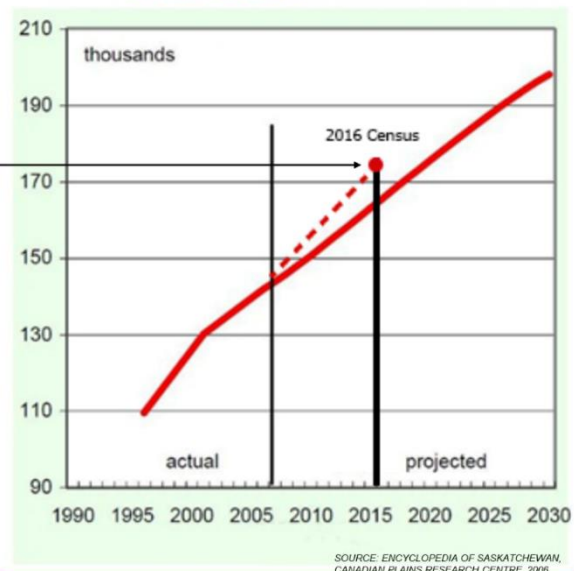


CHART B

Indigenous Demographics

2016 Census shows Saskatchewan's population of self-identified Aboriginals was **175,020** or **16.3%** of the total population.

Figure 2 Actual and Projected Aboriginal Population in Saskatchewan, Medium Population Growth Scenario



Note: Graphic source: SOURCE: ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SASKATCHEWAN, CANADIAN PLAINS RESEARCH CENTRE, 2006- 2016 DATA INCLUDED BY SASKCULTURE- NOT THE ORIGINAL GRAPHIC- IT HAS BEEN ALTERED TO REFERENCE CENSUS DATA.

The projected population growth for Indigenous peoples in Saskatchewan can be seen in Chart B. The data up to 2006 is confirmed population information, with the rising arc intending to show a medium population growth scenario. New data from the 2016 Census shows Saskatchewan's population of self-identified Indigenous peoples rose to **175,020** in 2016, or 16.3% of the total population. This is the second highest proportion in Canada among provinces, following Manitoba. As you can see, the 2016 census data is higher than what was projected as a medium population growth scenario. We know that Indigenous population in Saskatchewan is growing and has been so for quite some time and is approaching a population equivalency of nearly 1/5 of the population of Saskatchewan.

Cultural organizations are challenged to respond to this growth by making meaningful change. In many respects, we are behind, as are many sectors in the province, in our responsiveness to First Nations and Métis peoples and communities. SaskCulture, as an organization, is moving forward with meaningful change.

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