Polytechnic Showcase Sessions
Wednesday, May 14

Opening Keynote - 9:30am

Truth & Reconciliation: A Post-secondary Report Card

Dr. Niigaan Sinclair, an award-winning writer, editor and educator, is Anishinaabe from Peguis First Nation. In this keynote presentation, he will reflect on the truth and reconciliation journey of post-secondary institutions in Canada to-date and suggest ways they can continue to deepen their relationships with Indigenous students and communities. Dr. Sinclair will also challenge us to reexamine our collective and individual roles in reconciliation, something that requires building a greater appreciation of Indigenous history across our institutions. Don't forget to pick up your complimentary copy of Dr. Sinclair's latest book, Wînipêk: Visions of Canada from an Indigenous Centre.

Keynote speaker:
- **Dr. Niigaan Sinclair**, Writer, Editor & Educator

Concurrent Sessions A - 11:15am

Southern Alberta Institute of Technology

Growing Canada's Hospitality Sector

SAIT is a leader in hospitality and tourism, recognized as the number one hospitality management school and the number one culinary school in Canada. Thanks to a transformative $30 million donation from the Wim and Nancy Pauw Foundation and a new partnership with the YWCA Banff, SAIT is helping shape the future of tourism education. This session will explore how SAIT and the YWCA Banff are working together to establish world-class programming and a state-of-the-art teaching facility in Banff to strengthen the economic resiliency of the hospitality and tourism industry in one of Canada's most renowned tourist destinations.

Presenter:
- **James Overall**, Dean, School of Hospitality & Tourism

Sheridan

Embracing Disruption in Design Education

As AI transforms creative industries, institutions must rethink how they prepare students. Traditional design education emphasizes technical skills, but AI is shifting value toward strategy, conceptual thinking and problem-solving. This presentation explores how institutions can integrate AI literacy while designing stackable, nested credentials. This modular approach allows targeted adjustments to specific credentials without overhauling entire programs, ensuring flexibility and responsiveness to industry shifts. This session provides actionable strategies to help educators build adaptable, future-ready programs that equip students with the skills needed to thrive in an AI-driven world.

Presenter:
- **Myles Bartlett**, Associate Dean, Faculty of Animation, Arts & Design

Lunch Panel - 12:15pm

Red River College Polytechnic

Indigenous Strategy at Work

At this insightful panel discussion, RRC Polytech will share how its Indigenous strategy is transforming the institution. Hear from staff leading this work and students who are experiencing changes firsthand as they discuss how new approaches are reshaping learning outcomes, institutional policies and procurement, human resource practices and the student experience. Discover how weaving Indigenous viewpoints and strategy into everything we do creates meaningful change across the polytechnic and adds new dimensions to its culture.

Presenters:
- **Jamie Wilson**, Vice President, Indigenous Strategy, Research & Business Development
- **Carla Kematch**, Director, Truth & Reconciliation & Community Engagement
- **Jade Karsin**, Director, Procurement
- **Eucharia Ogoms**, Consultant, Indigenous Recruitment
- **Hevyn-Lee Martens**, Student, RRC Polytech Pathway

Concurrent Sessions B - 1:30pm

Kwantlen Polytechnic University

Finding Your Niche in a Crowded PSE Market

Situated in one of Canada's most ethnically diverse regions and saturated post-secondary markets, KPU has carved out its unique position in the sector with leading programs and research in areas such as applied genomics, design, Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and sustainable agriculture. Using TCM as an example, this session will focus on how post-secondary institutions can find and establish niche programs that respond to community and industry needs and will unpack the opportunities and challenges involved in breaking the mould.

Presenters:
- **Sharmen Lee**, Dean, Faculty of Health
- **Dr. John Yang**, Chair, Traditional Chinese Medicine
- **Caldwell Lever**, Student, Traditional Chinese Medicine

Seneca Polytechnic

Embedding Artificial Intelligence: A Polytechnic Approach

During the rise of GenAI in 2022, Seneca Polytechnic led the post-secondary sector in developing policies integrating AI into education, emphasizing student engagement with AI tools. In 2023, Seneca partnered with Microsoft to enhance learning and career development and appointed faculty AI thought leaders to collaborate with industry and academic partners. Seneca's Centre for Innovation in AI Technology supports 40 companies in AI adoption and commercialization, while providing students with real-world opportunities to apply their knowledge. Join us to explore Seneca's AI initiatives and their impact in 2025.

Presenters:
- **Dr. Amit Maraj**, Professor, School of Software Design & Data Science
- **Dr. Namrata Barai**, Director, Research Partnerships
- **Michelle Hutt**, Vice President, Academic

Concurrent Sessions C - 2:45pm

George Brown College

Building Community at Toronto's Waterfront

George Brown is transforming Toronto's waterfront into a dynamic hub for learning, innovation and community engagement. This presentation will explore the College's campus expansion, including the groundbreaking Limberlost Place, one of Canada's first mass timber, net-zero institutional buildings. We will discuss how these developments foster connections between students, industry and the local community, creating sustainable, inclusive and future-ready spaces. Through strategic partnerships and innovative design, George Brown is shaping the waterfront's evolution while enhancing experiential learning and urban development. Join us to discover how education and community-building intersect in one of Toronto's most exciting districts.

Presenter:
- **Michelle McCollum**, Vice President, Facilities & Sustainability

Humber Polytechnic

Map the System & Systems Thinking: A Polytechnic Success Story

This session will explore how faculty have helped deepen systems thinking in Humber's classrooms through Map the System—a global systems thinking competition organized by Oxford University. What began in 2019 with two faculty and a handful of committed students has now grown to over 320 teams, achieving the highest rate of student participation in the world. As the first polytechnic to join the competition, Humber has taken an applied approach, differentiating it from the universities that traditionally participate. Humber students won the overall competition in 2024, demonstrating the power of systems thinking in applied learning and the talent in the polytechnic sector.

Presenters:
- **Elinor Bray-Collins**, Professor, Politics
- **Sara Hassan**, Professor, Liberal Studies
- **Chandra (Nat) Limiarja**, Alumnus, Research Analyst Graduate Certificate

Concurrent Sessions D - 4:15pm

British Columbia Institute of Technology

Powering BC's Workforce: EV Technician Training at BCIT's School of Transportation

The transportation sector propels our economy and is key to Canada's economic growth. BCIT is the only post-secondary in North America that delivers globally recognized accreditation in all modes of transportation: air, sea, road and rail. This session will contextualize skills training across the transportation sector and will spotlight BCIT's industry-leading EV Technician Training Program. Attendees will discover how the program empowers students to meet specialized industry needs, ensuring graduates are job-ready for careers in this high-demand field by experiencing innovative training approaches, collaboration with industry leaders and cutting-edge learning technologies.

Presenters:
- **Steve Perry**, Dean, School of Transportation
- **Mubasher Faruki**, Associate Dean, School of Transportation, Automotive
- **Jim Berladyn**, Faculty, School of Transportation, Automotive

Fanshawe College

Transforming Learning & Workforce Development through Digital Innovation

As industries exponentially evolve with AI, automation and digital transformation, post-secondary institutions must adapt to prepare students and workers for the future. Fanshawe is driving innovation through its strategic partnership with the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board. Through this collaboration, Fanshawe integrates cutting-edge extended reality and AI-driven learning tools into applied research, corporate training and academic programming to enhance worker preparedness, resilience and mental health. Join this session to discover how Fanshawe's industry-driven approach to innovation is shaping Ontario's workforce and economy.

Presenters:
- **Candace Miller**, Executive Director, Business Development & Strategic Support
- **Assem Kroma**, Senior Manager, Immersive Technologies & Simulation

Polytechnic Showcase Sessions
Thursday, May 15

Concurrent Sessions E - 9:30am

Saskatchewan Polytechnic

Empowering Innovation: The Synergy of AI Programming & Applied Research

By 2030, AI will revolutionize society, adding $13 - $20 trillion to the global economy. It will create 170 million jobs while displacing 92 million, automating tasks and spawning new roles in science, healthcare and technology. AI is also expected to reshape institutions and raise ethical issues of accountability, bias and privacy. Concerns include deepening economic inequality. At home and at work, AI assistants will be ubiquitous, driving workforce adaptation and upskilling, with 85% of employers prioritizing training. Polytechnics will be crucial in navigating these changes. Join us to learn how.

Presenter:
- **Dr. Terry Peckham**, Director & Research Chair, Digital Integration Centre of Excellence

Conestoga College

Bolstering the Skilled Trades

Diversity in the skilled trades is essential for fostering innovation, improving workplace culture and addressing labour shortages. At Conestoga, we foster diversity and innovation through different programs and the work of the Canadian Institute for Safety, Wellness & Performance (CISWP). The institute is home to applied research laboratories including the Skilled Trades Applied Research and Training Lab and the Skilled Trades Research in Inclusivity, Diversity and Equity Lab. Attend this session to learn how CISWP leverages cutting-edge technologies and collaborates with employers, labour unions, academics and policymakers to develop solutions that improve safety and inclusivity within the skilled trades workforce.

Presenter:
- **Suzanne Moyer**, Dean, Trades & Apprenticeship

Northern Alberta Institute of Technology

Driven by Industry, Built for Results

NAIT Applied Research is committed to making a significant impact on Alberta's economy, industries, environment and communities. With a strong focus on cleaner energy and environmental sustainability, NAIT supports the responsible development of energy resources, driving technology development and knowledge adoption for industry partners, communities and learners. This session will explore how we mobilize knowledge at eight applied research centres and with a dedicated team of 155 full-time research staff who support 200 industry clients each year.

Presenters:
- **Olle Lagerquist**, Associate Vice President, Industry Solutions
- **Diane Lee**, Director, Applied Technologies

Algonquin College

Harnessing Wearable Technology and Machine Learning to Support First Responders

Algonquin is leading an innovative research program aimed at helping first responders manage stress and build resilience by providing emergency workers with real-time insights into their stress levels and offering tools to support their mental and physical well-being during high-pressure situations. Project data will inform tailored strategies for enhancing resilience both during training and in real-world emergencies. This session will introduce Algonquin's strategy for applied research as well as the technical, operational and business aspects of the project. We will explore how these elements come together to achieve results.

Presenters:
- **Ashley Murfin**, Program Coordinator, Paramedic Program
- **Martin Rivard**, Senior Project Manager

Closing Keynote - 12:30pm

Degrees, Skills and Careers - Getting the Framework Right in a Global Context

In today's rapidly changing labour market, post-secondary education and career preparation cannot be independent of one another. Learners need to acquire the enduring skills they will need to navigate many job changes, along with tailored, in-demand skills employers need on day one. Drawing on evidence-based research, case studies and in-depth interviews, author and higher education expert Ben Wildavsky will deliver a keynote presentation on the most critical lessons of what he calls the career arts, building career success through broad education, targeted skills and social capital. He will also share insights from his latest research assessing how institutions from four different countries are adopting innovative experiential learning practices.

Keynote speaker:
- **Ben Wildavsky**, Author & Higher Education Expert