

York University Assistant Vice-President, Indigenous Initiatives

First Nations peoples have lived on this part of Turtle Island for millennia, stewarding the land, the water and all that contributes to life in this region. Today, the culture and presence of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples enrich the lands and people of this territory.

More than two centuries ago, the Mississauga people welcomed settlers to this territory, providing sustenance and engaging in trade and commerce.

Today, York University campuses are located on the Toronto Purchase Treaty No. 13 lands and territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and the lands of the Anishinabek of the Williams Treaties First Nations. Our campuses are also situated on the traditional territories of the Huron-Wendat and the Haudenosaunee.

Treaty history is foundational, and it is our collective responsibility to honour the land, as we honour and respect those who have gone before us, those who are here and those who have yet to come. We are grateful for the opportunity to be learning, working and thriving on this land, and we commit to learn the truth and be active in the process of reconciliation.

As [York University](#) continues to advance its vision as a leading research-intensive institution committed to positive change, the University invites applications and nominations for the position of **Assistant Vice-President, Indigenous Initiatives**. Reporting to the Vice-President, Equity, People & Culture, this is an exceptional opportunity for a mission-driven Indigenous leader to help shape the University's future by advancing Indigenous priorities across teaching, learning, research, community engagement, and institutional life.

Canada's 3rd largest university, York provides scholars and students with access to outstanding research and an exceptional teaching and learning environment. With three campuses in the Greater Toronto Area—one of the most vibrant and multicultural regions in the world—York hosts a diverse and dynamic community of over 53,000 students and nearly 7,000 faculty and staff. Reflecting both its scale and ambition, in recent years the University opened its [Markham Campus](#), unveiled [The Joan and Martin Goldfarb Gallery](#) at Keele, and is advancing its [School of Medicine](#); the first in Canada with a core mission to train community-focused primary care physicians, the medical school is set to welcome its first cohort in September 2028. York has also been building on its strong research foundation across all disciplines, with large-scale funded projects, award-winning scholars and groundbreaking research with transformative, real-world impact. The University takes special pride in its distinctive progressive, forward-looking ethos summed up in its motto, *Tentanda Via*: the way must be tried.

Guided by the Anishinaabe teaching of *Mino Bimaadiziwin* (the 'Good Life'), the [Division of Equity, People & Culture](#) is committed to fostering an environment where all members of the York community experience connection, inclusion, belonging, and wellbeing. The Assistant Vice-President, Indigenous Initiatives will provide strategic leadership for York University's Indigenous portfolio and serve as a trusted advisor to the President, the Vice-President Equity, People & Culture, the Provost, senior academic leaders, and Indigenous advisory councils, and works collaboratively with Indigenous faculty, staff, students, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, community partners, and leaders across the institution to help guide the University's long-term work in advancing Indigenization, decolonization, and reconciliation. The role provides leadership across a broad portfolio that includes Indigenous student success, Indigenous faculty

recruitment and retention, Indigenous teaching and research, institutional policy development, Indigenous placemaking, community engagement, and strategic partnerships.

About the Role and Qualifications

While all candidates are encouraged to apply and, in so doing, share how they see themselves adding value to the York University environment, the following lived experience, work experience, attributes, and/or qualifications are seen as possible markers of those most aligned with the role:

- Lived experience as an Indigenous person, with demonstrated success building enduring relationships with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, organizations, and partners.
- A strong understanding of Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing grounded in Indigenous worldviews, cultures, traditions, and values.
- Demonstrated ability to provide visionary, respectful, collaborative leadership that advances institutional commitments to Indigenization, decolonization, and reconciliation within a complex organization.
- Experience developing and implementing strategic initiatives that create meaningful institutional change, ideally within post-secondary education or similarly complex environments.
- A strong commitment to working in a team and learner-centred environment with demonstrated ability to collaborate effectively with senior leaders, faculty members, staff, students, governing bodies, and external partners to advance shared priorities.
- Knowledge of Indigenous education, student success, community engagement, and approaches that strengthen Indigenous teaching, research, curriculum, and support services.
- Demonstrated understanding of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action and other relevant reports, legislation, and institution-specific and sectoral policy frameworks affecting Indigenous education and post-secondary institutions.
- Strategic and financial acumen, including experience overseeing budgets, allocating resources, developing policy, and leading organizational planning.
- Experience working collaboratively across multiple organizational units to implement institution-wide priorities while balancing diverse perspectives and interests.
- Outstanding communication, listening, consensus-building, and relationship management skills, with the ability to engage effectively with both Indigenous and non-Indigenous audiences.
- Integrity, sound judgment, and the ability to manage highly confidential information with discretion.
- A graduate degree in a relevant discipline such as education, social work, law, public policy, social justice, or a related field is preferred. An equivalent combination of education, lived experience, and leadership experience will also be considered.

Additional Information and How to Apply

York University is committed to a positive, supportive and inclusive environment. All interested applicants are invited to apply; however, Canadians and permanent residents of Canada will be given priority.



The successful candidate will begin in the role in Fall 2026. The expected salary for this position is approximately \$230,000 CAD per year, commensurate with experience.

*York University is partnering with BES Executive Search on this important file. Applicants are guided through what BES calls 'The BES Experience'—a thoughtful, candidate-centred process that provides candidates with support and care throughout the search process. **All interested applicants are encouraged to apply with their expression of interest by clicking [HERE](#).***

BES Executive Search does not use AI to screen, assess, or select applicants. This posting reflects an existing vacancy within the organization.

In accordance with the AODA Act, for applicants living with a disability, accommodation will be provided throughout the search process. Should accommodations be required, or if candidates have any other questions, please make Jason Murray or Helen Mekonen aware by emailing jmurray@bessearch.com.

