

MEMORANDUM

To: Indigenous Initiatives, Indigenous Student Centre, Indigenous Faculty Members, Indigenous Postsecondary Education Council, Vice-Provost & AVP Indigenous Initiatives Selection Committee; Senate; President's Leadership Team; UWOFA Executive; USC Executive; SOGS Executive; Affiliated University College Principals

From: Florentine Strzelczyk, Provost & Vice-President (Academic)

Date: April 30, 2025

Re: **Leadership reappointment: Vice-Provost & Associate Vice-President (Indigenous Initiatives)**

I am very pleased to announce that **Christy R. Bressette** has been reappointed to a second five-year term as Western's Vice-Provost & Associate Vice-President (Indigenous Initiatives). Christy was first appointed to this inaugural role on March 1, 2021, for a five-year term.

Christy, whose Anishinabek name is Neeta-Noo-Kee Kwe (*Hard-Working Woman*), brings to Western a wealth of experience advancing Indigenous education, policy and partnership. A member of the Chippewas of Kettle and Stony Point First Nation, Christy previously served as National Coordinator for Indigenous Education with the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada. She is also one of the first Indigenous women to earn a PhD in Educational Studies from Western, where she also earned her BA (Honours) in History and BEd (with distinction).

Over the past five years, Christy has provided extraordinary leadership grounded in Indigenous knowledge systems, community engagement and a commitment to inclusive excellence. Under her guidance, the Office of Indigenous Initiatives (OII) has led and supported numerous transformative initiatives, including the establishment of the Wampum Learning Lodge; the expansion of Indigenous student supports, scholarships and mentorship programs; and the advancement of Indigenous-led teaching and research across Western's faculties.

Christy has helped integrate Indigenous priorities into Western's institutional strategies, shaped new policies and practices rooted in cultural safety and respect and strengthened relationships with local Indigenous Nations and organizations. Her relational leadership style, inspired by the Anishinabe concept of *Meno Biimaadziwin* (the Good Life), has created space for meaningful dialogue and action toward reconciliation.

In her second term, Christy plans to continue to champion Indigenous-led initiatives, grow campus and community-based partnerships, and lead Western in expanding intercultural

competency, allyship and institutional accountability in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action. Christy will continue to represent Western across the country (Turtle Island) and provide leadership as the co-chair of the National Indigenous University Senior Leaders Association (NUISLA).

On behalf of Western, I want to thank the members of the Review Committee for their thoughtful and thorough work during the review process: **Penny Pexman**, Vice-President (Research), **Michael Kim** (Dean, Faculty of Music), **Ruth Martin** (Associate Vice-Provost and Professor, School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies), **Renée Bédard** (Assistant Professor, Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies), **Chantelle Richmond** (Professor, Geography and Indigenous Studies), **Ella Conrod** (Undergraduate student), **Abeni Flynn** (Graduate student) and **Debbie Dolson** (Post-Secondary Counsellor, Chippewas of the Thames First Nation).

Please join me in congratulating Christy on her reappointment and in recognizing her outstanding leadership and enduring commitment to Western and Indigenous communities.

Sincerely,

Florentine Strzelczyk
Provost & Vice-President (Academic)
Western University