




BSAC 2022 Annual Conference

**Business Schools' Social Impact: Case studies
Indigenous Programs**



Faculté des sciences
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A case for collaboration

In line with its commitment to making a societal impact through service, teaching and research, the Faculty of Business Administration of Université Laval (FSA ULaval) promotes research for a positive impact on Canada's indigenous communities. Over the last 15 years, our faculty members have published 17 research papers on indigenous affairs, contributing to areas such as women's studies, entrepreneurship, and human resource management (HRM).

One particularly interesting grant-funded project aims to better understand and promote the attraction and retention of the Indigenous workforce in the forestry sector. The project emerged in the context of the Chair in Indigenous Forestry (CIF). While affiliated with Université Laval's Faculty of Forestry, Geography and Geomatics, the CIF brings together researchers from multiple disciplines, faculties and universities, and is funded by the MITACS, FRQSC and SSHRC. FSA ULaval encourages this kind of multidisciplinary research with other faculties and universities as a means of increasing the potential impact when addressing major societal challenges.

Marie-Eve Dufour, associate professor of HRM, is one of FSA ULaval's members of the CIF research program. Her expertise in HRM contributes to the program's research on the attraction and retention of the indigenous workforce in a Canadian forestry sector that is particularly affected by the current labour shortage. While the indigenous population is young, growing, and seeking employment, challenges in attracting and retaining indigenous workers persist in the natural resource sector. Despite efforts stemming from a desire by some indigenous communities to be more involved in the economy, results have been less than expected.

At the time Professor Dufour joined the research program, a partnership had already been established with the First Nations Human Resources Development Commission of Québec (FNHRDCQ), an organization that promotes the employability of the indigenous workforce in various communities. In fact, all of the CIF's projects are developed in partnership with indigenous communities, and the researchers adapt their approaches to respect the native cultures. Both sides contribute actively to each project, with researchers traveling to meet with indigenous communities and their leaders on their own territories.

The research project on the attraction and retention of the indigenous workforce in the forestry sector uses a mixed

methodology and includes several phases: documenting forestry sector employers' practices and expectations; and drawing portraits of three indigenous communities' worker motivations.

In addition to contributing to the scientific and professional literatures, this research program is yielding significant practical benefits. For example, the researchers and the FNHRDCQ are collaborating to produce a practical guide for attraction and retention of indigenous workers in the forestry sector, based on the comparative analysis of the portraits of worker motivations and intended for employers.

A new phase of the research project, focusing specifically on the motivations of young indigenous workers and women, is currently underway. For this phase of the project, a doctoral student in Forestry is playing a pivotal role. The indigenous community asked that the student do an eight-week stay in the community, to make the project about more just research. In this way the student - and, by extension, the School - contributes to the community, becomes involved in the community, and helps the community. The student completed courses in both faculties (FSA ULaval and the Faculty of Forestry, Geography and Geomatics) in preparation for the stay.

FSA ULaval is now working to ensure an open channel of communication between two complementary research units: the CIF and the Centre for Research and Co-creation in Innovation and Sustainable Indigenous Business. Created in March 2022, this center is funded by one of the components of the FSA ULaval's research support program for the seeding of new research units (\$5000 for a year for a new unit). The new centre covers indigenous innovation and business in all sectors, while the CIF focuses on the capacity of indigenous communities to participate in the sustainable development of Québec's forests and in relationships with forestry companies and the government.

The new centre is associated with Luminary, a six-year initiative to design and implement an indigenous innovation strategy and plan leading to economic transformation and well-being. Luminary is an initiative of Indigenous Works (formerly the Aboriginal Human Resource Council), a non-profit organization founded in 1998 with a mandate to improve the inclusion and engagement of indigenous peoples in the Canadian economy. FSA ULaval's Vice Dean of Research and Innovation participated in the initial meetings and discussions organized by Luminary and answered their request to all Canadian university representatives to recruit researchers who may be interested in getting involved in their research and innovation projects. Based on the responses to this call for involvement, the Vice Dean organized a meeting between interested professors in information systems management. The result of this new interdepartmental collaboration was the creation of the new Centre.

Given the success of these projects, FSA ULaval plans to continue strengthening the societal impact of its research via this type of stakeholder co-creation and multidisciplinary collaboration with other faculties and universities.