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CAUT Statement on National Indigenous Peoples Day

June 19, 2020

Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT)

This year, the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) marks National Indigenous Peoples Day as five years have passed since the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) issued its landmark report.

The report documents pressing issues facing Indigenous peoples that still require attention, and the anniversary of its release is underscored by a global campaign against racism, sparked by the recent death of George Floyd at the hands of police officers in Minneapolis.

CAUT continues to press all levels of governments to act. As the TRC report notes, education policy can play a critical role in supporting the reconciliation process, but to do so we need to invest and be invested in the reconciliation process.
Academic staff associations, universities and colleges must urgently address systemic racism affecting Indigenous peoples which manifests in delegitimizing Indigenous cultures and knowledge. We must support Indigenization of the academy by undertaking proactive measures aimed at restoring, renewing, and re-generating Indigenous practices, languages, and knowledge; and by pursuing Indigenization through collective bargaining.

Today, as we celebrate the contributions of Aboriginal Peoples, we cannot forget the historic wrongs committed against First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities in Canada, and are reminded that all Canadians have a role to play in decolonizing, and building a more just country and world.

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