



**Sault College Media Release
For Immediate Release**

Sault College Unveils Sacred Fire Arbour at its Annual Winter Gathering

(Sault Ste. Marie, ON January 27, 2017) – Building on its commitment to Indigenous education, Sault College is proud to announce and celebrate the completion of the ‘Wiigwaasgamig’ Birch Bark House Sacred Fire Arbour. Surrounded by students, community members and staff, the sacred fire was lit for the first time today at Sault College’s annual Winter Gathering.

Located outside the College’s Indigenous Student Centre – Enji Maawnjiding, the fire arbour is a welcoming place used for spiritual ceremonies, teachings and community events throughout the year. The newly designed arbour was named by the College’s Elders in Residence Barbara Nolan and Ted Recollet. A symbolic name of ‘Wiigwaasgamig’ – meaning Birch Bark House in Anishinaabemowin – was given to reflect both traditional teachings and the structural design of the arbour.

“As we unveiled our newly designed sacred fire arbour and lit the inaugural fire, there was a great sense of community among us,” says Carolyn Hepburn, Dean Indigenous Studies and Academic Upgrading. “Offering this sacred place on our campus provides a welcoming and spiritual environment that will help our Indigenous students share their culture. We’re very grateful to be able to provide this to our students and community and we will proudly incorporate it into future events and ceremonies,” she adds.

The ‘Wiigwaasgamig’ was made possible through the generous financial support of Sault College and the Sault College Student Union. “On behalf of Native Student Council, I would like to say a Chi-Miigwetch/Big Thank You to everyone involved in this process. It’s been an empowering experience leading us up to this point,” says Jonathan Boyer-Nolan, President, Native Student Council. “I am very pleased and honoured to participate in the opening ceremony of the ‘Wiigwaasgamig’. Today we are celebrating an additional welcoming and safe place for our students, and I am proud that much of it has been student led. I would also like to highlight the incredible support we have received throughout this process, including an investment of \$35,000 from the Sault College Students’ Union as well as the additional contributions from Sault College. I am so proud of this collective accomplishment.”

The opening of the new fire arbour was immediately followed by Sault College's School of Indigenous Studies' annual "Winter Gathering". During this celebration, students and community members enjoyed a pipe ceremony, big drum and feast.

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INDIGENOUS STUDIES
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About Sault College

The vision of Sault College is to provide a transformative life experience through empowering those who study with us to think and learn in progressive, innovative ways, including those we have not yet imagined. Sault College grants Ontario College certificates, diplomas, advanced diplomas, graduate certificates, and degrees to its graduates. The College is the largest deliverer of apprenticeship training in all of Northern Ontario. Educating over 2,300 full-time and 4,000 part-time students each year, Sault College has a significant economic impact on the community, with spin-offs in excess of \$158 million. Over \$1.8 million dollars in scholarships, bursaries and awards are distributed annually to students at the College. Located on the border to the United States and situated in the middle of three of the largest Great Lakes on the planet, Sault College is one of 24 publicly-funded colleges in the province of Ontario.

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