



Dr. Leona Makokis is a Cree Elder in northeast Alberta and past President of University nuhelot'ine thaiyots'į nistameyimâkanak Blue Quills which is situated in a former Indian Residential School near St. Paul, Alberta and which Leona attended as a child. Leona has extensive teaching and research experience with a focus on leadership and language revitalization. She is a trainer and consultant on cross-sectoral initiatives to restore Indigenous knowledge and practice, especially with Alberta Children's Services.

### Key Note

Our collective journey starts from our community members having a vision and belief that we are responsible to educate our children. The story starts with the peaceful sit-in to take over Blue Quills Indian Residential School in 1970. Since then we have grown from an elementary school, high school, trades, college and now a university. Throughout this journey we have moved from a residential school, to brokering programs to decolonizing curriculum. Today we have developed our own Bachelors, Masters and Doctoral programs.

We have listened well to the voices of our parents, grandparents and relatives. Their vision was. "Our children will get the western education but more importantly they will come home, learn and live our traditions, protocols, ceremonies, and languages. They will become our teachers." University of Blue Quills creates space grounding students in traditional knowledge and blending it with western education.

We are not only teaching our own people but also teaching non-native people of who we are, the process of colonization and trauma informed healing and how they can become wicihtasowak (allies).