



# THE UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG

## N E W S   R E L E A S E

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**For Immediate Release**

### **Great-West Life Supports New Aboriginal Student Awards at The University of Winnipeg**

WINNIPEG— The Great-West Life Assurance Company and The University of Winnipeg are helping 15 young Aboriginal people prepare for future careers, through the innovative *Great-West Life Aboriginal Student Access Awards* program. Students involved in the financial aid, support services and work experience program are now completing their first academic year.

“The Aboriginal Student Access Awards program is unique in that it offers a combination of financial aid, potential internships, and other support. It connects students, many of whom are from remote areas, to the many resources in the community that can help them make a successful transition into the workplace,” said Jan Belanger, Assistant Vice-President, Community Affairs at Great-West Life.

The Aboriginal Student Access Awards were developed in partnership between The University of Winnipeg, in its ongoing commitment to create a supportive environment for Aboriginal students, and Great-West Life, a supporter of education and community initiatives across the country. The awards program is offered through The University of Winnipeg’s Aboriginal Student Services Centre.

“Great-West Life is helping to meet an urgent need for Aboriginal bursary programs that will help close the accessibility gap. This program provides students with resources to help them complete their degree programs,” says University of Winnipeg Acting President Patrick Deane. “We are grateful to Great-West Life for its full participation in designing a program with such lasting value for Aboriginal students.”

Through the access awards program, 15 Aboriginal students receive financial aid for tuition, books, and educational materials for up to five years of study towards their degree. Great-West Life’s contribution of \$100,000 is being matched dollar-for-dollar by the province’s Manitoba Scholarship and Bursary Initiative.

Great-West Life is also providing bursary recipients in their third and fourth years of study with the possibility of work placement and internship opportunities at Great-West Life or at one of the associated community-based organizations it supports. Opportunities will be tailored to the needs of each student to help them gain experience in their chosen fields.

A grant from The Winnipeg Foundation has enabled the Aboriginal Student Services Centre to purchase equipment, including computers, to enhance the student experience particularly beyond the first year of studies. Focused efforts by The University of Winnipeg's Aboriginal Student Services Centre over the past three years have resulted in an increase in the number of Aboriginal students on campus. Recent initiatives focus on community liaison, admissions counselling, transition year programming, academic and personal advising, and student retention.

Founded in 1891, Great-West Life is a leading life and health insurer in Canada. Together, Great-West Life and its subsidiaries, London Life and Canada Life, serve the financial security needs of nearly 12 million people across Canada. The organization contributes to hundreds of institutions, non-profit and community-based organizations, and encourages and supports volunteerism of its staff and financial security advisors through its national *Key to Giving* program.

The University of Winnipeg, located in the heart of the city, is a compact, caring community committed to access and excellence in the arts and sciences. Ranked by *Maclean's* magazine as one of Canada's top ten undergraduate universities, The University of Winnipeg is home to more than 8,300 full- and part-time students. Established in 1871 as Manitoba College, The University of Winnipeg has long taken pride in preparing students to think critically and creatively, and to live fully in the world.

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