STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN
2023—2025

ADVANCING INDIGENOUS
PEOPLE IN STEM

AISES

PLAN OVERVIEW

Background & Context for the Plan

In 2019, AISES, a 501(c)(3) public charity, embarked on a planning process to guide the organization in building its capacity and programming over the next four years. Following a transition in leadership six years earlier, significant organizational growth, evolution of its work, the time was right to take stock of AISES, to determine a next lifecycle stage and course of action to best implement its mission. This comprehensive process—conducted in partnership with outside consultants, interSector Partners, L3C—allowed for both internal reflection and other perspectives to leverage the organization's history and assets toward a sustainable future.

In the summer of 2022, in preparation for updating the existing strategic plan, AISES held a three-day strategic visioning session in Denver, Colorado. Participants included AISES staff, board, advisory council members, as well as other key stakeholders and representatives from AISES constituencies. In December of 2022, the AISES staff leadership spent three days working together to update AISES strategic goals. The resulting goals have been integrated into this updated three-year strategic plan (2023-2025). As we work to implement this plan, we will draw upon the recommendations and ideas from the summer 2022 strategic visioning session which also serves as a guide for developing the updated goals in this plan.

The Planning Process – Timeline

SUMMER 2022
Three-day strategic visioning session in Denver, Colorado. Participants included AISES staff, board, elders, advisory council members, and other key stakeholders and representatives from AISES constituencies.

DECEMBER 2022
Annual end-of-year planning meeting for the AISES staff leadership group was utilized to develop updated strategic goals for the three-year/2023 – 2025 strategic plan.

APRIL 2023
Final draft of newly updated three-year strategic plan reviewed and approved by the AISES Board of Directors.

Decision-Making Guidance

Decision-making during the process was guided by a set of decision-making criteria. These criteria can also be used as new ideas and opportunities arise and will allow AISES to return to a set of questions that help it to decide – what is essential?

- Is the opportunity / strategy tied to the mission of AISES?
- Does it fit within the work we are trying to get done?
- Does it fit in our long-term / big picture plan?
- Can we secure the resources to deliver on this opportunity?
- Does this allow us to create a sustainability path?
- Do we have or can we get the capacity to take this on?
- Will our stakeholders and other audiences support this?
- Does it consider our international members?
- Do most of our staff support this decision or direction?
- Does this support our culture of knowledge and innovation?
- Are we keeping pace and leading with innovation in our field with this direction?
- Are we leveraging the equity/inclusion initiative in this work?
- Is it aligned with focus areas from the greater philanthropic community?
- Does it honor our history and traditions?

The Updated Plan (2023-2025)

The following plan outlines a long-term vision and three-year updated approach for how AISES will evolve toward achieving the vision. A combination of a strategic and business plan, the document explains the process used to develop the plan, as well as details on how the organization will adapt its business model to meet changing market needs and continue to offer high quality services to its members, partners, and other supporters.

About AISES — Advancing Indigenous People in STEM

Since 1977, AISES has focused on substantially increasing the representation of Indigenous peoples of North America and the Pacific Islands in critically needed STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) disciplines. This robust nonprofit currently supports individual student and professional members across the U.S. and Canada through chartered college and university chapters, professional chapters, tribal chapters, and affiliated PK-12 schools. Members benefit from diverse STEM-focused programming that supports careers and promotes student success and workforce development in multiple crucial areas. To learn more visit aises.org.

Vision
The vision of AISES is for the next seven generations of Indigenous people to be successful, respected, influential, and contributing members of our vast and ever-changing global community.

Mission
AISES is a national nonprofit organization focused on substantially increasing the representation of Indigenous peoples of North America and the Pacific Islands in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) studies and careers.

Values
- Knowledge – AISES is committed to continuous growth in learning and teaching.
- Innovation - AISES embraces change by seeking out unique solutions to complex challenges.
- Relationships - AISES diligently stewards relationships with all who are part of the extended AISES family.
- Commitment – AISES conducts business with the highest standards of professional ethics.
- Empowerment - AISES supports and promotes the collective intellect and talent of Indigenous people.
- Culture - AISES honors the ancestors by carrying forward cultural traditions and values.

Beliefs
- Traditional Indigenous knowledge illuminates unique pathways to innovation.
- Centering Indigenous worldview, and a deep respect for place, is key to sustaining our planet.
- Indigenous peoples are uniquely positioned to create solutions to our most challenging issues.

Focus Areas

The work of AISES falls into three focus areas:

STUDENT ACCESS AND SUCCESS

CAREER SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT

EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND WORKSPACES

Focus Area One: Student Access and Success
AISES works to ensure students have access to Indigenous designed STEM programming and vital services including scholarship and academic support as well as mentorship and guidance throughout their educational journey from PK-12 through undergraduate, graduate, and post-graduate studies.

Focus Area Two: Career Support and Development
AISES works to ensure professionals are supported as they enter and progress in their STEM careers by providing internships, fellowships, training, networking, and direct connection to the vast network of employers who partner closely with AISES to hire talent in the corporate, government, and public sectors.

Focus Area Three: Equitable and Inclusive Institutions and Workspaces
AISES works closely with its vast network of partners of PK-12 schools, colleges, and universities, and employers representing all sectors, to ensure that students and professionals have access to equitable and inclusive educational institutions and workspaces where they can prosper throughout their educational and career journeys.

STRATEGIES

Four strategies create and support pathways for those AISES serves within the three focus areas:

Strategy One: Increase Awareness and Retention in PK-12 Education

Start the pathway by increasing awareness amongst families and communities as to the importance of STEM education and providing culturally-responsive curriculum and programming to increase student retention.

Strategy Two: Increase Access and Success in Higher Education

Continue the pathway by providing financial, academic, and cultural support to college and university students to increase student access to, and success in, higher education.

Strategy Three: Increase Leadership Opportunities for Professionals through-out their Careers

Expand the pathway by providing professional development resources to increase the number of professional leaders in all employment sectors.

Strategy Four: Increase Visibility and Understanding through Partnerships and Research

Illuminate the pathway by engaging in research and cultivating strategic partnerships to increase the visibility and understanding of the challenges and solutions that are unique to Indigenous students and professionals in STEM studies and careers.

Strategic Imperatives for the Plan

To guide AISES toward its vision for the strategic plan, several strategic imperatives will be integrated into the plan and AISES work going forward. Strategic imperatives are those items that are necessary for achieving the vision for the plan that they serve as a foundation—or umbrella—for the planning cycle.

A strong membership amplifies our voice and power

A U.S./Canada focus expands our reach and impact

Cross-stakeholder connections strengthen our work

Sytems-level change is critical to achieving our vision

Goals and Objectives of the Plan

The following section outlines the objectives for each goal, as well as the rationale for the goal and objectives as a result of stakeholder input, model research and other analyses conducted during the planning process. Comprehensive action plans will be developed for each goal and its associated objectives in 2023, and objectives and associated action plans will be revisited halfway through the planning period and will be updated based on progress and the current AISES environment.

Goals

- **Goal 1**: Build the organizational capacity and infrastructure of AISES by strengthening its policies, processes, people (staff), methodologies, IT systems and data.

- **Goal 2**: Grow and sustain AISES membership and networks through improved systems and functions that support communications, events, mentors, allies, partners, and operations.

- **Goal 3**: Increase visibility and advocacy that brands AISES as the "go-to" organization in Indigenous STEM based on expert data, research, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, communications, and AISES institutional knowledge.

- **Goal 4**: Develop, implement, and *weave* culturally informed STEM programming to support Indigenous students and professionals at their institutions and workplaces.

- **Goal 5**: Diversify funding sources to provide short-term and long-term financial resources for the organization.

- **Goal 6**: Develop the emerging *AISES Canada* organization to become an authentic and successful leader in STEM education and careers for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities.

- **Goal 7**: Create an AISES *Theory of Change* that articulates the shared connections between the work of the different departments and how it is defined to articulate AISES impact as an organization.

Goals with Objectives

Goal 1: Build the organizational capacity and infrastructure of AISES by strengthening its policies, processes, people (staff), methodologies, IT systems and data.

- Effectively execute giving campaigns and support funnels
- Streamline accounting and HR systems and processes
- Identify and implement staff professional development and training
- Increase IT capacity and refine systems to support our work
- Develop and/or refine IT and AV systems to support AISES events

Goal 2: Grow and sustain AISES membership and networks through improved systems and functions that supports communications, events, mentors, allies, partners, and operations.

- Grow online network of members and stakeholders
- Develop more stories with visuals, video, and content that effectively engage audiences and inspires action
- Increase internal clarity about key AISES members and allies (by category or segment), their key interests and needs, and prioritize activities to engage them
- Streamline communications – IT functions relative to member and ally communications
- Improve and expand in-person networking events and experiences
- Increase capacity for continuously improving member engagement

Goal 3: Increase visibility and advocacy that brands AISES as the "go-to" organization in Indigenous STEM based on expert data, research, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, communications, and AISES institutional knowledge.

- Finalize AISES branding project and implement recommendations
- Develop capacity and processes to produce consistent, high-quality content
- Increase AISES visibility and public relations activities relative to grants, partners, sponsors, allies, and programs
- Disseminate AISES lessons learned, research, and data
- Support efforts to develop and publicize supportive Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion environments for Indigenous people in academic and workplace settings
- Create educational resources for external partners
- Enhance visibility and presence in external spaces and organizations
- Create online Resource Center on the AISES website

Goal 4: Develop, implement, and *weave* culturally informed STEM programming to support Indigenous students and professionals at their institutions and workplaces.

- Increase the number of programs centering Indigenous knowledge and practices
- Strengthen current programs and develop new programs to better support Indigenous students and professionals
- Increase collaboration with Tribal communities and other Indigenous organizations

Goal 5: Diversify funding sources to provide short-term and long-term financial resources for the organization.

- Develop and implement a five-year $30 million capital campaign for an endowed fund

- Increase individual giving
- Develop and launch fee-for-service program
- Develop strategy for securing increased private foundation support

Goal 6: Develop the emerging *AISES Canada* organization to become an authentic and successful leader in STEM education and careers for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities.

- Create a new charitable organization in Canada

Goal 7: Create an AISES *Theory of Change* that articulates the shared connections between the work of the different departments and how it is defined to articulate AISES impact as an organization.

- Collaborate with staff and incorporate input from the June 2022 Strategic Visioning Meeting to guide the development of an AISES *Theory of Change*

What is not included in this plan summary are the myriad tasks that support each objective. These tasks are developed by the staff to ensure they have well identified steps to achieve each objective. As with the previous strategic plan, the staff will participate in quarterly check in meetings with InterSector Partners to update progress on the goals and objectives. At these meetings, objectives and tasks may be modified. These modifications may include changing the target date for completion, the creation of additional objectives or tasks, or eliminating objectives or tasks that are no longer relevant. For example, during the execution of the previous plan, the world experienced the COVID-19 pandemic which necessitated a number of modifications. Similarly, AISES grew at a faster pace than anticipated, and as such, additional modifications were made to accommodate that growth.

AISES
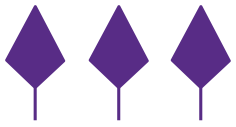
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