

University of Manitoba holds Grand Opening of Aboriginal House

GRN STAFF

Aboriginal House is now open at the University of Manitoba to the delight of students, staff and faculty who have moved in and are now able to use the facility. Built at a cost of \$6.7 million, the 15,000 square foot facility signifies the commitment and mutual respect shared between the University of Manitoba and the Aboriginal community. It is a gathering place for Aboriginal students, alumni, faculty and staff, as well as the campus and community at large.

The Grand Opening took place on Friday, September 19, 2008. Opening Ceremonies began with a Grand Entry, followed by a prayer.

Throughout the day, there were traditional games and activities, entertainment and tours of the new facility. The first 500 University of Manitoba Aboriginal students to register will receive a free backpack.

Aboriginal House is located on Curry Place, southwest of the Education Building. Tenants of Aboriginal House include: Access programs; Office of University Accessibility; Aboriginal Student Centre; Aboriginal Student Association; and graduate students and sessional instructors in the department of Native studies.

For students, Aboriginal House will be a place that will foster support from peers, staff and Elders and provide a positive learning environment, respecting culture and heritage.

David Barnard, University of Manitoba president, says, "Aboriginal House will act as a home-away-from-home for those who have traveled far to be here; a place where

their culture and traditions are recognized and celebrated. This building tells them they are important here, valued here and that this is a place where they can achieve their goals. In addition, non-Aboriginal students will be offered a place to come and learn about their fellow students and share their cultures and experiences."

Kali Storm, Aboriginal Student Centre director, notes: "Aboriginal House is a vision 25 years in the making — a dream come true. We have a new home that is visible and respectful of our culture and will be a welcoming place from which to teach and learn."

Designed and built with a focus on sustainability and energy efficiency, the building is a candidate for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Certification. LEED® is a rating system that certifies buildings based on energy and environmental performance, administered by the Canada Green Building Council, and is an adaptation of the US Green Building Council's program. Projects are certified by third party review and audits. LEED® is a recognized designation that sets the building apart as a leader in the green building sector. Aboriginal House is aiming for Gold certification.

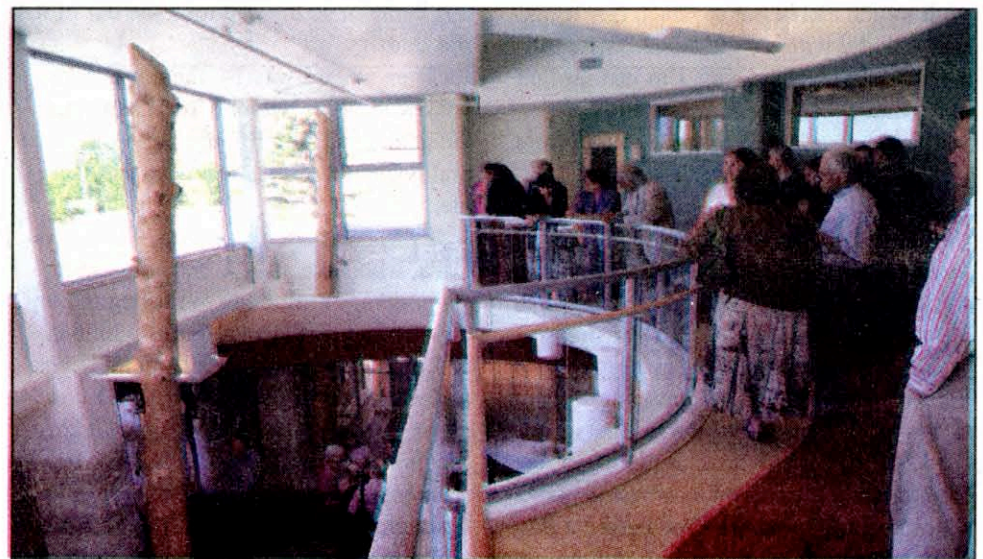
An all-inclusive facility, Aboriginal House welcomes all nations and invites pedestrians into the ongoing life of the centre. A central 'Meeting Place' area bridges the single-storey student lounge area and the two-storey office area. The significance of the Aboriginal medicine wheel is respected in this area and in the Circle Room.

"The new building is not only an Aboriginal student meeting place but a community meeting place in the widest

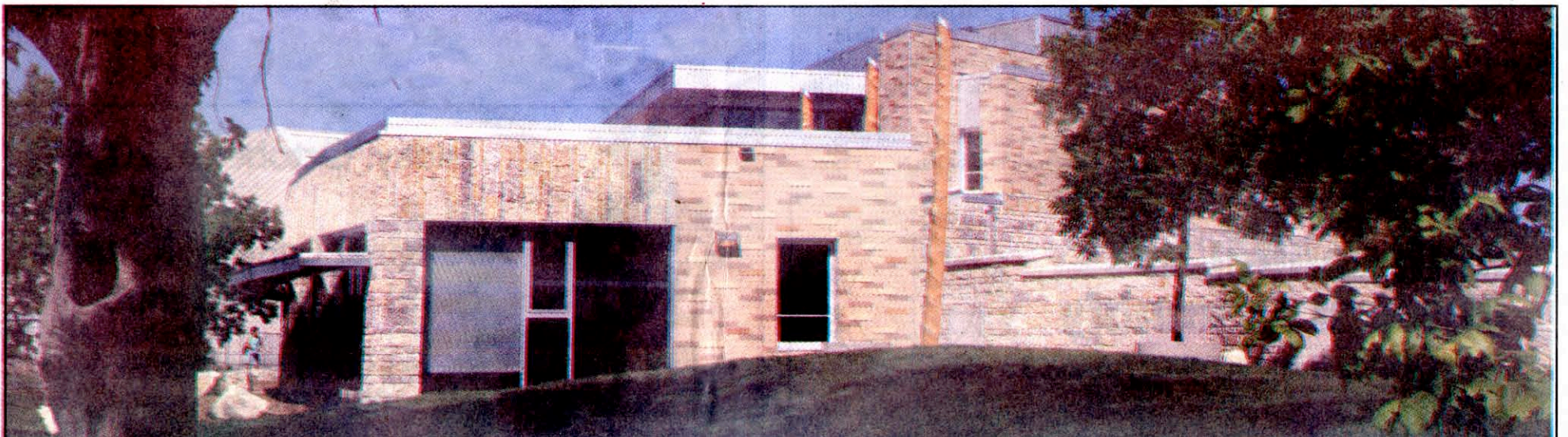
sense," says Fred Shore, executive director, Office of University Accessibility. "All are welcome to 'join the circle'."



The Meeting Place at Aboriginal House - Photo courtesy of Prairie Architects.



The 2nd Floor Lounge at Aboriginal House - Photo courtesy of Prairie Architects.



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Congratulations to the University of Manitoba on the opening of Aboriginal House, a new meeting place for Aboriginal Students and for the community.