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## MEDIA RELEASE

### **Actua and Six Nations Polytechnic STEAM Academy Deliver For-Credit On-The-Land Camps Across Ontario**

Actua, Canada's leading science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) youth outreach network, in partnership with Six Nations Polytechnic STEAM Academy, is providing local Indigenous high schools students with a unique for-credit on-the-land-camp program in Indigenous communities across Ontario.

The initiative is part of Actua's national model to engage more Indigenous youth in STEM and improve high school graduation rates for Indigenous youth. Actua's national Indigenous Youth in STEM (InSTEM) Program partners with Indigenous communities, local school boards, and network members at universities and colleges to deliver Indigenous STEM courses during the academic year, and 15-day credited Indigenous STEM land camps.

Indigenous communities have always asserted that Indigenous knowledge is best applied through land based learning and the sharing of local cultural knowledge. This is particularly true when it comes to learning (STEM) from an Indigenous perspective.

"We are very excited to partner with Actua to make these land camps possible. Many students go to camp, and many others go to summer school," said Aaron Hobbs, Principal, Six Nations Polytechnic STEAM Academy. "We at Six Nations Polytechnic have blended the two and built the entire Gaqᑭdewayęhsta? Ohwejagehka? experience on traditional Hodinohsó:ni? knowledge, layered with advanced sciences and truly enjoyable and engaging experiences. There is no other program like this anywhere else and we are privileged to be able to offer it to the community."

This summer there are three land camps delivered in Ontario at Six Nations, Akwesasne, and Dokis First Nation with similar programs in the pilot phase in British Columbia and Alberta. At the end of the 15-day program, all participating Indigenous students who complete the program will receive a high school credit for their involvement. More importantly, these students will have gained a deeper understanding of the intrinsic value of their local culture and how that local knowledge equips them for exciting careers in STEM.

"It provides a strong sense of cultural pride and identity when Indigenous youth recognize that their inherent knowledge of land based science and technology actually aligns with, and is as important as the western STEM that Actua brings to the program," said Doug Dokis, Senior Advisor, Actua National InSTEM Program. "When these two knowledges are combined in one program for credit, Indigenous students gain a better understanding of how they can apply their local cultural knowledge to STEM related areas of study, with the hope that one day they could help their communities."

**About Actua:** Actua is Canada’s leading science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) youth outreach network representing 36 university and college based members. Each year, Actua’s growing network of member organizations reach over 250,000 young Canadians in 500 communities nationwide. Actua focuses on the engagement of underrepresented youth through specialized programs for Indigenous youth, girls and young women, at-risk youth and youth living in Northern and remote communities. It’s national InSTEM program reaches over 35,000 Indigenous youth per year in over 200 Indigenous communities. Actua’s major funding partners include: Government of Canada, Google Canada, Suncor Energy Foundation, GE Canada, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, Ontario Trillium Foundation, Finning, Toyota Canada Foundation and Lockheed Martin. For more information about Actua, visit [actua.ca](http://actua.ca).

**About Six Nations STEAM Academy:** The Six Nations Polytechnic STEAM Academy is a secondary school built on Hodinohsó:ni values that offers students a progressive and technology rich educational experience. By blending the various STEAM disciplines (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) into all courses, the school creates an enhanced and culturally supportive educational experience for a range of learners and is inclusive of all students from all cultural backgrounds. The students at STEAM have opportunities to forge forward on academic and social pathways offered at no other educational institution, including working with many post-secondary partners to earn both an accredited Ontario Secondary School Diploma as well as an accredited college diploma. The staff are responsive to the needs of students, and put the wellbeing and personal achievement of each individual in the school as the paramount objective.

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