1. INTRODUCTION: UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

During the colonization of Indigenous Nations and peoples in Canada, education became a main vehicle of settler governments’ genocidal policies. For over two hundred years, the punitive practices that resulted from the economic, political, cultural, social, linguistic, judicial, geographic, and spiritual oppression of Indigenous peoples threatened the very survival of Indigenous kinship systems, communities, and individuals. This is Canadian history. This is our present. The question is, how does an educational institution engage with the complexity of this colonial legacy and its e/affects in order to move forward? And how does it do so when Western institutional discourses tend still to minimize or even to conceal that uncomfortable legacy? How do staff, faculty, students, and associates of the University of Waterloo come to a place where we can all identify, and respect, the heterogeneity of multiple Indigenous Nations, communities, kin systems, epistemologies and pedagogies, linguistic structures, and cultural and social protocols within the University? How do we embed this respect in all of our interactions with persons and groups outside the University? To begin to consider community engagement among non-Indigenous and Indigenous communities at the University of Waterloo, (re) education is crucial.

A critical aspect of education is an individual’s understanding and acknowledgement of the land upon which they work and learn. Local Indigenous communities in proximity to where the University of Waterloo is located are the Haudenosaunee of the Six Nations of the Grand River and the Anishinaabe of the Mississauga of the New Credit. If the University of Waterloo’s objective of engaging with communities is to be achieved, local Indigenous communities must be at the forefront of the efforts. This means understanding and honouring local treaties of this area, including: the Dish with One Spoon which was established amongst the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe; the Haldimand Treaty in relation to the Haudenosaunee, along with the Two Row Wampum Treaty and the Hiawatha Belt; and the Mississauga of the New Credit came to the Six Nations territory in the nineteenth-century.

Indigenization efforts that focus on the local Indigenous communities continue to be demonstrated by other Canadian universities. It would be impossible for any university to acknowledge and meaningfully incorporate all Indigenous Nations (630+ in Canada). However, like other urban areas across the country, the region of Kitchener-Waterloo includes several urban organizations that service First Nations, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI) members. It is critical
that the University of Waterloo also encourage urban Indigenous community engagement by
developing strong relationships with organizations like Anishinaabek Outreach, Grand River
Metis Council, KW Urban Native Wigwam project, Healing of the Seven Generations, White Owl
Native Ancestry Association, and places throughout the region and across Canada. Almost 60%
of Indigenous peoples in Canada identify as urban Indigenous, and Waterloo students, faculty,
and staff come from many different communities across Canada and from across the globe. In
terms of community engagement, the University of Waterloo is responsible to present and
future generations and must hold space for the Elders, Knowledge Keepers, students and all
those who come from communities that are both near and far.

This work includes the ongoing education of University community members about past and
present relationships among diverse populations in Canada. It also includes the organization of
events that encourage further dialogue among the members of these populations. We believe
that this work needs to be done, and that the amount of work and resource funding involved
will be considerable.

2. PREAMBLE

Education built on multiple worldviews is a mandatory element of respectful engagement
between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. It is necessary to ask why we find
ourselves in the position of developing strategies to create new policies to reform educational
and institutional systems and why this is not always already operating within those systems.
The only way to begin to engage is by providing opportunities for institutional learning about
the historical contexts and perspectives that have led us to this point and to make these visible;
otherwise, we will repeat the often-invisible colonial templates that are entrenched in our
social systems and continue the long histories of violence, alienation, and silencing. This is
heavy intellectual, administrative, and emotional work laden with intergenerational and very
present trauma; non-Indigenous community members and institutions must therefore be
wholly committed to undertaking the intercultural and interpersonal work, collaboratively and
respectfully, with Indigenous peoples if genuine and meaningful community engagement is to
transpire and be everlasting.

Community engagement involves the commitment to specific responsibilities and practices of
acknowledgement that ensure sustainable relationships with Indigenous communities on
campus and beyond. The institution’s commitment of engagement must be at every level of its
existing infrastructure (administration, research, teaching, service, operations, etc., and across
disciplines from unit, department, and faculties). The institution must be willing to change and
utilize transparent channels of communication where and when necessary to guarantee the
integrity, sustainability, and meaningfulness of its commitment by recognizing:

a) University of Waterloo campuses and affiliated and federated institutions (AFIW) are
situated on the traditional lands of Indigenous peoples. Teaching, learning, and research
have taken place since time immemorial on these lands.
b) Authentic partnerships between the University and Indigenous peoples within and outside the university are essential to deliver the best outcomes. In the spirit of reconciliation, such partnerships make space for the voices of Indigenous peoples in decision making that affects Indigenous peoples and communities.

c) Indigenous peoples hold unique knowledge and knowledge systems that are foundational, continuing, and fundamentally important to Canada’s intellectual, social and cultural landscape. Universities are uniquely positioned to foster deeper public understanding of that contribution and to effective global citizens.

3. COMMUNICATION AND UNIVERSITY POLICIES

a) **Recommendation:** An annual Report on Community Engagement presented to Senate in the regular agenda as part of the Vice-President and Provost’s report to Senate.

b) **Recommendation:** Recruitment to ensure Indigenous representation on Senate.

c) **Recommendation:** Create and implement specific university policies to ensure university faculty, department, and unit actions and opportunities are supported to meet educational and engagement objectives and recommendations.

**Rationale:** The purpose of presenting this report to Senate is to allow Senators to ask questions about it, to encourage the University to continue its work on community engagement, to press for answers if that work loses momentum, and approve funding. Reports to Senate are an important instrument to keep specific issues front and centre at the institution. As indicated by the number of UW faculty, staff, and students who expressed interest in becoming involved in drafting the University’s Indigenization strategy, the University community needs regular updates on the actions the University is advancing to increase, strengthen, and remain transparent about community engagement between non-Indigenous and Indigenous peoples. The university has a responsibility to provide the resources and opportunities for staff, faculty and students to advance their learning and this means having Indigenous peoples represented at all levels of the university, including university governance.

4. STRUCTURE, HUMAN RESOURCES, AND FUNDING

a) **Recommendation:** Appoint an Associate Vice President, Indigenous Relations who will broadly oversee the implementation of the Indigenization Strategy and sustain the University’s commitment to Indigenization and decolonization.

b) **Recommendation:** Appoint Indigenous Community Connections Officers at the Faculty level who will work closely with Indigenous communities to support relationship-building, teaching and research collaborations, student recruitment and implementation of the University’s Indigenization Strategy.

c) **Recommendation:** That the University engage Elders on a paid regular full- or part-time basis to support Indigenous students, faculty, and staff on campus.

d) **Recommendation:** Establish an Advisory Council on Indigenous Relations comprised of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit community representatives, the Senior Advisor on
Indigenous Relations, faculty Indigenous Community Connections Officers, and Indigenous University of Waterloo Faculty and student representatives to plan and prioritize goals and objectives related to the University’s Indigenous Strategy.

e) **Recommendation:** Promote and support the placement of non-Indigenous faculty and staff across university departments who have a demonstrated knowledge base and collaborative working experience with Indigenous communities to teach across disciplines the histories of colonialism and colonization and its impact on education and social conditions in order to address current issues and create new opportunities for community engagement, social practices, and educational reform.

f) **Recommendation:** Establish and support networking opportunities for Indigenous and non-Indigenous faculty and staff with an interdisciplinary knowledge-base about Indigenous histories in Canada (but not exclusively) in each department to support instruction, research, and programming.

g) **Recommendation:** Open, operate, and budget for two Office of Indigenous Engagement spaces (St. Paul’s campus and the University of Waterloo campus) to integrate the inclusion of Indigenous community scholarship, research, programming, presence, visibility, and access at multiple locations.

**Rationale:** The University must create an Office of Indigenous Engagement and other campus full-time positions to facilitate the ongoing education necessary to ensure a continued and robust dialogue among the Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities connected to the University. Key to Indigenization is hiring Indigenous peoples to lead and inform the work otherwise we simply perpetuate colonial interpretations and strategies of Indigenous engagement.

**5. ENGAGEMENT (INTERNAL)**

a) **Recommendation:** Sustain meaningful engagement programming with Indigenous alumni, faculty, scholars, Elders, artists, knowledge-keepers, students, and staff on and off campus in order to build genuine and long-lasting relationships.

b) **Recommendation:** Create and fund scholarships, grants, and other modes of recognition to advance and promote the work of Indigenous scholarship across campus.

c) **Recommendation:** Advance and recognize the expertise of Indigenous student contributions to community engagement programming by providing individual funding and resources.

d) **Recommendation:** Members of any committee or initiative may leave the appointment without sanction.

**Rationale:** Defining engagement needs to occur through an initial and ongoing process of dialogue with the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities who are connected to the university presently. This dialogue will help ensure that engagement and relationship building reflects the expectations and needs of Indigenous partners as well as to acknowledge and respond to current issues and prioritize action items toward working solutions. The university must recognize and acknowledge the leadership, scholarship, and individual and overall
contributions provided by current Indigenous faculty, staff, and students to begin the process of a broader scope of engagement.

6. ENGAGEMENT (EXTERNAL)

a) **Recommendation:** Identify current Memoranda of Understanding concerning “engagement” held between the University and Indigenous communities and examine the discontinuities in the agreements. Why and how are these agreements (not) sustainable? What can we learn?

b) **Recommendation:** Re-evaluate the process of developing “memos of understanding” with Indigenous communities to ensure that any future model is built on genuine and sustainable relationships that acknowledge sovereignties and are reciprocal, respectful, and equitable.

c) **Recommendation:** Undertake a process of engagement with Indigenous communities and organizations to explore culturally appropriate approaches to relationship building, collaboration and decolonization with the University of Waterloo.

d) **Recommendation:** Appoint and fund an external advisor from Six Nations of the Grand River to be a member of Advisory Committee initiatives.

e) **Recommendation:** Members of any committee or initiative may leave the appointment without sanction.

**Rationale:** The development and maintenance of relationships between the University and Indigenous communities require respect and commitment across all facets of university life and beyond. Developing such relationships requires the university to acknowledge, educate, and fund programming that develops opportunities for non-Indigenous community members to engage knowledgeably and respectfully with the intercultural multiplicity and dynamics of Indigenous communities.

7. RESEARCH ENGAGEMENT

a) **Recommendation:** Develop and advance international research initiatives that engage with Indigenous scholars in both local and global trajectories, and build connections and collaborative research-creation projects across disciplines.

b) **Recommendation:** Examine, identify, and prepare to change the University of Waterloo’s educational paradigms and foundations (research, teaching, service) in faculties, departments, and units to empower the full engagement and inclusion of Indigenous epistemologies and worldviews as a generative and interdisciplinary process.

**Rationale:** As a place of education and “innovation” the University of Waterloo must recognize, encourage, and support through funding initiatives research projects that advance Indigenous epistemologies and worldviews in order to materialize its commitment to community engagement at both local and international levels. The University of Waterloo must also encourage, support and fund intercultural collaborative projects that build meaningful and
potentially transformative initiatives between Indigenous and non-Indigenous research endeavors as it continues to rebuild its institutional foundations across disciplines.