

# Indigenous Relations Advisory Committee (IRAC)

Office of Indigenous Relations

## Terms of Reference

### 1. Purpose

The University of Waterloo's Indigenous Relations Advisory Committee (IRAC) has been established to provide advice to the Associate Vice-President, Indigenous Relations on all matters pertaining to Indigenous teaching, research, and service, and in particular, guidance on the University's commitments to Indigenization through the Indigenous Strategic Plan. Through the Indigenous Strategic Plan, the University of Waterloo has committed to Reconciliation by enhancing Indigenous representation among faculty, students, administrative staff and governance, and to work collaboratively with University faculties and departments to develop and implement Indigenous initiatives. This committee's purpose is to monitor and guide the progress of all initiatives that are embodied in the Indigenous Strategic Plan.

### 2. Objectives

The Indigenous Relations Advisory Committee has the primary responsibility of monitoring Indigenous strategies and initiatives at the University, to ensure that progress is being made on the implementation of the Indigenous Strategic Plan, to provide advice and recommend any internal or external resources to the Associate Vice-President, Indigenous Relations.

IRAC has four principal areas of focus:

- i. Identifying opportunities and strategies to promote greater awareness and recognition of Indigenous peoples within the University of Waterloo, with the related goals of:
  - embedding Indigenous perspectives throughout the University, and
  - developing more functional and productive relationships between Indigenous faculty, staff and students and the broader campus community;
- ii. Identifying funding opportunities and other resources to support Indigenous faculty, Indigenous learners and institutional initiatives, including support for curriculum development, independent Indigenous faculty-led research, collaborative research of value to Indigenous peoples and communities, and related projects that may lead to more functional and productive relationships;
- iii. Developing a more detailed understanding of Indigenous strategies developed at the University, the programs and initiatives that currently exist and are being established, and the unmet needs of Indigenous faculty, Indigenous students, and Indigenous communities that the University might address; and,

- iv. Reviewing and discussing progress reports on the Indigenous Strategic Plan and other commitments and indicators of the University's progress in its handling of Indigenous relations.

### **3. Guiding Principles**

The Indigenous Relations Advisory Committee comprises a team of Indigenous faculty members, staff, students, and community advisors committed to embodying and employing, in their work and relations with each other and with the wider University of Waterloo community the following principles:

- Respect for the diverse knowledges and ways of being of committee members;
- Communication that is open and transparent and a commitment to sharing information with others;
- Contribution to discussions that facilitates timely and culturally informed decisions;
- Collaboration with the Office of Indigenous Relations.

### **4. Membership & Appointment**

Given that the function of the IRAC encompasses education, policy, program, leadership, curriculum development and student support, its composition is designed to include representatives who can add meaningfully to discussions on the issues addressed during meetings. Further, it is important that the IRAC includes in its membership those who can act as agents of change to ensure that decisions come to fruition.

The IRAC is to be composed of representatives from Indigenous communities, Indigenous student representatives, Indigenous faculty and staff, and the Associate Vice-President, Indigenous Relations. Membership of the Committee shall consist of ten (10) voting members, which will include the following:

- Associate Vice-President, Indigenous Relations (1)
- Elder (1)
- Indigenous Faculty (2)
- Indigenous Staff (2)
- Indigenous Students (2)
- Indigenous Community (2)

The Director of the Waterloo Indigenous Student Services Centre will participate in IRAC meetings as a non-voting, *ex-officio* member. Additional non-voting, *ex-officio* members may be appointed to the committee as determined by the Associate Vice-President, Indigenous Relations in consultation with IRAC voting members. The terms of *ex-officio* members shall continue for as long as the member holds the office which entitles them to membership.

IRAC members will include one (1) member who is a citizen/member of either the Six Nations of the Grand River or the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. Where possible, IRAC members will comprise at least one (1) First Nations, Métis, and Inuit representative to reflect the breadth of Indigenous communities represented at the University of Waterloo and to allow for multiple Indigenous voices/perspectives in committee discussions.

Each member of IRAC must be a verified member or citizen of a First Nations, Métis or Inuit community as required according to the University of Waterloo's [Indigenous Citizenship/Membership Verification Guidelines](#).

The Associate Vice-President, Indigenous Relations will invite prospective members to join the IRAC. Once a member leaves or a space is vacant, the Associate Vice-President, Indigenous Relations will consult with existing IRAC members to identify prospective replacements.

Except for student members, each IRAC member should aim to fulfill a two (2)-year commitment to the committee. Student members should aim to fulfill a one (1)-year commitment to the committee.

There will be a yearly review on commitment/capacity to continue the work of the committee for each member. If an IRAC member fails to attend at least two (2) scheduled meetings without providing prior notice to either of the committee co-chairs, that member may be asked to vacate their position on the committee.

A committee secretary (non-voting) will be appointed from staff within the Office of Indigenous Relations to attend IRAC meetings and will work with the co-chairs to:

- Communicate and liaise with committee members,
- Draft and circulate committee meeting agenda and minutes,
- Prepare and manage the committee's budget,
- Liaise with the Chair on logistical matters.

## **5. Chairs**

The committee shall have two (2) co-chairs, one of whom will be the Associate Vice-President, Indigenous Relations. The other co-chair will be a member of IRAC and shall be appointed by the Associate Vice-President, Indigenous Relations following consultation with IRAC members for a two-year renewable term.

Using an alternating model, each co-chair will be responsible for meeting facilitation.

The co-chairs' responsibilities include:

- Setting discussion items and topics for meeting agenda,

- Facilitation of meeting discussions,
- Communication with Office of Indigenous Relations staff to address questions expressed by committee members related to the Indigenous Strategic Plan,
- Monitoring the committee's budget.

## **6. Meeting Procedures and Quorum**

The Indigenous Relations Advisory Committee shall meet four (4) times per calendar year on the first Friday of January, April, June and September, or at the call of the co-chairs as required. Committee meetings will typically be three (3) hours in length.

At least five (5) or fifty percent (50%) of voting members, including one (1) of the co-chairs must be present in a scheduled meeting to constitute a quorum.

Decisions will normally be made by consensus, otherwise they will be determined by a simple majority of members present.

Specific faculty or staff members from the broader University of Waterloo campus community may be invited to meetings occasionally when their participation and expertise is needed for information and/or advice in relation to issues under discussion. Faculty, staff and students of the University of Waterloo with an interest in the Indigenous Strategic Plan are welcome to attend IRAC meetings as observers.

## **7. Compensation**

Compensation will be provided to the following committee members for their participation in IRAC meetings. Travel costs for personal vehicle use will be reimbursed based on University of Waterloo [Guidelines for Expenses](#):

- Elder: \$75 per hour
- Indigenous Students: \$35 per hour
- Indigenous Community: \$40 per hour
- Travel Rate: \$0.59 per kilometre for personal vehicles

## **8. Accountability**

Meeting agenda, minutes and relevant documents will be prepared by the co-chairs and circulated to committee members by the committee secretary no later than two (2) weeks prior to a scheduled meeting date.

Minutes of Indigenous Relations Advisory Committee meetings are approved at the next Committee meeting or by means of electronic approval.

## **9. Amendment, Modification or Variation**

This Terms of Reference may be amended in writing by the co-chairs after consultation and consensual agreement of the Indigenous Relations Advisory Committee members.