

Indigenous Advisory Committee Meeting

Minutes of the Meeting – January 10, 2025

Present: Jean Becker, Melissa Ireland, Eileen Antone, Brad Regehr, Tracy Primeau, Jen Smerdon, John Lewis, Logan MacDonald, Dale Ashley Bellaire, Amanda St. Marie, Emma Rain Smith, Richard Myers, Ryan MacTavish

Regrets: Savannah Sloat

Opening Ceremony and Acknowledgements

Eileen opened the meeting with a traditional thanksgiving address. Jean acknowledged the territories that the University is situated on.

Approval of Agenda and Minutes

- Jean asks for any conflicts of interest regarding the agenda items.
- Motion to approve Agenda, moved by Tracy, seconded by Amanda.
- Motion to approve Minutes from September 13, 2024, moved by Eileen, seconded by Logan

Sector Scan

- John introduces the sector scan, highlighting the report by David Newhouse on indigenous strategic plans at Canadian universities. Newhouse examined four factors: indigenous strategic plans, leadership presence, linkages to broader institutional plans, and indigenous services and spaces.
- Waterloo has many of the elements Newhouse identified as successful, such as active recruitment of Indigenous students and embedding Indigenous Knowledges in scholarship. There is a need for dedicated personnel and budgets for indigenization efforts and the challenges of supporting Indigenous faculty.

Update on the health of the University

- Jean reports on a presentation by Alex Usher, highlighting the financial challenges facing post-secondary education, including a \$75 million deficit at Waterloo. Waterloo is currently under a hiring freeze; the Office of Indigenous Relations is in need of more staff.
- There will be potential impact with the new hospital on North Campus, and the opportunities for Indigenous health initiatives.
- Jean will be retiring at the end of 2025, noted upcoming transition in senior leadership at Waterloo.

Updates from Director, Indigenous Relations

- Melissa provides an update on the Indigenous Training Strategy, noting the strong engagement in the initial survey and the need to align the strategy with available resources.
- New Indigenous hires, including Catherine Porter with CEE, Brad LeBaron with Campus Wellness, and Dr. Sarah Connors an Indigenous Naturopath.
- Working on a proposal with SVPRO for a Maker Space, also working on a digital story project to enhance wayfinding on campus.

- Committee is invited to attend the launch of an Indigenous athletic logo on February 4th.

Updates/Reports re: WISC and PFAL reporting

- Emma provides an update on WISC, including programming support, elder house visits, and a fish skin leather workshop, WISC was an alternative location for students to write exams and that will continue this term.
- Upcoming programming includes a student drum circles, a drum making workshop, and planning a film screening of the movie “Seeds”.
- The Indigenous Speaker Series will be continuing with an talk by Katherine Vermette, writer of The Break. This will be hosted in a round table discussion on March 25th.
- Emma discusses the end-of-term feast and the closing of WISC events in April.
- Emma introduces new swag items designed by local artist Alannah Jewel and plans for a student design competition for the next year.

Indigenous Faculty Report

- John reports on the Indigenous Faculty Council meeting, focusing on course enrollment, faculty performance evaluation, and the formation of the Indigenous Research Council. Outlines the challenges of course cancelation and the need for a balanced approach to enrollment.
- Ongoing work on redefining faculty performance evaluation to better accommodate Indigenous scholarship.
- John highlights the formation of the Indigenous Research Council and its role in addressing potential harms in research with Indigenous communities. Emphasizes the importance of collaboration and communication between the Indigenous Research Council and other research councils within the faculties.
- John discusses the new listing of courses with a strong indigenous focus, highlighting the cross-faculty offerings and areas for improvement.
- John notes that the arts faculty has a significant number of indigenous courses, while Faculty of Health is also noted. There is a need to identify gaps in the current offerings and enhance delivery where necessary.

Feedback on IAC meeting format and other business

- No significant complaints raised. The hybrid meeting format works well for everyone, with positive feedback on the lunch and pre-reading materials.
- Request for update on Capital Campaign, no information despite initial information.
- Amanda shares experiences from an open house event, highlighting the interest and questions from high school students about Indigenous-related courses and opportunities.
- Jean suggests initiating formal reports to the university's governing bodies to enhance the council's position. Highlighted the importance of reporting to the President and Senate, with John mentioning recent presentations to DC plus and the board.
- Melissa outlines the institutional analysis and planning breakdown of the strategic plan and performance measure indicators. The focus is on aligning projects with the strategic plan and TRC pieces, using project management tools for mapping and coding.

Closing Remarks and Adjournment

- Eileen closes the meeting, gives thanks for the work being done to enhance Indigenous teachings and learning. Highlights the importance of the work for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.
- Motion to end the meeting moved by John, seconded by Dale.
- Next meeting scheduled for April 4, 2025