

Indigenous Relations Advisory Committee Meeting

Minutes of the Meeting - September 13, 2024

The Indigenous Relations Advisory Committee (IRAC) meeting on September 13, 2024, discussed the establishment of the committee, its purpose, and the approval of its terms of reference. Key points included the need for strategic advice on the Indigenous Strategic Plan, the importance of incorporating Indigenous worldviews into all faculties, and the growth of Indigenous student enrollment. The meeting also highlighted ongoing projects such as the North Campus land-based learning space, the Indigenous Training Strategy, and the Indigenous Youth Outreach Program. The committee emphasized the need for flexibility in reporting and accountability across faculties.

Present: Jean Becker, Melissa Ireland, Eileen Antone, Brad Regehr, Tracy Primeau, Jen Smerdon, John Lewis, Savannah Sloat, Dale Ashley Bellaire, Amanda St. Marie, Emma Rain Smith

Regrets: Kurt Gibson, Richard Myers

Opening Ceremony and Acknowledgements

- Eileen performs an opening, giving thanks to the Creator, and concludes with a thank you and a reminder of the importance of keeping ceremonies and traditions alive.

Approval of Agenda

- Jean asks for any conflicts of interest regarding the agenda items.
 - Motion to approve Agenda, moved by Brad, seconded by Amanda.

Administrative Updates and Indigenous Strategic Plan Overview

- Jen provides an update on the administrative aspects of the Indigenous Advisory Council, including the creation of a Teams channel for document sharing.

Reviewing Terms of Reference

- John presents the terms of reference, an overview of the Indigenous Strategic Plan for the Indigenous Relations Advisory Committee.
 - Motion to approve as amended, moved by John, seconded by Tracy.
- The committee's purpose is to provide strategic advice and guidance on the Indigenous Strategic Plan and monitor progress.
- The committee aims to meet four times a year, with a two-year appointment for members, 1-year appointment for student representatives, led by two co-chairs.
- Discussions on the terms of reference include incorporating indigenous worldviews into all faculties.
- Outlines the expectations of being on the IRAC the committee consists of Indigenous peoples of the extended campus community, providing advice and recommendations pertaining to direction/redirection or resources.

- Summarizes commitment, meeting 4 times a year with 50% representation at each meeting, decisions to be made by consensus and a majority vote when needed.
- Committee to be made up of Inuit, Metis and First Nations, a request was made to have representation from the host nations.

Indigenous Representation Across Campus

- The strategy includes a proposal for the Global Futures Initiative to attract more indigenous scholars to the university.
- Currently 9 indigenous faculty, Science's Canada Research Chair is the first indigenous faculty hired in that Faculty.
- Cluster hire has not succeeded in hiring across the faculties, only the Faculty of Arts has been successful and overall, it's a competitive landscape.
- Number of indigenous employees has doubled from 2021 to 2023, currently 110 staff.
- Indigenous undergraduate student enrollment has increased by 67%, graduate students have remained the same.
- Working on placemaking, creating physical spaces and indigenous identifiers including the Outdoor Gathering Space, wayfinding project, Moccasin identifying project.

Updates on Indigenous Student Services and Programs

- Emma provides updates on indigenous student services and programs, including the BSW placement student, partnership with the Accessibility Office to provide space for an alternative writing space for students for final exams. Also creating a partnership with the theatre department; launching the first indigenous writing production along with a basket making and puppet making workshop.
- WISC hosted their first-year orientation and had 20 people attend.
- Bridge installation, in partnership with Faculty of Arts, opening on October 24th and closing on November 7th.
- Jean shares that efforts are being made to designate space for indigenous students on main campus.
- Jean shares information about the North Campus project, which includes plans for a land-based teaching and learning space, ceremonial space, and a sweat lodge.
- The committee discusses the importance of land-based learning and the need for collaboration with faculties to offer indigenous-focused courses.

Indigenous Training Strategy, Indigenous Youth Outreach Program

- Melissa introduces the Indigenous Training Strategy, which aims to provide training for staff and faculty on indigenous topics.
- The committee discusses the Indigenous Youth Outreach Program, which aims to align with existing youth work and create new opportunities for indigenous students.
- The importance of social media and communication channels for indigenous relations is highlighted.

Discussion on Indigenous Verification and Membership

- Jean discusses the process and challenges of verifying indigenous membership, including the recognition of certain communities and the handling of incorrect submissions.
- The committee acknowledges the need for a policy on indigenous verification and the establishment of an indigenous verification committee.
- The importance of self-identification and the support provided to students and staff is emphasized.
- The committee discusses the need for a framework to hold faculties accountable for indigenization efforts and the potential for expanding the role of indigenous relations advisors in faculties.

Meeting Format and Future Plans

- The committee discusses the format and timing of future meetings, with a preference for virtual options and the first Friday of the month.
- The importance of having a second co-chair is discussed, with Brad being nominated and agreeing to the role.
 - Motion to appoint Brad, nominated by Tracy, seconded by Jean.
- The committee plans to establish a framework for reporting on indigenous initiatives and activities across the university.
- The meeting concludes with a reminder of upcoming events and the importance of continued collaboration and support for indigenous students and faculty.

Adjournment

- Meeting concluded; next meeting scheduled for January 10, 2025.