Indigenous Advisory Circle

Minutes of the Electronic Meeting, November 20 – December 5 2017

Participating: Eileen Antone, Grafton Antone, Jaimie Lickers, Brenda Simpson, Chris Read, Marisha Roman, Brock Higgins, Lori Campbell, Rick Myers

1. Opening

The meeting opened with an electronic invitation from the Principal on November 20. Grafton provided the following prayer:

Creator we come together this morning as the IAC and pray that a good mind would be present for all of us on this new e-meeting. There are many things that we need to hear, see and respond to. Bless us in a good way. ya w^ ko. Meegwetch

2. Agenda

Motion: That the agenda be adopted as circulated (Brenda/Brock) CARRIED

3. Minutes

Motion: That the minutes of the meeting of June 16th be adopted as circulated (Brenda/Brock) CARRIED

4. Principal’s Report

Rick circulated the Principal’s Report to the St. Paul’s Board from its October meeting and provided a verbal update on the progress being made with two academic initiatives: the Minor in Indigenous Studies, and a proposed Bachelor of Indigenous Entrepreneurship.

Marisha asked for a clarification of the implications of corridor funding for new program development and Rick provided a brief overview of the new funding approach and its consequences. Rick also provided background about CCBR at her request and a few examples of the kind of work they do.

5. Director’s Report

Lori circulated her report, which is appended to these minutes.

6. Name Change

The Principal had asked the new Director to lead a consultation regarding a possible Indigenous name for the Center. Staff and students explored the matter over a number of months, in consultation with some external experts. The rationale for the recommendation is appended to this report.
MOTION: That IAC endorse the proposal to change the name of the Center to: Shatitsirótha’ : Waterloo Indigenous Student Centre

Moved by: Jaimie/Brock CARRIED

7. Membership

Lori and Rick noted that the IAC currently does not have any representation from Inuit peoples, or from indigenous students. It was also noted that the work of the Center would be enhanced if we could add some local members who might be available to attend WAEC functions.

MOTION: That IAC the Principal and the WAEC Director take steps to add IAC members that represent the following: Inuit peoples, indigenous students at UW, and Grand River Metis Council. (Jaimie/Brenda) CARRIED

Rick noted that under the IAC Terms of Reference, appointments are made by the Principal, in consultation with the President of The University of Waterloo. Once Lori and Rick have identified suitable prospects, Rick will consult with the President and then proceed.

8. Adjournment

There being no further business, this electronic meeting concluded on December 5th.

R. Myers
Recording Secretary

APPENDIX A DIRECTOR’S REPORT

1. Strategic direction
1.1 WAEC

In late June I organized a full-day strategic planning meeting for my team. It was held at Stratford Campus and we were able to receive a tour of the campus to learn more about programs offered. The rest of our day was spent reviewing what we had done over the last year and organizing what we would do for the 2017-2018 year. We used the medicine wheel as a guide in our planning. Using visual representation via colored sticky notes that corresponded to the mental, physical, spiritual and emotional aspects of self we mapped out the events, activities and supports we had provided to students over the previous year. The assessment revealed that we had not offered as much mental (academic support) and physical support in relation to the other aspects of self. As we mapped out our planning for the current year we made some adjustments to ensure we had an overall more balanced approach.
It is also noteworthy to mention that it was apparent that staff in the centre had been involved extensively external to the centre itself. This was being reflected in things such as being invited to deliver class lectures, sitting on panels, help guiding curriculum development and, community engagement not directly related to recruitment or reciprocal relationship building. As we planned for this year, it was important to me to refocus the work of the centre to prioritize supporting the success of current Indigenous students first and foremost, then move to engaging and networking to the broader UW community, onto Indigenous external community and finally broader external community.

Student leadership and capacity building has been another key priority. Many students have also been engaged to speak in classrooms, sitting on panels, or drumming and singing at events, bringing with them their “expertise” which is rooted in their indigeneity. Their work has been considerable and was also being expected as unpaid labour, but they are still required to maintain their studies and work outside of the institution for paid labour. They have been getting run ragged! I have implemented a “financial compensation” protocol for Indigenous students whereby departments and/or faculty are providing them honorariums or gift cards for sharing their “expertise”. This seems to be going smoothly and people are happy to compensate. I also recognize that WAEC needs to draw on students more to assist with events such as soup lunches and recruitment events. WAEC also follows the honorarium and/or gift card compensation protocol. This has resulted in several students being able to work a few hours less at their outside employment, allowing more time to be refocused onto studies.

The renaming of the centre process has progressed. It falls under its own agenda item and details will be shared later this week.

Dr. Myers touched on the Ceremonial Fire Grounds in his report. In addition, we will be hosting an opening of this space in the spring – so please watch for your invitation!

1.2 UWaterloo

The U Waterloo Indigenization Task Force is well underway! There are five working groups (WG): research, student experience, curriculum, policies & procedures and, community engagement. I am chair of the community engagement. We put a call out to all of UW staff, students and faculty to complete an expression of interest if they wanted to participate on a WG. We also directly contacted (via HR) all self-declared Indigenous employees to invite them to bring their expertise. Overall we received 200+ expressions!
All those who self-identified as Indigenous were placed on WG and the rest of the spots were filled based upon WG stream expertise, relationship personally or professional to Indigenous peoples/communities and, diversity from departments. Each WG has 10 members, plus the Chair. We will all be hosting our first meetings later this month. The WG streams will be directed by the group members themselves. Our Indigenization website is launched and you can find updates here: https://uwaterloo.ca/indigenization-strategy/

Diana Parry, Vice President, Human Rights, Equity and Inclusion, oversees the task force. She would like an opportunity to meet the IAC at our next meeting. Her and I have also discussed what role the IAC can play in this work. Some questions to think about:
- Do you want to collectively or individually be directly involved? If so, how much?
- Do you want me to primarily keep you in the loop via email?
- Would you be willing to review our work and provide feedback?

We have put a fresh breath into another webpage that was title the Truth and Reconciliation Response Projects page. It had focused on a few projects that were completed before my time. We decided that we should look at it again and revamp it to meet current needs. It is primarily a resource page for employees and perhaps community members and is still under renovations but here is the link: https://uwaterloo.ca/truth-and-reconciliation-response-projects/

2. Building and strengthening partnerships
2.1 Internal - highlights

I continue to meet regularly with faculty and staff from UW regarding curriculum development and resource development. I have provided several presentations to departments about my role and about the Indigenization strategy. I attempt to attend as many UW events as I can in order for people to become familiar and comfortable with me so that we can have conversations about how to do things better at UW. I am currently developing a process to better tabulate data for me and my staff. This will be reflected at our next IAC meeting.

I have been networking with STP Office of Advancement to explore opportunities for Indigenous student financial support through potential and current donors.

We have proactively outreached and engaged onsite at both UW Cambridge Campus and Stratford Campus.

For the first time ever, at the UW President’s townhall, he had a slide on Indigenization. In addition, there is a centerfold in the President’s report that speaks to Indigenization.
Yes, this may be a little later than other institutions, but we are definitely at the table now! The public acknowledgment that we are vested in this work contributes to our institutional accountability to actually doing the work!

2.2 External - highlights
Our 14th annual Pow Wow was a huge success. It was held in late September in Waterloo Park. Others that were involved last year tell me that this year’s pow wow was bigger and very well organized. I shook many hands on that day and I asked many people the same question, “Have you been to our pow wow before?” I received dozens of answers from folks who said it was their first pow wow and they wanted to come out and learn.

Next year is our 15th annual Pow Wow and we are going to focus on the theme of Indigenous Alumni. This fits well with work that I have already undertaken with our research project to reconnect and celebrate our Indigenous alumni and to engage them back into our institution to meet, mentor and network with current students. It will be held on September 22, 2018.

3. Recruitment
3.1 Youth outreach - highlights
Circle of Life Camp (youth and caregivers) August, 2017
- Target participants 10-12 year old youth and a caregiver
- 9 youth and 7 caregivers attended with one family being return participants and with two children
- Centre for Community Based Research did an intensive evaluation for us so that we can strengthen future camps
- Key strengths: great activities, engaged staff, great flow, high value on family-centred approach, non-judgmental
- Key outcomes: increased awareness of post-secondary education and Indigenous cultures, along with better understanding of STEM fields

Directions Camp (grade 11-12 youth and chaperone) November, 2017
- 20 youth and 4 chaperones – very well attended
- In-house evaluations still under review

Huron Heights Community Powow
Eastwood Collegiate Institute Chanie Wenjack Walk

3.2 Graduate programs - highlights
I have been working with a Dr. Wendi Adair, Psychology Department, on our research project and out of that planning came the idea to specifically outreach to try to engage Indigenous applications into the MASc in Organizational Psychology or the PhD program. I have been successful in recruiting two qualified Indigenous applicants, one into each
program. This is very exciting as we move forward on building our team for the five-year research project!
I believe this tells us something very important: UW could build a strategy around recruiting Indigenous graduate students into our unique programs IF Indigenous students feel that their indigeneity is valued by our institution and the work that we are vested in.

APPENDIX B  HIGHLIGHTS
REPORT ON PROPOSAL TO CHANGE THE NAME OF THE WAEC
Renaming of the Waterloo Aboriginal Education Centre

1. Background
   Early in my appointment I embarked on engaging with WAEC staff and Indigenous students to discuss the name of the centre for two main reasons:
   1.1 Terminology
   Across Canada, we have been seeing a shift in terminology used to identify the collective group of those who identify as First Nations, Metis and Inuit peoples. The term in place as been “Aboriginal” and the shift has been to “Indigenous”. The overarching reason for the shift seems based on the idea that the term “Aboriginal” has been a government-given identifier whereas the term “Indigenous” grew out of original peoples of some land bases naming themselves outside of government interference. A common denominator for people identifying as Indigenous is that they have all experienced colonization.
   1.2 Connection
   The WAEC staff and students were feeling personal disconnect from the centre space itself. The overall feeling was that they had a room, with offices around, and a place to work and visit, but not a space that they were intimately feeling a connection to. I felt it was important to engage them in such a way that they could gain a sense of connection specifically to the space.

2. Process
   Keeping in mind the principal of “nothing about us, without us” and the feeling of disconnect to the space that was coming from staff and students it was vital that they were directly involved in any changes that were to occur. I hosted a luncheon for the group and I shared information about terminology. I provided a historical background and information from many conversations I had been involved in regarding contemporary terminology. I also asked them if they would like to name the centre and if so, to consider questions such as: Why do I come to the centre? What feeling do I want when I walk in? What feeling do I want guests to have when they walk in? What does the centre mean to me? Do I want the name in English and/or an Indigenous language (if so, which one/s)?
   Once I had provided them the background information and answered any questions they had, I asked them to meet 2 or 3 more times to discuss with each other. I also had them reach out to other students who were not at this particular meeting.
3. **Outcome**

By spring the students had decided that they wanted to switch “Aboriginal” to “Indigenous” in the WAEC name and also in the Aboriginal Students’ Association (ASA) name. ASA moved ahead and has already switched their name to Indigenous Students’ Association.

The students came back with some ideas around the centre name that would signify an atmosphere of safety, welcoming, community, friendship. They also wanted support with finding someone to translate it into a Mohawk language, Kanien’kéha. They recognized that other languages are also spoken in the area, but they felt most connected to Kanien’kéha at this time.

I had followed up with a couple of Kanien’kéha speakers over the summer, but none who had a close connection to the centre.

In late summer, it was decided that Renison University College would run an introduction to Kanien’kéha language course. They connected with a recent graduate of the immersion language program from Six Nations Polytechnic. Several students from the centre enrolled in the course and quickly built a relationship with the instructor. We invited the instructor to a conversation about the centre name.

From that conversation four name possibilities arose:

- **Tsi le'nikonhraientastáhkwha’** - Where they create understanding (challenging to say)
- **Tsi lontia'larohróktha’** - The gathering place (noted to be a common theme for other centres)
- **Tsi Rontatia'takéhnhas** - Where they all help each other
- **Shatitsirótha’** - They re-ignite the flame (top choice)

After talking to staff and students we collectively feel most connected to **Shatitsirótha’** - They re-ignite the flame. This name has a direct temporal connection to our birthing of our new Ceremonial Fire Grounds (CFG). The CFG opens up a stronger commitment from STP as we walk a path to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples and WAEC in particular. It also signifies the renewed energy and sense of connection to the centre space itself, and to the greater University. It is also timely as the University of Waterloo embarks on working on its Indigenization Strategy.

4. **Proposed Name** (our logo will remain the same)

**Shatitsirótha’**

**Waterloo Indigenous Student Centre**

5. **Next Steps**

The students and staff at WAEC would like support from the Indigenous Advisory Council to:

- **4.1 Change the name from Waterloo Aboriginal Education Centre to Waterloo Indigenous Student Centre.**

- **4.2 Approve one of the above listed names, noting the top choice is Shatitsirótha’.**

One additional point: I heard Dr. Vianne Timmons, University of Regina President, speak that the National Building Reconciliation Forum a few weeks ago about some pushback they had regarding inclusion of Indigenous language in renaming streets on campus. The city had told her originally that the words were too difficult to say, to which she responded, “I told them that John Diefenbaker Boulevard was also a pretty challenging name to say.” Point was taken and they were approved to proceed with their name changes. I say this to remind us to not let our western minds blur our work. Rest assured, I do have a plan in mind to help spread the word of our new name, teach it, and help people feel confident in saying it!
Upon approval, we will be hosting a launch in the centre in January to announce and celebrate our new name! Invitations will definitely be sent your way as students are excited to get to know you all a little better (and I know you are looking forward to engage on a student level as well).