

Indigenous Education Council (formerly Indigenous Advisory Circle)

Minutes of the Meeting of November 13, 2023

1:00 pm, Rm 257 and Zoom

Present: John Lewis, Savannah Seaton, Eileen Antone, Jean Becker, Tracy Primeau, Rick Myers

1. Opening

Brad opened the meeting by welcoming John Lewis to the IAC. John is a Professor of Planning in the Faculty of Environment and has recently been appointed Director of Indigenous Faculty Relations. John is a member of MNO.

Eileen offered an opening prayer.

2. Agenda and Minutes

The Minutes of the May meeting were approved as circulated. The agenda circulated prior to the meeting was also approved with the addition of "Centralization" under Other Business

3. Report of the Director

Savannah reported on four items:

- The videography project is almost done. Staff hope to have it available for showing at the Feast on December 1.
- Consideration is being given to building a sweat lodge down by the Ceremonial Firegrounds. Students need more opportunities to participate regularly in ceremonies. The hope would be to run a monthly sweat. Elder Myeengun has suggested putting the teepee over the sweat lodge to protect it from the elements but the current location of the teepee is too far from the entrance to the Ceremonial Firegrounds. One possibility is to relocate the planter for the cedar and relocate the teepee there.
- The firekeeper has noted that the beautiful granite turtle in the middle of the firepit gets very slick when wet and could be a safety hazard.
- The 20th powwow was held in late September. For the first time, it was indoors at the soccer stadium where the artificial grass was a major asset. Attendance was

approximately 3,000. This event was a collaboration with the Office of Indigenous Relations and the Department of Athletics and Recreation. One small issue is that food and drink were not permitted on the turf, which was a challenge for vendors who did not have someone to relieve them. There was also some controversy over the role of dogs at the powwow.

4. Report of the Principal

Rick reported on five items:

- The launch of the INDENT Diploma program has been disappointing. We have six students involved. About fifteen applied but the majority did not meet UW's admission standards. We have been in conversation with external partners to ensure better results next year.
- In support of INDENT, the College is launching an Indigenous Entrepreneurship Incubator. Incubator staff are proposing to call their incubator The Flint Hub.
- The College has appointed Dr. Sarah General to a tenure-track faculty position in Indigenous Studies. Sarah was until recently the VP (Academic) at Six Nations Polytechnical School, and we are hopeful that her appointment here will facilitate greater collaboration between UW and Six Nations. Sarah is currently doing intensive Mohawk language training and will take up her appointment at United College in the summer of 2024.
- To bridge the gap until Sarah begins, the College has appointed Dr. Bimadoshka Pucan (Saugeen First Nation) to a one-year full-time position in Indigenous Studies. Indications are that her courses are going very well.
- On Saturday evening, the College will host Jody Wilson-Raybould in conversation with Chancellor Michaëlle Jean on the topic of reconciliation.

John Lewis expressed an interest in serving as a mentor with The Flint Hub. Rick will provide the necessary introductions.

5. Terms of Reference

Savanah presented modified terms of reference, reflecting the discussion at the previous meeting. One further amendment was to make students eligible for appointments shorter than three years and to make students eligible for honoraria.

Members of the IAC were unanimous in their support for the final package of changes. A copy is appended to these minutes.

Rick will share the proposed changes with the President of UW and will then bring them to the United College Board for formal approval.

6. Other Business

Savanah raised the possibility of transferring responsibility for the WISC from United College to the Office of Indigenous Relations. It was suggested that such a transfer would have three advantages:

- UW is in a better position to provide expanded resources to the WISC.
- Coordination between the WISC and OIR would be improved.
- Students would be less confused about who does what and essentially able to better access services available to them.

There was general agreement that the key criterion for thinking about the idea would be what is best for the students. Rick and Jean have a meeting with the Provost to ascertain his views on the idea, including whether a move to UW would open the door to enhanced resources.

7. Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting should take place shortly after the next meeting of the United College Board of Governors.

The meeting adjourned at 3:05 with a prayer from Eileen.

Minutes by Rick

enclosure

Waterloo Indigenous Student Centre
United College, University of Waterloo
Indigenous Education Council (formerly Indigenous Advisory Council)
Director's Report

November 13, 2023

1. Videography project
 2. Sweat Lodge on UTD Greens
 3. 20th Annual Pow Wow
 4. Strategic Planning budget allocation from UTD
 5. Proposal for centralization of WISC to structural feed into OIR at UW
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1. Update: Videography project

- Hoping to have ready to upload to the WISC main website page, as well as unveil at one or both of the following events:
 - November 28th Stanley Knowles Lecture dinner with Keynote Speaker Jody Wilson-Raybould
 - December 1st End-of-term Wiisniida Feast co-hosted by WISC and OIR

2. Sweat Lodge on UTD Greens

- Students do not have access to ongoing sweat lodge ceremonies on campus. Accessing off-campus poses many barriers such as cost, transportation, reconnection anxiety, etc. WISC had partnered with Crow Shield Lodge and Faculty of Health Elder to build a sweat lodge build and conduct a ceremony for the Indigenous campus community off-site which was a huge success. The demand highlighted a need for a sweat lodge to be built on campus for sustainable access to ongoing ceremonies for Indigenous students at UW.
- Preliminary consideration to build the lodge on UTD Greens are underway as follows:
 - Option 1: use same firepit
 - Take apart and move cedar medicine box
 - Build lodge, then put teepee up around it (closer to firepit)
 - Remove turtle tile around firepit (liability, very slippery)
 - Potentially avoids need for GRCA permit (tbd)
 - Option 2: new firepit solely for sweat lodge ceremonies
 - Scope/locate
 - Requires new GRCA permit for new firepit

3. 20th Annual Pow Wow

- Came in higher cost than expected with total costs nearing \$40k, though with all sponsorship fundraising efforts, the final total is approximately \$7k split 50/50 with OIR, making for considerable cost recovery and alleviating some financial constraints on the heavily strained annual non-core funded and static WISC budget.
- Sponsors: UW Athletics & Recreation, City of Waterloo, United, Renison, St. Jerome's, Conrad Grebel, Fac-Arts, Fac-Engineering, Fac-Health, Fac-Math, Fac-Environment, and Conrad Grebel Student Council.
- Amazing turnout over 3,000 attendees, 70 dancers, 70 Indigenous artisans and informational vendors, 3 Indigenous food vendors and UW Food Services.
- Challenges: no food or drink (water only) allowed on turf.

4. Strategic Planning budget allocation from UTD

- WISC planned to develop Guiding Principles naturally through the Strategic Planning consultant contract and was tasked to share with the IEC, as there is interest in the group considering them for implementation into the IEC Terms of Reference. However, a request for proposals for this work is on hold due to ongoing structural challenges that inherently and unintentionally wedge the working relationship between OIR and WISC, and ultimately the advancement of centralized Indigenous student services. It does not make good business sense to invest in a WISC Strategic Plan as UW and OIR released their 2023-28 Strategic Plan that highlights "Services and Supports" as one of five major theme goals for the campus community.
- These funds are proposed to be utilized for an Organizational Assessment of Indigenous Services and/or Indigenous Campus Culture in lieu of a WISC Strategic Plan.

5. Proposal for centralization of WISC to structural feed into OIR at UW

- This has been pitched through many informal meetings over the past year as the WISC Director identified as the main issues and key goal to advance Indigenous student services for UW.
- It is recommended that WISC physically stay at UTD under some sort of rental arrangement and that all financial and authority reporting structurally changes from UTD to OIR.
- The WISC Director made the centralization proposal to OIR AVP and UTD Principal, both of whom agreed the need in principle. Given the current and public budget constraints for UW and many other research-intensive institutions, the current proposal is primarily focused on making only structural changes at this time. The OIR AVP and UTD Principal are scheduled to meet with the Provost next week to discuss and carry forward the proposal.