Aboriginal Council, Queen’s University
Meeting Minutes
January 23, 2017 6:00 – 8:30 pm 340 Richardson Hall, Queen’s University

In attendance:
Marlene Brant-Castellano, Co-Chair & Council Elder
Caroline Davis, Co-Chair
Jan Hill, Council Secretary
Benoit-Antoine Bacon, Provost & VP Academic (Principal’s Delegate)
Ann Tierney, Vice-Provost & Dean of Student Affairs (Provost Delegate)
Sam McKegney, Professor, Faculty of Arts & Science
Donato Santeramo, Department Head, Languages, Literatures & Cultures
Armand Ruffo, Professor, Faculty of Arts & Science
Lea Keren, Social Issues Commissioner, Alma Mater Society
Lauren Winkler, President Queen’s Native Students Association (QNSA) &
Deputy Commissioner, Indigenous Affairs – Alma Mater Society
Billie Kears on behalf of Lydia Brant, Queen’s-American Indian Science &
Engineering Society (Q-AISES)
Mirelle Lapointe, Ardoch Algonquin First Nation
Jason Leblanc, Executive Director, Tungasvvingat Inuit
Robert Rittwage, Correctional Services Canada
Dawn Lavalle-Harvard, Ontario Native Women’s Association (by phone)
Carol Ann Budd – Alumna
Dan Brant – Tyendinaga Mohawk Council
Don Klinger, on behalf of, Lindsay Morcom – Faculty of Education
Vanessa McCourt, Four Directions Aboriginal Student Centre

Observers:
Wanda Praamsma
Ellie Sadinsky
Rebecca Luce-Kapler
Corrina Fitzgerald
Teri Shearer
Paolo Kalita
Saba Farbodkia
Ginette Denford

Regrets:
Melanie Howard
Elaine Jeffrey
Natasha Stirrett
Stephanie Roy
Pamela Ouart
Adam Hopkins

Guests:
Norman Varano, Faculty of Arts and Science
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| Provost’s Update Benoit-Antoine Bacon | The ongoing work of the Truth & Reconciliation Commission Task Force continues to be a focus at Queen’s. The Provost mentioned Call to Action # 16 related to the creation of PSE-level programs in Indigenous languages and highlighted the two certificates in development: Indigenous Languages (Mohawk, Inuktitut & Ojibway), and Mohawk language and culture in partnership with Tsi Tyonnhet Onkwawennen in Tyendinaga.  
The Principal has established an implementation committee to review past reports on racism, inclusion and diversity, identify barriers to implementing past recommendations, and the steps needed to remove these barriers. Queen's has made considerable progress but much work remains to be done. The work of the TRC Task Force is a good model for the kinds of meaningful discussions we want to have around diversity & inclusion, and how we can sustain these discussions. While, the work of the TRC Task Force is closely connected to the work of the Diversity & Inclusion committee, they shouldn’t be “lumped together.”  
The Queen’s National Scholar program funds a number of positions in important and strategic areas. Two proposals that have gone on to the second round of selection include Indigenous Studies land & language-based pedagogies & practices, and Aboriginal Literature & French migrant literatures. Queen's will fund up to 4 positions this year. Drs. Ruffo and Vorano are Queen’s National Scholars.  
The provost encouraged council members to visit Dr. Vorano’s current exhibition – Picturing Arctic Modernity Baffin Island – curated by Norman Vorano at the Agnes Jan.7-Apr.9 |
| Presentation by Norman Vorano Assistant Professor, Art History | Dr. Vorano spoke to Council about his research on Cape Dorset prints, now on an online exhibition of the Canadian Museum of History in Ottawa, and about the more positive role that museums, with their colonial legacies, can play in the lives of Indigenous peoples, using technology. The exhibition is an example of how digital technologies, including social media, can be used to connect and empower Arctic communities with collections of Inuit cultural heritage.  
One of Dr. Vorano’s current projects is a comparative analysis of Cape Dorset prints and their impact on Indigenous communities. |
| **Self-Identification: Positioning and Promotion** | Currently there is no mechanism in place at Queen’s for students to identify, change, un-identify their Aboriginal ancestry. The only opportunity is for Ontario-based students to choose to self-identity or not, at the time of application. With provincial government funding to create a mechanism in the student information system, FDASC hired Lauren Winkler in summer 2016 to research, conduct an environmental scan, and consult with stakeholders on and off campus to determine an appropriate mechanism and text to provide all Queen’s students with the ability to self-identify when/if they choose to do so, and change the information at any time. Lauren updated Council on the current draft that consists of five optional questions on the students’ “Personal Information” page. It is currently being “built” by the Office of the University Registrar and will be launched this Spring/Summer.
Council members made the following suggestions for the text, which was circulated in the agenda package:

- embed who gets the information at the beginning of the survey.
- use accessible terms for high school students.
- Have the tool available in various languages (Inuktitut, Mohawk, etc).

As the marketing and promotion strategy is developed, Council members were asked for input on the following questions:

1. How can the university best position the benefits/importance of self-identification to prospective and current students and families?

2. To whom, when and how might we communicate to encourage self-identification?

3. What tools do we need to support increased self-identification?

The following points and suggestions were made:

- Focus on the value of identifying
- Create a safe environment to identify
- Information about Self-ID should be provided to prospective students. Suggested channels included: the viewbook, communications, eg. Gazette, Alumni Review (which normally circulates to staff and faculty but has a trickle down effect to students), student groups ie. SGPS, graduate assistants, etc.

- Gather testimonials from current students, highlighting importance of self-identifying

- Illuminate the role of QNSA

- Share the intention of doing this: communicate the value proposition to the 3rd parties – ie. parents, guidance counsellors: “Queen’s supports Aboriginal students”

- Benefits – community building vs. qualifying for administrative benefits. Building community doesn’t have eligibility requirements

- The introduction page is very bureaucratic about the “why”. It is important to connect with students. Let students know their personal information will not be published; self-identification will link them to a community of like experience. There are also material/honorific/monetary benefits- there are eligibility requirements. FDASC doesn’t manage these, but can provide info.

These suggestions will be integrated as the project continues to move forward.

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<th>Working Group Reports</th>
<th>ACQU member and 2016 Honourary degree recipient Carol Ann Budd was offered Council’s congratulations and received a round of applause for her accomplishments. Council members were asked to provide any comments on Council’s 2016 Annual Report to Ellie Sadinsky (<a href="mailto:ellie.sadinsky@queensu.ca">ellie.sadinsky@queensu.ca</a>) by February 9.</th>
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<td>Truth &amp; Reconciliation Task Force Update</td>
<td>Jan Hill reported that the Task Force has held a total of eighteen dialogue sessions. The task force has engaged with students, staff, faculty, and the Senate at Queen’s. Sessions were also conducted in Tyendinaga, Manitoulin Island, Kingston community, and a nation-to-nation</td>
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dialogue is to be hosted by the Grandmothers Council on Jan.26. See list of consultation sessions attached. Discussions will continue until early February and report is expected to completed in mid-February, and officially released in March. Accolades were given to staff members in Task Force Co-chair Jill Scott’s office for their support of the Task Force. The hope is that the report will be a living document that can be updated, that sections of related recommendations can be changed or broken into bite size workable pieces.

**Action item:** Jan Hill will raise the suggestion to the task force that Council see the report for comment before it goes public (a draft was circulated by email on Feb. 15).

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20pm by Marlene Brant Castellano’s closing words.