



Backgrounder – Queen's Truth and Reconciliation Commission Task Force Final Report

In April 2016, in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada's final report on the history and legacy of Canada's residential school system for Aboriginal children, Queen's launched a university-wide task force to develop recommendations on how to begin the reconciliation process at Queen's. The task force gathered input and feedback through a series of 18 consultation sessions with Indigenous and non-Indigenous faculty, staff, students, governance bodies, alumni, and local indigenous communities, and now has issued 25 recommendations in six key categories.

The names of each category are also given in Kanyen'kéha and Anishinaabemowin. Kanyen'kéha, also known as Mohawk, is a language of the Haudenosaunee people in the Katarokwi (Kingston) area. Anishinaabemowin is a language of the Anishinaabe people in the Katarokwi (Kingston) area. Queen's University is situated on traditional Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee Territory.

Representing (Yakwanenhrí:ne's, Ogimaa Mazinigan E'giigidoomgak)

The task force calls on the university to continue to develop and strengthen relationships with Indigenous communities in the Kingston region. It also calls for proactive efforts to ensure selection and nomination of candidates for senior administration positions and governance bodies do not unintentionally limit Indigenous candidates from consideration. The task force also recommends the establishment of an Office of Indigenous Initiatives, working in collaboration with deans, the Office of the Vice-Principal, Research, and the Four Directions Aboriginal Student Centre, to streamline the coordination of Indigenous services and programs. The office will also serve to develop strategies to ensure sustained progress on Indigenous initiatives.

The report also calls for the expansion of advancement strategies to increase philanthropic funding for Indigenous initiatives, as well as the development of partnerships to proactively advocate and engage with government for system-wide programs and policies that support Indigenous students.

Reflecting (Yakyóhnhne, Zhi-zhishendamang)

The report calls on Queen's to create culturally validating spaces by incorporating Indigenous art and languages into public spaces and signage, planting traditional Indigenous plants to honour the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe Peoples, and the creation of Indigenous spaces for ceremonies and events.

Welcoming (Kanonhweratónhtshera, G'di-mikwanim)

The task force recommends the creation of new bridging and pathway programs to increase access to post-secondary education for Indigenous youth, as well as expanded recruitment and outreach initiatives into Indigenous communities. Faculties are to ensure an Aboriginal admission policy is developed to improve access in all undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs. Queen's must also work to increase the number of Indigenous staff and faculty, as well as to explore ways in which to recognize traditional knowledge as a valid means of scholarly achievement in hiring practices.

Creating (Yakyóhnhne, Zhi-zhishendamang)

The task force calls on Queen's to raise awareness of Indigenous-focused research occurring on campus and to ensure the necessary supports are in place to allow research in these fields to flourish.

**Learning** (Yonkwaweyentehton'hátýe, Kinoomaagasing)

Given that Queen's has trained leaders and policymakers in a wide array of fields, the task force recommends that every program offered at Queen's include significant and meaningful Indigenous content, so that graduating students gain a basic understanding of Indigenous knowledge systems relevant to their discipline.

Including (Teyonkwayenawà:kon, Maamdoonaan)

The report calls on Queen's to ensure all students receive appropriate cultural awareness training to understand the complex histories and modern realities faced by Indigenous Peoples. Additional training and resources for faculty members are required to ensure instructors are comfortable promoting dialogue between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students on Indigenous issues. The incorporation of Indigenous ceremonies and practices into university events will also serve to foster a sense of inclusion for Indigenous students and increase awareness of Indigenous practices among non-Indigenous students, staff, and faculty.

Implementation

The university will be tasked with developing and implementing Indigenous cultural awareness training modules within the next two years. Once established, completion of this training must be encouraged across the university and embedded into existing training initiatives. Individual faculties and shared service units will be asked to develop a response to the recommendations, along with a five-year implementation plan, by fall 2017.

Additions of Indigenous content to existing courses are to be implemented no later than the 2018-2019 academic year, with new courses to begin by the 2019-2020 academic year. Faculties and schools must report annually to the provost on their progress towards implementing the recommendations. The provost and principal will report annually to Aboriginal Council, Senate, and the Board of Trustees on the overall achievements of the university with regard to the recommendations.

Full Text

The full text of the report, titled *Yakwanastahentéha Aankenjigemi Extending the Rafters* is available through the Office of the Provost and Vice-Principal (Academic) [website](#).

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