



Meeting Notes

MEETING OF THE ABORIGINAL COUNCIL OF QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY (ACQU)

Wednesday, February 26, 2014, 6:30 p.m.

Location: 202, [Robert Sutherland Hall](#), 138 Union St.

In attendance:

Marlene Brant Castellano
Ann Tierney
Duncan Cree
Lynn Freeman
Janice Hill
Jill Scott

Caroline Davis
Paul Chaput
Derek Sagima
Melanie Gray
Norma Sunday
Doug Maracle

Alan Harrison
Melanie Howard
Brendan Houston
Michelle Williams
Carol Ann Budd
Rebecca Luce-Kapler

Guests: Irene Bujara, Arig Girgrah, Ellie Sadinsky, Rebecca Benson

I Opening Session

1. Opening Prayer
2. Introductions
3. Adoption of Agenda
4. Adoption of the Meeting Minutes of October 28, 2013
5. Reports from the Co-Chairs

–Co-Chair Brant Castellano

Ms. Brant Castellano reported on the Caucus meeting that took place immediately preceding the Council meeting. She had emphasized the pivotal role of Council members in advising the university on financial and academic matters. She commented on the explosion of activity and creativity that is bolstering increased engagement and support for Aboriginal student activities - more than could have been anticipated when the renewed Council was formed two years ago.

A report from Robert Rittwage, Council's representative on the university's Employment Equity Committee, was submitted and can be found at Appendix 1 of this document.

Geography professor Anne Godlewska presented to Caucus on her ongoing Aboriginal Assessment and Awareness project. Details are in the report of Council's Indigenous Knowledge, Curriculum and Research working group. Caucus recommends Council affirm its continuing support for this project and requests that the working group consult with Dr. Godlewska on a questionnaire that is being used as part of the project at Queen's and that can be adapted at other universities.

Ms. Davis commented that the earlier the education of young people begins on Aboriginal history, the better.

Dr. Luce-Kapler added that provincial changes to the B. Ed program are causing concern about funding for part-time community-based aboriginal teacher education programming. Additional funding is required.

6. Report from the Office of the Provost

-Dr. Jill Scott,
Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning

Dr. Scott is also a faculty member in the Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures and said she was pleased to see the introduction of Indigenous Language courses at Queen's. She noted the years of work of the department, in consultation with Ms Girgrah, Ms Hill and others, that moved the process forward.

Dr. Scott was also involved in the recent external recruitment processes for Aboriginal faculty members. Queen's National Scholar Dr. Armand Ruffo arrives later this year and we also expect to welcome a Canada Research Chair (CRC) in Indigenous Studies. We are waiting for final approval of our CRC nomination. Both academics will bring with them vigorous and collaborative research programs.

7. Reports from ACQU Working Groups

Focus on 2014 priorities

Written reports distributed

For discussion

i. Aboriginal Student Access and Support

a. Presentation on *Q Success* Aboriginal cohort

-Arig Girgrah, Rebecca Benson

Thanks to an anonymous donor, the university piloted a nine-week transition support program in Fall 2013 called *Q Success* for 110 first-year students. Approximately 12 participants self-identified as Aboriginal and were offered the opportunity to join an Aboriginal student cohort. Laura Maracle was the staff lead from Four Directions, Ms. Benson was the peer mentor, and elders were involved throughout. Often the sessions ran longer than scheduled due to the nature of the discussion and questions. Topics included healthy living, mental health and stress reduction, building connections, raising awareness of supports and resources, self-identity and a sense of culture. A focus group will be held as part of planning for next year.

Ms. Benson said a significant challenge is to get first-year students to Four Directions. Many feel they “aren’t indigenous enough” to visit but feel so welcome when they do. This program gave students a path to that support. Some sessions were difficult, due to personal experiences that came out, and elders played a large role in facilitating weekly “check-ins” that sometimes lasted the entire session. Ms. Benson stressed the impact of working through topics with an Aboriginal lens. For example, most students chose to use a medicine wheel instead of a chart for their planning. Ms. Benson praised the leadership of Ms. Maracle and said how important this program was to the cohort.

Several students participated consistently, while others could only attend sporadically due to other extra-curricular commitments. The comprehensive planning process for the second year of the program and a formal assessment of the pilot are now underway and the results will inform promotion and participation. For example, the program will be promoted to all students who come to Queen’s under the Aboriginal Admissions Policy and they will be guaranteed a spot in the program.

ii. Indigenous Cultural Awareness and Programming

iii. Indigenous Knowledge, Curriculum and Research

8. Stakeholder Updates

Written reports distributed
For Information

i. Four Directions Aboriginal Student Centre (FDASC)

Ms Hill reported that she was recently elected to the University Senate.

ii. Aboriginal Teacher Education Program (ATEP)

iii. Master of Education in Aboriginal & World Indigenous Education Studies (AWIES)

iv. Aboriginal Access to Engineering (AAE)

- Ms. Howard advised Council of the passing of Corrine Mount Pleasant – Jetté, a member of the Aboriginal Access to Engineering Circle of Advisors. A memorial has been posted at <http://www.AboriginalAccess.ca>
- The AAE is a growing team! Joseph Brant has been hired as outreach coordinator; student hiring is planned.
- A new publication, *“We’re Civil Engineers”* (featuring students Oke Maracle and Haven Moses), is now available.
- A group of students is going to the a Leadership Summit next month in New Mexico, including one FAS student and five FEAS students.
- 15 new dual degree offerings for the Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science now include Indigenous Studies. This opportunity is also available to students in Nursing and Commerce.

v. Professional Master of Public Administration (PMPA)

vi. Queen’s Native Students Association (QNSA)

The president has left and the association is regrouping.

vii. Supporting Aboriginal Graduate Enhancement (SAGE)

SAGE recently held its writing retreat. Mr. Chaput commented that the outcomes echoed the positive benefits attributed to Q Success regarding community-building and support. There were 11 participants, including one each from Ryerson and Trent. The elders who participated were completely booked with one-on-one appointments with students. Mr. Chaput said it was a profound experience for all involved and a very important program.

Ms. Brant Castellano identified the recurring theme of building community and access to community among all of the programs described and the impact of face-to-face connections and circles that energize and transform people.

Mr. Chaput informed Council of a circle at Four Directions focused on mental health and led by an elder that is based on collaboration that generates feelings of accomplishment and community. It was suggested Council could undertake a blanket activity that proved very effective among circle members.

II Business Arising from the Minutes

9. MTCU PEFAL

i. Fund priority working session

Update For Information

- Ann Tierney

Ms. Tierney reported on the January meeting with a representative of the MTCU that provided clarity on the province's evolving purpose for the Student Success Fund: that it is for student support and not academic program operation. After the meeting, units reallocated their funding to better align with the ministry's priorities.

With regard to ATEP, the ministry acknowledged that the SSF grant was never meant to fund this kind of program, even though the university (and others) has been using the grant to fund the program's core operations. Discussions are continuing between the Faculty of Education and the Provost's Office about ways the university and the Faculty can lobby the province for (different) sources of funding for ATEP.

Ms. Lynn Freeman noted an increasing emphasis by the province on performance measures and the importance of data in supporting proposals to the fund. Ms. Hill said there are more comprehensive reporting requirements now than in the past. The ministry has told the COU Aboriginal reference group it needs to be able to demonstrate to the public that the funding is having a positive impact – that it is increasing participation, retention, student success and community partnerships.

Council members spoke of how Queen's needs to report to the province in a more integrated way, in particular in demonstrating collaborative efforts, inter and intra university. The units are looking at new ways of reporting results as institutional, instead of unit-by-unit.

It was suggested the Post-Secondary Education Fund for Aboriginal Learners (PEFAL) amounts can only ever be peripheral as funding sources. For example, the province had \$2M for the Targeted Initiative Fund (TIF) and received \$170M in proposals. (Queen's received no TIF funding)

ii. 2013-14 mid-year MTCU report

Distributed For Information

10. Update from Nominating Committee

For Information

-Co-Chair Brant Castellano

The committee will be surveying all one-year-term Council members whose terms are coming up to see if these individuals are interested in serving for another term. It will also survey the membership for vacancies and report at the next meeting.

11. Annual Report 2013

Draft circulated in January for comment

The report is being submitted for information to the University Senate for its March meeting and also to the Board of Trustees at its May meeting.

III New Business

12. CAUT Census of Aboriginal Academic Staff

- Provost Harrison

The Provost reported that Queen's had received a request to participate in this census. After consultation with the Human Rights and Equity Offices, it was determined that the University already had processes in place to gather information regarding Aboriginal academic staff, so an additional survey would have no value. It was furthermore not clear what CAUT's purpose was in undertaking this initiative. For these and other reasons, Queen's declined to participate. Many other universities received a similar request; most took the same position as Queen's.

13. Letters of Commendation

-Co-Chairs

The Council Co-chairs would like to support the two PhD students, Iain Reeve and Jennifer Hardwick, who played an integral role in the process of establishing the Indigenous Studies minor, as they graduate. Ellie will work with the co-chairs on this.

IV Other Business

- Co-Chair Brant Castellano moved the following motion, which was endorsed:

“That Council affirms its continuing support for the research project, Aboriginal Assessment and Awareness and refers, to the Indigenous Knowledge and Curriculum Working Group, a request from Professor Godlewska, for input to refine a student questionnaire that is part of the project.”

- It was noted that a new program report will be added to ‘stakeholder updates’ – [Sustainable Engineering in Remote Areas](#) (SERA).
- The Co-Chairs commended unit directors for their work in reallocating their SSF budgets for years two and three to maintain funding.
- Mr. Doug Maracle commented that Bands that are funding Aboriginal students need to know the tuition and fee amounts for the coming year as early as possible. Getting this information will allow Bands to plan, make decisions and potentially provide more support to more students. Queen’s 2014-15 tuition fees will be determined in early March. Fee statements are available in July, when students register.

This issue has been identified as a priority this year for the Access and Support working group. Work is underway by Four Directions and the Office of the University Registrar (OUR) on strategies that will support timely communications and Council will be updated at its next meeting.

- Ms. Budd reported that she has raised Council’s good work to the University Council (UC), of which she is a member. She has suggested the Fall 2014 UC meeting include promotion of the Aboriginal Council and the ongoing work on Indigenous issues at Queen’s.
- Dr. Scott is a member of the anniversary planning committee and has suggested to that committee that part of the activities include acknowledgement of territory and the telling of Aboriginal history at Queen’s.

V Next Meeting Date

New date: Monday April 14, 2014, 6:30 p.m – 8:00 p.m. Caucus: 5:00 p.m – 6:30 p.m.

VI Closing Prayer/Adjournment

– Co-Chair Brant Castellano

Appendix 1

Report from Robert Rittwage, ACQU rep on Queen's Council on Employment Equity (CEE).

Please see the following update re CEE for the Aboriginal Caucus:

- CEE has met twice since the last ACQU Meeting (November 27, 2013 and January 22, 2014).
- November's meeting was a 'themed based meeting' enhancing Aboriginal Cultural Awareness presented by Laura Maracle.
- January's meeting outlined a new EE Framework Proposal to change the way Queen's University practices Employment Equity. The proposal is in the consultation stage. Once the proposal is drafted, I will provide further updates.
- March's CEE meeting is a themed meeting with three (3) separate speakers invited (including myself with my CSC hat on) to present on EE topics.