



Meeting Notes

ABORIGINAL COUNCIL OF QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY (ACQU)

Wednesday, October 15, 2014, 6:30-8:00 p.m.

McLaughlin Room, [JDUC 214](#)

Attendees:

Carol Ann Budd	Dawn Harvard	Jeela Palluq-Cloutier
Marlene Brant Castellano	Janice Hill	Armand Ruffo
Leah Combs	Doug Maracle	Jill Scott
Caroline Davis	Vanessa McCourt	Natasha Stirrett
Stephen Elliot for Lindsay Morcom	Sam McKegney	Ann Tierney
Lynn Freeman	Martin Noel	Emily Wong
Alan Harrison		

Resource personnel: Arig al Shaibah, Irene Bujara, Ginette Denford, Ellie Sadinsky

Regrets: Paul Chaput, Melanie Howard, Mireille Lapointe, Lindsay Morcom, Robert Rittwage, Derek Sagima, Jennifer St. Germain, Norma Sunday

Opening Session

Co-Chair Brant Castellano provided opening words.

All attendees introduced themselves. Co-chair Davis welcomed all members, new and renewed, and encouraged everyone to review the [Council's Terms of Reference](#). The current [membership list](#) was distributed; several terms will be expiring in spring 2015, and ideas regarding potential new members can be forwarded to the co-chairs.

Ms. Davis explained the structure of Council and some of the agenda items. Members are encouraged to join the working groups at any time.

Ms. Brant Castellano reported the discussions of the caucus meeting held just before the Council meeting. She emphasized the role of Caucus members in ensuring there are Aboriginal voices in decision-making, both with regard to academic programming and support services.

She outlined plans for the Council's January meeting as a 'revisioning' exercise to review progress made since a 2011 visioning exercise, and to provide an opportunity for members to express their perceptions of the current state of Aboriginal affairs at Queen's, celebrate the strengths, identify any weak areas and begin a strategic planning process.

ACQU Working Groups

Further to the written reports provided with the agenda, Ms. Ann Tierney, chair of the **Aboriginal Student Access and Support working group** drew Council's attention to the current undergraduate Aboriginal enrolment numbers and recent initiatives.

Self-identification: Ms. Brant Castellano noted the enrolment numbers capture only undergraduate students who have self-identified as Aboriginal. Jan Hill, Director of the Four Directions Aboriginal Student Centre ("FDASC") elaborated that there is currently no way to track others, but FDASC is working with the School of Graduate Studies and the professional faculties to try to gather a more complete picture. In terms of geographic location, she estimates that more than 1/3rd of Queen's self-identified Aboriginal students are urban from the Toronto-Montreal corridor, 1/3rd are from out of province and 1/3rd are from elsewhere. The university is targeting recruitment activities accordingly.

Vanessa McCourt of FDASC identified the need to create a process for students who wish to self-identify at some point while at Queen's, but not necessarily when they apply. This is an issue that many universities are struggling with. Four Directions has created a self-identify poster that has been circulated across campus. *Action item: This will be discussed by the working group.*

Ms. Hill estimated the number of students who choose to self-identify is 1/3rd to 1/2 of those present at Queen's. Dr. Ruffo wondered if there is a correlation between the number of self-identified students and having a dedicated Indigenous Studies program. Ms. Hill suggested a significant factor that may encourage self-identification is the number of Aboriginal faculty at an institution who serve as visible role models. Ms. Hill

noted that a new provincial law may have an impact on self-identification because of potential requirements on universities to report personal identifying information they receive to government.

Enrolment trends were discussed; since 2011-12, when targeted recruitment activities began, applications have increased by 30%, offers have increased by 61% and acceptances have increased by 104%. The university has recently been able to start tracking the year 1-2 retention rate among Aboriginal students. In 2014-15, 93% students have returned for second year, which is approximately the same as in the total population.

Ms. Tierney also updated the Council on the processes that have been put in place, pursuant to a query raised at the working group, about ensuring timely communication to prospective and current students, as well as Bands, and education council members about the upcoming year's tuition and fees. Emails are sent by the Office of the University Registrar (OUR) and Four Directions and posted to the Queen's website as soon as the fees are finalized in May. Student fee totals are loaded into the student's online system account in July after they have chosen their courses. It was suggested that students could be asked to give consent (online) in advance for this assessment to be sent directly to their Band. Ms. Stirrett noted her Band has a system in place that works well. *Action item: Ms. Tierney will ask the OUR how best to clarify 'who does what' on the system and on the website to facilitate a smooth process on the part of the university and she will report back at the next meeting.*

Indigenous Cultural Awareness and Programming Working Group: Ms. Hill highlighted work that is being finalized on an online Indigenous Protocol Handbook to increase access to information and reduce the number of calls received by the Centre.

This working group will dedicate itself to the 'Visioning' report card that reflects progress made since 2011.

The group is also focusing on how to increase the visibility of Indigenous people on campus, including a collaboration with the QNSA to establish an on-campus tribute to the fact that Queen's sits on the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee & Anishinabek.

Indigenous Knowledge, Curriculum and Research Working Group: Ms. Hill reported that Dr. Donato Santeramo, Department Head of Languages, Literatures and Culture, is the new working group chair. She also drew Council's attention to the KIKI report (circulated with the agenda), which is a sub-group of both this working group and the

Cultural Awareness and Programming working group and has been a recent focus. KIKI is looking for more participation.

Ms. Hill recognized the arrival of Dr. Ruffo, a Queen's National Scholar (QNS) in Indigenous Literatures and Languages, as well as Dr. Norman Vorano, a QNS in Indigenous Visual Arts of the Americas. In January, Queen's will welcome Dr. Dylan Robinson, Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Arts.

Ms. Hill noted that there are now at least 14 students who have identified Indigenous Studies as their minor and there are likely more enrolled in some of the courses. There are more and more courses that can be added to the minor. *Action item: The working group will work to identify a process that ensures no courses are missed.*

'Feasts with Profs' began last week for the Indigenous Studies minor faculty and students and this will become a regular event.

Ms. Brant Castellano encouraged all members to join whatever working group is of interest, because so much of the work on the ground is done in these groups. Those who are not close to Kingston can link in remotely.

Stakeholder Updates

Further to the written reports circulated with the agenda, Faculty of Education Dean Stephen Elliot brought to Council's attention that the Aboriginal Teacher Education Program (ATEP) has evolved to a four-semester program, pursuant to provincial changes. The Faculty has also applied to a new government fund to implement a 'virtual ATEP' stream to increase access through three hubs (Queen's, Manitoulin, Seven Generations) and maintain healthy cohorts.

NSERC CREATE Program in Sustainable Engineering in Remote Areas (SERA): Mr. Noel described the program (funded by a 6-year NSERC grant), its activities and the industry partnerships that provide internship opportunities for students. Some courses are open to students from various disciplines.

Alma Mater Society (AMS): Ms. Wong, AMS Social Issues Commissioner, indicated she would be in contact with members on the working groups to engage with their work.

Society of Graduate and Professional Students (SGPS): Ms. Stirrett indicated her enthusiasm for her role on Council and that she was learning about the various

structures in place and is eager to participate.

Business Arising from the Minutes

Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) Postsecondary Education Fund for Aboriginal Learners (PEFAL) grant 2014-15 mid year financial report

Ms. Tierney indicated that the data for this report is being gathered now from the units and is due to the ministry on October 31. This report comprises the current spending against this year's grant and is strictly numbers. It will be circulated to Council when it is finalized.

The year-end report includes text that is brought to Council for input in the Spring.

The ministry is working on a progress report on the implementation of its Aboriginal Education Policy Framework to be released later this fall. We are currently in year two of a three-year PEFAL funding cycle, and the next funding cycle is expected to be developed based on the implementation report's results/recommendations.

Update from Nominating Committee

The ACQU current membership list was distributed. There are currently two vacancies.

Other Business

Upcoming Council events and meetings

Special event: Friday January 16, 2015: Lunch-hour lecture by The Hon. Justice Murray Sinclair hosted by Queen's School of Policy Studies. Ms. Lynn Freeman noted this is part of the School's regular lecture series, and has been scheduled to facilitate the attendance of the Professional Masters of Public Administration students, who will be on campus that day, as well as the broader community. More details will be confirmed within the next 4-6 weeks and sent to all Council members.

Council meeting: Monday January 19, 2015 – Visioning Exercise

In February 2011, a major initiative focusing on Queen's engagement with Aboriginal communities took place following a protest of the QNSA. The-then Provost asked for a report on issues relating to Aboriginal learners at Queen's. A day-and-a-half event,

interviews and focus groups supported the setting of goals with a four-year timeline. The resulting report will be circulated.

A report card will be created and circulated by mid November and will be the focus of January's meeting. Members are encouraged to inform themselves of the 2011 document and speak to Council members who were present at the time.

May 11, 2015: Council Meeting: Council endorsed the suggestion that this meeting be held on Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory.

Closing

Ms. Brant Castellano led a Closing Prayer and the meeting was adjourned.