



Aboriginal Council of Queen's University

2015 Annual Report

February 2016

Introduction

The Aboriginal Council of Queen's University (ACQU) provides advice to the university and is mandated to be involved in all decisions affecting Aboriginal programs and services at Queen's. It normally meets three times per year.

The Council's [website](#) includes information about the Council's mandate, [membership](#) and activities, including [meeting summaries](#). There were three meetings of Council in 2015. What follows are highlights from these meetings.

January 19, 2015 Aboriginal Council meeting

Council participated in a Re-visioning Exercise facilitated by Arig al Shaibah, Assistant Dean, Student Affairs (Student Life and Learning). Council members worked in small groups to identify potential areas of focus in each of Council's four policy domains: Access, Climate, Curriculum and Capacity. Groups and individuals identified their top three priorities across all domains. The [results of this exercise](#) formed the basis of annual action plans of Council's three working groups.



National Aboriginal Awareness Week at Queen's, May 2015

May 11, 2015 Aboriginal Council meeting

Council met on the Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory and were welcomed by Chief R. Donald Maracle, Chief, Tyendinaga Mohawk Council.

- Council reviewed and approved the annual report to the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities as part of the Post-Secondary Education Fund for Aboriginal Learners (PEFAL) requirements.

The report reflected the fact that while the provincial grant did not increase significantly in the current 3-year cycle, the university did increase its cross-campus financial support to programs and services from \$529,836 in 2013-14 to \$761,937 in 2014-15.

- Council received an update on the first-year 2015-16 admission cycle to date among self-identified Aboriginal students to direct-entry undergraduate programs. Applications were 24 per cent higher than they were at the same time last year; offers had increased by 40 per cent, and acceptances were already higher than they were for the entire 2014-15 admission cycle. The proportion of students applying under the [Aboriginal Admission Policy](#) remained consistent with previous years at 87 per cent.
- Issues relating to hesitancy to self-identify were discussed. This is a concern across the PSE sector.
- Council was informed that during Spring Convocation, 29 self-identified Aboriginal students will be graduating and the university will be gifting these students with a Creation Pendelton blanket at their ceremonies. In addition, an honorary degree will be given to Alexander McComber, a Mohawk from Kahnawake who works in diabetes prevention and Aboriginal health.



Blanket presentation, Spring Convocation

- The Council's nominating committee was authorized to confirm renewals of eligible members and to fill vacancies over the summer.
- The chairs of Council's three working groups took members through their 2015-16 action plans, developed based on the priorities identified at the January meeting. The areas of focus are as follows:
 - Student Access and Support:
 - Bridging program;
 - Graduate student support;
 - Communications and Marketing.
 - Indigenous Knowledge, Curriculum and Research:
 - Indigenous Minor: program development, curriculum review, learning communities;
 - Four Directions/Kahswentha Initiative: cultural activities, co-curricular opportunities, events;
 - Four Directions student support, community programs and outreach, recruitment, advocacy.
 - Cultural Awareness and Programming:
 - Development cultural competencies across the campus community;
 - Expansion of acknowledgement, including acknowledgement of territory at more student events;
 - Increase in visibility of spaces, symbols and resources that invite and reflect Indigenous cultures and peoples, including Indigenous Protocols Handbook.
- [Full meeting notes](#) are available on the council's website.

Brant House Residence

On October 3, 2015, Queen's University celebrated the opening of Brant House, one of two new student residences that welcomed its first students in September 2015. Several ACQU members were in attendance. The residence, which accommodates 271 students, is located on Lower Albert Street.



Brant House



Marlene Brant Castellano at the opening celebration

The building is named in honour of Dr. Marlene Brant Castellano and Dr. Clare Clifton Brant – Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte of the Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory, members of the Wolf Clan, and Queen's graduates.

Dr. Marlene Brant Castellano (Arts'55, LLD'91) is a leader in Aboriginal education and research who has dedicated her life to the rights and well-being of Indigenous students. She is co-chair of the ACQU. Her late brother, Dr. Clare Clifton Brant, was Canada's first Aboriginal psychiatrist and worked to advance Aboriginal mental health issues.

October 26, 2015 Aboriginal Caucus and Council meeting

- The Council's Aboriginal Caucus, led by Council Co-Chair Marlene Brant Castellano, met prior to the full Council meeting.
- Principal Daniel Woolf made brief remarks, and commented on the progress made by Council and the working groups; the significance of the naming of the Brant House residence in honour of Ms. Brant Castellano and her brother Clare Clifton Brant and the opening celebration held in October; and his continued commitment to advocating at provincial and national levels for increased funding for Indigenous students, faculty and staff and enhanced support for Indigenous knowledge in PSE.

- Ms. Brant Castellano expressed immense pleasure at the naming of Brant House and the occasion it presented to celebrate the Great Law of Peace and Hiawatha belt, bringing together the five nations. She updated Council on the plans for a November 2016 reconciliation-themed conference, “Sharing the Land, Sharing the Future” to mark the 20th anniversary of the release of the report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP). She noted the strong links between the RCAP and the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.
- The working group chairs provided updates on their activities and progress made against their annual priorities.
- Further to the stakeholder reports, Faculty of Education Dean Rebecca Luce-Kapler raised a concern about a lack of applications to the community-based Aboriginal Teacher Education (ATEP) program due to the provincially-mandated changes to the Bachelor of Education program. This is being brought to the ministry’s attention.
- Council membership was discussed by the Aboriginal Caucus prior to the meeting. As a result, Ms. Brant Castellano is recommending the addition of two supernumerary positions to Council: an Aboriginal student representative and an Aboriginal community representative. In addition, Dr. Morcom will consult with ATEP community-based groups to seek representatives to “meet” with Council via video to foster a connection with this constituency.
- [Full meeting notes](#) are available on the Council’s website.

The first two 2016 Council meeting dates are:

- January 27, 2016 at Queen’s; and
- May 9, 2016 at Tyendinaga.

The following stories about Aboriginal students, faculty, staff and initiatives were posted to the university's news websites in 2015:

[Celebrating release of final report](#), News Story, December 15, 2015
[Two new honorary degree recipients named during Queen's Fall Convocation](#), Media Release, November 11, 2015
[Picture yourself...as an engineer](#), Queen's Alumni Review 2015 Issue #4
[Brant House opens](#), Queen's Alumni Review, 2015 Issue #4
[Effecting change: David Sharpe](#), Queen's Alumni Review, 2015 Issue #4
[Queen's Welcomes two Banting postdoctoral fellows](#), News Story, October 29, 2015
[Queen's Officially Opens Brant House](#), News Story, October 5, 2015 and [Media Advisory](#), September 30, 2015
[Truth and Reconciliation Commissioner visits Queen's](#), Media Advisory, September 22, 2015
[Dean's trip north helps build ties with First Nations](#), News Story, September 14, 2015
[Aboriginal education course a key element of enhanced BEd program](#), News Story, August 13, 2015
[A unique viewpoint](#), News Story, July 27, 2015; and
[Education student mounts unique Aboriginal art exhibit](#), Media Advisory, July 27, 2015
[Aboriginal student guided by promise to great grandmother](#), News Story, July 13, 2015
[Drama professor earns provincial arts award](#), News Story, June 24, 2015
[Queen's recognizes exemplary careers with honorary degrees](#), Media Advisory, May 21, 2015
[Q Success: easing the transition to university life](#), Queen's Alumni Review 2015, Issue #2
[Available Expert: Auditor General reports on Aboriginal health care](#), Media Advisory, April 28, 2015
[Federal budget includes support for research excellence, students](#), News Story, April 22, 2015
[Celebrating Indigenous Arts and Culture](#), News Story, March 21, 2015
[From Queen's to \(Little\) NHL](#), News Story, March 16, 2015
[Raising Awareness](#), News Story, March 12, 2015
[Creating Connections](#), News Story, January 14, 2015

Queen's campus is situated on traditional Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee territory

www.queensu.ca/aboriginalcouncil