

IAWG PRIORITIES AND SUGGESTIONS FOR THE PROVOST'S TASK FORCE ON INDIGENOUS STUDIES & EDUCATION

Context:

During a Fall 2016 meeting of McGill's Indigenous Affairs Workgroup (IAWG), a discussion was held around the Provost's Task Force on Indigenous Studies and Education. The goal of the discussion was to provide ideas, priorities and suggestions for the Task Force, in part because of the wealth of experience by members of IAWG. This document summarizes the discussion, and will hopefully prove useful for all those engaged in the Task Force.

Indigenous Student Recruitment and Retention

- Garner support to obtain systematic information on admissions, retention and recruitment of indigenous students. Invest in recruitment tools and support for mentorship and pipeline programs. Enrolment Services can provide an explicit budget.
- Consider a scholarship program for elite students that will be a deciding factor to retain top indigenous students.
- Push to have more advanced standing given to community college courses which could otherwise delay graduation for students.
- Establish permanently funded student-run outreach programming.
- Establish a university wide video for prospective indigenous students wanting to know more about the services and resources available to them should they attend McGill University.

Academic Programs and Curriculum

- Establish a part-time undergraduate degree in indigenous business administration/management online so students are not required to leave their communities.
- Enhance the Elder program at McGill (consider an Elder-in-residence).
- Work towards the integration of indigenous ways of knowing into programs across McGill.

- Advocate for indigenizing education more broadly outside McGill's walls, especially in primary and secondary education.
- Establish funding for a trailer set-up with computers to go into indigenous communities in order to build capacity and skills in information technology.

Research and Academic Complement

- Establishing a fully funded Indigenous scholar in residence program.
- Formalizing the aboriginal focus group into an indigenous educational council.
- Ensuring that new and current academic staff are sensitized to indigenous affairs/issues.

Capacity-Building and Staffing

- Indigenizing education across McGill. This could be done by advocating all students have some indigenous content throughout their degree. Some universities have mandatory courses, although this has its downsides as well (putting indigenous students in the spotlight, becoming a token class). Ensure that indigenous ways of knowing are integrated across McGill.
- Hire dedicated advisors who know about indigenous programs, placements etc., and in general expanding existing support.

Physical Representation and Symbolic Recognition

- Continued pressure to change the Redmen name – there is a general discomfort with the name, and more should be done to educate the community on the reasons why.
- Continue to develop the traditional territory statement. Ensure that the statement is read at convocation and other important events.
- Consider new indigenous artwork and representation in the re-imagination of the McLennan library. This would be a great opportunity to increase visibility.
- Discuss having unique branding for indigenous initiatives across campus.