

Meeting Summary
McGill Indigenous Advisory Council Steering Committee
December 6th 2023, 1:00 - 2:30pm EST

Chair: Prof. Celeste Pedri-Spade, Associate Provost (Indigenous Initiatives)
Notetaker: Hannah Martin, Associate, First Peoples Group

Attendees:

Celeste Pedri-Spade - Associate Provost of Indigenous Initiatives
Taiaiake Alfred - Senior Advisor, Indigenous Initiatives, Kahnawà:ke
Treena Delormier, Centre for Indigenous Peoples' Nutrition and Environment (CINE) representative
Veldon Coburn, Indigenous Relations Initiative (IRI) representative, School of Continuing Studies
Sarah Rourke, Indigenous Health Professions Program (IHHP)
Geraldine King, (IMPRESS)
Mary Diamond Bear – Office of First Nations and Inuit Education (OFNIE) representative
Yann Allard-Tremblay – Indigenous Studies and Community Engagement (ISCEI) representative
Michael Loft – Retired Indigenous McGill faculty member, Kahnawà:ke
Pat Oakes - community representative, Akwesasne
Ka'nahsohon Deer – community representative, Kahnawà:ke
Mavis Poucachiche – student representative
Sidney Leggett - student representative
Hannah Martin - Associate, First Peoples Group
Ally Freedman – Associate, First Peoples Group
Heather Watts – President, First Peoples Group

Treena leaving at 2:15pm
Mary leaving at 2:00pm

Regrets:

Ann Deer – Associate Director, Indigenous Initiatives
Thomasina Phillips – Associate Director, Indigenous Student Success
Mike Auksi – student representative
Danielle Roy – First Peoples Group

It was suggested that IAC Steering Committee meetings convene with a smudging ceremony and opening prayer. This was offered by the retired Indigenous McGill faculty member.

The Chair welcomed the Steering Committee and facilitated a round of introductions to ensure new members (community representative, Kahnawà:ke; IMPRESS representative, CINE representative) were introduced.

There were no objections to the meeting minutes or meeting summary from the November 15th Steering Committee meeting.

The Senior Advisor on Indigenous Initiatives reviewed the revised IAC Steering Committee ToR, pointing out most recent changes in respect to the addition of representation from more

university faculties. There were no objections to these changes, and the Steering Committee unanimously accepted the ToR.

A discussion took place reiterating the importance of inclusivity of, and equal representation from, all programs and faculties within the IAC Steering Committee, regardless of whether these programs and faculties were named explicitly in the Task Force Final Report Calls to Action, and despite their percentage of Indigenous enrollment. Some programs were not in existence at the time the Final Report was published, and programs vary in number of Indigenous enrollment.

The question of whether Deans and Directors were aware of the IAC Steering Committee was raised, to which the Chair responded that she has been communicating with them about this initiative and they are aware.

Senior Advisor, Indigenous Initiatives led a discussion on Indigenous Advisory Council ToRs from Simon Fraser University and Western University. The purpose of this discussion was to learn what Steering Committee members liked and disliked about the formats of these ToRs, to aid in the forming of the structure of the McGill IAC.

The Steering Committee felt the McGill IAC should be more thorough, community-led, and grounded in an Onkwehon:we way of being and doing.

It was discussed how other ToRs are not solely composed of Indigenous peoples, and where the McGill IAC will be, there may be more opportunity to make active changes within the university.

The importance of including the principle of “academic freedom” in the IAC ToR was brought up, as was the need to discuss what this looks like within Indigenous knowledge systems where, historically, many Indigenous Peoples have been harmed by academics operating under these foundational rights and principles.

The Chair briefly reviewed the IAC membership outreach and engagement strategy for Indigenous leaders. A basic consultation form has been created as a mechanism for reporting back to the Steering Committee on discussions had with Indigenous leaders about their participation on the IAC.

A discussion on engaging internal McGill Indigenous community ensued, and the Steering Committee brainstormed ideas such as zoom sessions and in-person gatherings, as well as utilizing existing events and gatherings as a means of engagement. The importance of reciprocity to Indigenous students when requesting engagement was also mentioned.

It was suggested that Steering Committee meetings have lesser agenda items per meeting to ensure adequate time for robust discussion and input from Steering Committee members.