



Indigenous Food and Medicine Garden

Vision

The *Indigenous Food and Medicine Garden* is an outdoor space that fosters a welcoming and inclusive community on-campus and promotes Indigenous presence, Indigenous Knowledge exchanges, and community involvement while engaging peoples in growing Indigenous organic and sustainable foods and plants for future generations.

Goals

- Promote farming practices and teachings of Indigenous peoples of the local region.
- Provide experiential educational opportunities for community members, students and staff with respect to Indigenous worldview and customary planting, growing and harvesting techniques.
- Offer opportunities to learn about the spiritual significance of plants based on ancient Indigenous customs.
- Offer a welcoming green space on campus that engages communities in hands on learning of Indigenous Knowledge. Course development around customary Indigenous planting techniques will be explored.
- Give students, staff and community members the opportunity to grow their own food and medicines.
- Grow Medicines such as Sage and Tobacco for community members to use for praying and smudging.
- Grow vegetables such as corn, beans and squash to be used for an annual feasts and gatherings.
- Share Indigenous Knowledge and develop academic partnerships on and off-campus.

Background

The Indigenous Food and Medicine Garden is a community-based initiative that encourages community engagement widely. The concept of the Garden was first envisioned and realized by Indigenous graduate student, Andrew Judge, and has since culminated into a collective partnership between many organizations on-campus. Today, the Garden is governed by a Garden Council, and administratively housed within Indigenous Services part of the Student Development Centre (SDC) at Western University.

Garden Council Membership

The role of the Garden Council is to provide advice and direction to realize the Garden's vision and ensure the long-term sustainability of the space on-campus.

The Council will include at least 1 representative from the following organizations:

- 1 Indigenous Services
- 1 Indigenous Health and Wellbeing Initiative (IHWI)
- 1 First Nations Studies, Faculty of Social Science
- 1 First Nations Students Association (FNSA)
- 1 recognized Indigenous community Elder advisor
- 1 Supporting Aboriginal Graduate Enhancement (SAGE)
- 1 Facilities Management
- 1 SOGS Indigenous Commissioner
- 1 Enviro Western

Role and Responsibilities

Indigenous Services, Student Development Centre

- Ensure that the Garden Council is active each year.
- Coordinate Garden Council meetings including scheduling, chairing, and ensuring taking minutes are taken.
- Maintain all communications with partners including Facilities Management, Community Service Learning Network (CSLN) and Council members.
- Maintain up to date records including Garden terms of reference, membership, meeting minutes, financial records, and proposals.
- Allocate an annual budget to sustain the Garden and actively seek additional funding from Garden Council partners and through funding proposals.
- Hire and supervise 1 Community Garden Coordinator summer student position (funding permitted) and provide support and mentorship in relation to general oversight of the Garden operation, volunteers and program planning.
- Hire and assign Work-Study Student positions (where feasible) to provide support to the Community Garden Coordinator.
- Oversee, pre-approve and sign off on all expenses, track all funding and expenditures, and report to the Council on an annual basis.
- Ensure all activities of the Garden adhere to University policies.
- Ensure that staff and volunteers are given workplace training opportunities to ensure safety when working in the Garden.

First Nations Studies (FNS) Role

- Work closely with Indigenous Services and the Community Garden Coordinator to provide advice and direction on the operations of the Garden including; planting, maintaining and harvesting plants and medicines, and program/event planning.
- Build relationships with faculty members and academic programs to make course and curriculum connections that utilize the Garden space.
- Hire and assign Work-Study Student positions (where feasible) to provide support to the Community Garden Coordinator.

Community Garden Coordinator (Summer Student Position - Pending Funding)

- Develop, coordinate, and deliver culturally-based educational programming that engages community including hosting workshops, events, and developing resource materials.
- Coordinate the preparation and development of the Garden grounds, design Garden layout, oversee planting, and watering schedule, ongoing maintenance, and harvesting of plants and medicines.
- Recruit, organize, engage, and lead volunteers as well as supervise work-study students in the Garden.
- Attend, report, and actively participate in the Garden Council meetings and provide input on Garden Council agenda items etc.
- Liaise regularly with Indigenous Services and Garden Council on programming and activities.
- Assist Indigenous Services and Garden Council with identifying funding needs, completing long-term planning and participating in fundraising efforts.
- Assist Indigenous Services in developing community-based partnerships that fulfill the vision and goals of the Garden.
- Work with Indigenous Services in obtaining pre-approval on financial expenditures, and completing financial administration.
- Work closely with First Nations Studies in the operations of the Garden as well as building academic curriculum connections and partnerships.

Council Members Roles

- Attend monthly Garden Council meetings from March to September.
- Provide advice and direction on the yearly/seasonal activities of the Garden including plants, foods, and medicines planted as well as activities and programming.
- Identify needs of the Garden and approve new projects for the year.
- Engage and outreach to communities internally and externally by promoting the Garden and its activities and volunteer opportunities widely.

Decision Making

- Decision making about Garden plans and activities will be based on a consensus model. This model of governance reflects the traditional governance of the Haudenosaunee.

Become Involved

Community members are encouraged to participate by becoming a volunteer. Please contact Indigenous Services for more information.

Phone: 519-661-4095

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