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.

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