



Western University

Indigenous Postsecondary Education Council (IPEC)

Terms of Reference

1. Background

In recognition of Indigenous¹ peoples' strengths, Indigenous Knowledge(s), and self-determining rights as distinct peoples of Canada, Western University will consult and engage with the *Indigenous² Postsecondary Education Council* (IPEC) (formerly known as the Aboriginal Education and Employment Council, AEEC), which was first established in 1995 as a formal advisory Council to the University representing the common interests and concerns of local Indigenous communities relating to postsecondary educational matters at Western.

IPEC serves to support Western in fulfilling its strategic goals of “improving accessibility and success in higher education for Indigenous peoples” (Achieving Excellence on the World Stage, January 2014) and implementing the Ontario government’s *Aboriginal Postsecondary Education and Training Policy Framework* (MTCU, 2011) through approaches founded on 4 guiding principles:

- 1) Excellence and Accountability;
- 2) Equity, Inclusion and Respect for Diversity;
- 3) Cooperation on and Shared Responsibility for postsecondary education;
- 4) Respect for Constitutional and Treaty Rights, and respect for Indigenous Knowledge, Languages, and Cultures.

2. Vision

Indigenous peoples are fully engaging at every level of study, work, and research, ensuring positive educational experiences for Indigenous students, staff, and faculty and inspiring Indigenous success across Western University.

3. Mission

The *Indigenous Postsecondary Education Council* will have an opportunity to provide input into various aspects of Western University’s governance and long-term planning, student services, employment relations, academic programming, and research initiatives as it relates to Indigenous peoples. It will also fulfill the University’s strategic

¹ The term *Indigenous* encompasses all Aboriginal peoples’ of Canada including; First Nations, Metis, and Inuit which is recognized in the *Canadian Constitution Act of 1982*.

² Indigenous is a term used to encompass a variety of Aboriginal groups from an international and global context and is sanctioned by the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.

goals in higher education for Indigenous peoples (Going Global: Achieving Excellence on the World Stage, Western University Strategic Plan, 2013, p.14).

4. Goals

Western's broad level goals in the area of Indigenous relations are to:

1. Increase Indigenous presence and inclusion across Western University;
2. Increase Indigenous access and outreach to potential students, staff, and faculty;
3. Increase Indigenous student representation, transition, retention, completion and advancement;
4. Increase Indigenous staff and faculty hiring and advancement;
5. Improve the information pertaining to Indigenous peoples in our current academic programming and expand the current offerings to better portray Indigenous histories, cultures and lives in general;
6. Support and expand research on Indigenous issues and ensure that the research is done in a respectful and responsible manner.

5. IPEC Reporting

- IPEC will submit regular meeting minutes to the Office of the President, the Office of the Provost, and the Office of the Vice Provost;
- Each year, senior administration (Provost and/or President) will be invited to attend 1-2 IPEC meetings;
- The Council will play a central role in advising on the critical issues and agenda items for this meeting;
- IPEC will post Terms of Reference, membership, and meeting minutes on the Indigenous Services website for public viewing.

6. Membership

IPEC membership will reflect a broad representation of committed participants with diverse backgrounds. Members will be from both Western University and local Indigenous communities including; Indigenous students, staff, and faculty, local First Nations community representatives, urban organizational leaders, and other Indigenous stakeholders vested in postsecondary education matters.

7. IPEC Members Designated Seats

University Community Members (up to 13 seats)

- Office of the President designate.
- A University Faculty Member appointed by the President.
- Indigenous Health and Wellbeing Initiative (IHWI), representative.
- Indigenous Services, Student Development Centre, Coordinator.
- First Nations Studies, Faculty of Social Science, Director.
- Aboriginal Education, Faculty of Education, Director.
- Affiliate College designate.

- Indigenous faculty and staff members representing a broad cross of faculties including a representative from the Indigenous Staff and Faculty Caucus (1-3 representatives);
- Indigenous students at the undergraduate and graduate levels (1 representative from First Nations Student Association (FNSA) and 1 Supporting Aboriginal Graduate Enhancement (SAGE).
- Indigenous Services Visiting Elder.

Indigenous Community Members (up to 15 seats)

There will be seats dedicated to the following First Nations communities.

- Oneida Nation of the Thames.
- Chippewas of the Thames First Nation.
- Munsee Delaware Nation.
- Chippewas of Kettle and Stony Point First Nation.
- Six Nations of the Grand River.
- Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation.
- Delaware Nation Moravian of the Thames Band.
- Caldwell First Nation.
- Walpole Island First Nation.
- Aamjiwnaang First Nation.

There will be seats dedicated to the following Indigenous organizations in London area.

- Southern First Nation Secretariat postsecondary program.
- N'Amerind Friendship Centre.
- Fanshawe College, First Nations Centre.
- Metis Nation of Ontario (MNO).
- Noke Kwe Occupational Skills Development Inc.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

Co-Chairs are responsible for:

There will be 2 rotating Co-Chairs chosen by nomination and consensus including 1 Western University representative and 1 Indigenous community representative;

- Championing the vision and goals of the Council;
- Actively seeking out new members as seats become available;
- Ensuring meetings are held regularly, seeking agenda items from members, and following up on action items at meetings;
- Chairing meetings and facilitating meaningful discussion toward action;
- Acting as a signing authority for the Council;
- Acting as a lead member on the Indigenous Strategic Initiatives Committee.

Secretary is responsible for:

- Taking minutes, preparing agendas, distributing lists, drafting correspondence, preparing and updating materials, coordinating meetings as directed by Co-Chairs;
- Maintaining membership lists, managing current and archival records, ensuring online presence, and circulating minutes to the Office of the President, Provost and Vice Provost.

Members are responsible for:

- Championing the vision and goals of the Council;
- Representing the perspectives of Western and Indigenous community stakeholders as it relates to Indigenous peoples unique needs in postsecondary education at Western;
- Recognizing the complex nature of academic institutions with respect to academic freedom and freedom of inquiry in teaching as well as the units administrative roles and responsibilities;
- Understanding that IPEC plays a supportive role in advocating for Indigenous peoples' needs, and informing and influencing the institution through recommendations that increase educational successes for Indigenous peoples;
- Attending and equally participating in meetings on a regular basis;
- Reading and approving the meeting minutes;
- Making recommendations and engaging in meaningful dialogue around issues brought forward that facilitate decision-making and action;
- Completing Council action item and business by deadlines;
- Participating in sub-committee work as needed.

8. Term

- 3 consecutive years with a possibility of renewal where feasible with exception of the student representatives;
- As membership terms end and vacancies arise, Indigenous communities/organizations will be invited by IPEC to appoint new designates to the Council;
- Letters of appointment are required for all members.

9. Meetings

- Each meeting will begin with an Indigenous Caucus preliminary section chaired by the Indigenous Co-Chair representative where Indigenous representatives will meet to highlight key issues of priority prior to the regularly scheduled meeting;
- There will be at least 4 meetings per academic year;
- Sub-committee work as needed;
- 1 half-day professional development/celebration retreat per year held in the summer months at a local Indigenous community;
- Rotate meeting locations to be held occasionally in Indigenous communities;

10. Decision Making

- Ideally, decisions are made by consensus;
- Decisions about issues where there is not complete agreement will be deferred until a future meeting;
- If consensus cannot be achieved after the process, the issue will be resolved by a vote called at the discretion of one of the Co-Chairs;
- A decision will require 50% + 1 quorum from both Indigenous and University membership. A secret ballot to determine consensus may be taken and must be approved by either Co-Chairs.

11. Quorum

- At least 6 voting members are in attendance with a minimum of 3 external Indigenous community members.