



# Indigenous Initiatives

## Indigenous Postsecondary Education Council (IPEC)

### Western University

### Meeting Minutes

May 7, 2020

The meeting was held at 1:00pm – 4:00pm via ZOOM and Teleconference (due to COVID19)

#### **PRESENT:**

Danielle ALCOCK

Bernita BRIGHAM-  
JACOBS

Candace BRUNETTE

Regna DARNELL

Brent DEBASSIGE

Debbie DOLSON

Joan FINEGAN

Janice FORSYTH

Paula HEDGEPETH

Tara HEDICAN

Riley KENNEDY

Myrna KICKNOSWAY

Amanda MYERS

Jody NOAH

Laura SPERO

Guy WILLIAMS

Tehya QUACHEGAN

#### **AFFILIATION:**

Assistant Professor and Indigenous Leader-in-Residence, Schulich School,  
Western University

Post-Secondary Coordinator, Walpole Island First Nations

Acting Vice Provost/ Associate Vice President, Indigenous Initiatives,  
Western University

President's Appointee representing the Faculty of Social Science, Western  
University

Associate Professor and Director, Indigenous Education, Faculty of  
Education, Western University

Post-Secondary Counsellor, Chippewa of the Thames First Nation

Acting Dean of Social Sciences, Western University

Director, Indigenous Studies, Faculty of Social Science, Western  
University

Project Coordinator, Indigenous Initiatives, Western University

Supportive Aboriginal Graduate Enhancement (SAGE) Coordinator,  
Western University

Undergraduate Student Senator, Western University

Visiting Elder, Indigenous Student Centre, Western University

Director, Indigenous Student Centre, Western University

Southern First Nations Secretariat, Community Organization

Post-Secondary Counsellor, Aamjiwnaang First Nation

Special Advisor Indigenous Education & Development, Fanshawe College

Indigenous Student Association (ISA) President, Western University

#### **Guests:**

Erica CHAMBERLAIN

Jessa CHUPIK

Andy HRYMAK

Diana LEWIS

Gayle STUEBING

Chantelle RICHMOND

Dean Faculty of Law, Western University

Consultant Lead, Boyden Consulting,

Provost, and Chair, Executive Search Committee, Western University

Assistant Professor, and Executive Search Committee, Western University

Administrative Assistant, Executive Search Committee, Western University

Associate Professor, and Executive Search Committee, Western University

#### **Western University, Indigenous Initiatives**

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## REGRETS:

Joe HENRY	Dean of Students, Kings University College
Jennie MASSEY	Associate Vice President, Student Experience, Western University
Rick MONTURE	Grand River Post-Secondary Education, Six Nations First Nation
Melanie MOLNAR	Affiliate Designate, Brescia University College
Geoff READ	Dean of Students, Huron University College
Peter SIMPSON	Associate Vice-Provost, School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (SGPS)
Bette SUMMERS	Education Director, Oneida Nation of the Thames First Nation

### 1. Traditional Opening

Myrna Kicknosway

### 2. Search for the NEW VP/AVP (Indigenous Initiatives) - Community Engagement process

Executive Search Firm: Jessa Chupik/Boyden Consulting outlined the process and sought input from IPEC members

- Provost and VP Academic is responsible for chairing the search committee.
- The Search Committee members are: Chantelle Richmond, Diana Lewis, Erika Chamberlain, Amanda Myers, Riley Kennedy, and Melissa Schnarr-Rice. All members attended the community engagement process.
- Acting VP/AVP (Indigenous Initiatives) contextualized the work done to date in terms of recommending this new senior role, its importance in driving institutional change, the creation of the Office of Indigenous Initiatives, and its role in operationalizing the Indigenous Strategic Plan.
- The search committee engaged IPEC members around three questions:
  1. Why is it important to have this position?
  2. What questions would you ask the candidate?
  3. IPEC members were invited to contact the executive search firm and search committee members with recommendations at a later stage.

### 3. Approval of Agenda

IPEC Co-chair Candace Brunette welcomed everyone.

Co-chair invited members to add or removed items from the agenda:

- Approved as is.

### 4. Approval of Minutes

Minutes approved with the following changes:

- Laura Spero motioned to accept.
- Brent Debassige seconded.

### 5. Office of Indigenous Initiatives (OII) Updates

Candace Brunette-Debassige, Acting Vice Provost/Associate Vice President Indigenous Initiatives presented. Please see attachment titled OII updates.

- The Office of Indigenous Initiatives launched May 1<sup>st</sup> 2020. Considering COVID1919, the transition has been challenging.

The focus for Acting VP/AVP (Indigenous Initiatives) over the next 6-8 months will be transitioning the Indigenous Student Centre, building team cohesion, writing the OII budget for 2021-22, and creating strong administrative structures. The Acting VP/AVP will also work to strengthen communications including launching the new website and releasing an ISP progress report –to be released in June/July 2020.

## **6. Indigenous Student Centre (ISC) Update**

Amanda Myers, Director ISC presented.

### **Indigenous Awards Winners:**

- Western's Valio Markenen Indigenous award winners were announced for 2019-20 – Justine Fletcher/undergraduate student of the year, and Vanessa Ambtman-Smith/graduate student of the year.

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### **Graduation Celebration:**

- Indigenous Student Centre's (ISC) annual graduation was cancelled due to COVID19. ISC is sending out an online survey to Indigenous students to engage them on what they would like to see happen (i.e. reschedule graduation in the winter or wait and celebrate 2 cohorts next spring).
- In the meantime, to celebrate student success, Central Communications will be creating a photo filter for graduates to take pictures and post to OII/ISC website.

### **Cultural Programming:**

- Myrna Kicknosway/Visiting Elder continues to be available to meet with Indigenous students and staff on Fridays via the telephone.
- Virtual beading circle is offered every Wednesday 6pm-8pm hosted by ISC staff member Donna Noah.
- Writing tutor available virtually– Jennifer Komarowski

### **Youth Outreach:**

- ISC and TVSDB continue to work together to deliver a virtual Indigenous Academic Tutoring program for Indigenous high schools students. The program hired 4 Indigenous university students to be academic tutors.
- Mini University summer youth program will proceed virtually in summer 2020. The new program will be offered to 15 youth ages 12-17 through July and August. Each youth participant will receive a laptop as part of their acceptance into the program. ISC will be supplying data and Wi-Fi access to students who may experience internet connectivity issues. The ISC has hired four Indigenous summer student staff members and one supervisor to deliver the Mini University program. The central goal of the program is to offer students a culturally relevant experience that they can envision themselves going on to university and possibly attending Western.

### **Staffing Updates:**

- Ashley Kewayosh-Samuel had a healthy baby girl name Rue. Ashley's maternity leave is vacant due to COVID19.  
Zeeta Cayuga Lazore ISC staff member has transitioned to a new role within ISC titled the Community Enhancement Coordinator.

The Indigenous Admissions and Enrollment Navigator is now vacant (Zeeta's old role). Plans to post this new role in the fall 2020.

**IPEC Member Questions:**

***What does the new relationship between ISC and Student Experience mean?***

The Acting VP/AVP Indigenous responded to this question by reminding all IPEC members that Student Experience supports all students, and remains committed to supporting Indigenous students, which means that both OII and Student Experience will continue working together (in new ways) for example developing partnerships whenever possible etc... The main difference with the new structure is the administrative and reporting relationship between the ISC and AVP Student Experience. Now the ISC Director reports to the VP/AVP Indigenous, not AVP Student Experience. This reporting relationship means that ISC's budget and strategic directions go through the VP/AVP Indigenous for approval not AVP Students Experience, which in theory should strengthen ISC position and foster greater alignment between OII and ISC offices. This shift does not mean that Student Experience (and other Departments/Faculties of Western) are not accountable to supporting Indigenous initiatives and the Indigenous Strategic Plan. In fact, the presence of a senior VP/AVP Indigenous will help keep these important conversations moving at senior leadership tables, and will help nurture partnerships that meet Indigenous peoples' needs.

***When will ISC reopen for Indigenous students?***

Acting VP/AVP Indigenous responded to this question explaining how the university is creating a 3-4 phased approach based on government social distancing directions. Once a formal plan is released the VP/AVP will share a communication with IPEC.

***How does the application for Mini U work?***

The ISC Director responded and shared the online link on the Indigenous Student Centre website.

**7. Indigenous Studies (IndigStu), Faculty of Social Science updates**

Joan Finegan, Acting Dean of Social Science presented.

- IndigStu has a new faculty member hire (Lewis Williams, Maori from New Zealand) - starting with Indigenous Studies in January 2021
- IndigiStu is offering new courses in 2020-21, specifics TBD because of COVID19
- And, like all units on campus, the program is in flux in terms of being delivered online, in-person or blended delivery. More information will be released in mid-June when the enrollment numbers are in; hopefully by then the university can forecast COVID19 with more certainty.

**8. Indigenous Education, Faculty of Education Update**

Brent Debassige, Director Indigenous Education, presented.

- Faculty of Education reported on the hiring of three new Indigenous faculty members: Renee Bedard and David Chon who arrive on July 1, 2020, and Spy Denomme-Welsh as a Tier 2 Canada Research Chair who arrives January 2021.
- The Indigenous Education Coordinator search process resulted in a failed search. The role will be reassessed and reposted.

- The Indigenous Masters in Professional Leadership in Education Program is moving to be fully online this summer. The program is in the process of determining technology needs for its students. The Director is unclear about delivery plans for the fall 2020.

## **9. Schulich School of Medicine and Dentistry Update**

Danielle Alcock, Indigenous Leader-in-Residence presented.

- Indigenous Leader-in-Residence reported being in her new Assistant Professor/Indigenous Leader-in-Residence role for one month before COVID19 hit.
- As the Leader-in-Residence Danielle reports directly to the Dean.
- So far, Danielle attested to the fact that Schulich is a very large Faculty with complex systems and partnerships to navigate and she continues to develop relationships internally to understand the context and needs.
- As the Leader-in-Residence, Danielle is beginning some work by conducting a curriculum needs assessment of medical faculty members' knowledge and training needs in the area of Indigenous medical education.
- Another goal will be to develop a 5-year plan that will build sustainable system in Schulich to support the ongoing implementation of their Indigenous action plan.
- Danielle noted that the Indigenous Liaison part-time role continues to be vacant, and she would like to advocate for full-time funding to expand this role in the future.
- Leader also expressed interest in conducting more outreach with past Indigenous students.

## **10. Pending items**

### **Annual Planning**

- IPEC members expressed interest in reviewing Indigenous data (i.e. Indigenous student data per Faculty, employee data)
- IPEC members also expressed an interest in doing more action planning (i.e. setting goals for the Committee and university)

### **Summer IPEC Meeting Discussion**

- Considering COVID19, IPEC members discussed alternative formats to host summer meetings.
- Co-Chairs facilitated discussion asking: What topics of conversation can we focus on in shorter meetings?
- IPEC members suggested that Co-chairs host 3 shorter 2 hour meetings in June, July and August focusing on specific topics such as Indigenous students in a COVID19 context, Indigenous data, Indigenous language programming, and Indigenous scholarship criteria.

IPEC Professional Development options – tabled.

## **11. Adjournment/Traditional Closing**

Myrna Kicknosway conducted closing.