**Durham College Indigenous Advisory Circle Meeting**

**Minutes**

March 21, 2023 Zoom Meeting

1:30 - 3:00 p.m.

**Present:** Tara Koski, Christine Murphy, Elaine Popp, Michelle Evans, Brandon Carson, Cassie-Jean Dillon, Shirley Williams, Victoria Heard, Julie Pigeon, Claire Kearns, Jean Choi (guest)

**Regrets:**  James MacKinnon, Erin Elmhurst, Colleen McCullough, Karli Robertson, Jacob Powless, Mackenzie Bodnar, Lucy Romao Vandepol, Leah Power, Kevin Baker, Mandy Nakashima, Cecile Wagar, Gary Paulin

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| 1. | **Opening Remarks and Introductions of Guests*** Tara welcomed the attendees to the meeting
* Tara acknowledged Amanda’s departure from the College to the City of Oshawa.
* Tara noted that she will facilitate the Circle meetings in the absence of an internal co-chair on an interim basis to ensure Circle meetings are able to continue.
* Michelle advised that Erin Elmhurst would no longer be participating on this Circle
* Michelle asked Elder Shirley to open the meeting with thanks and prayer
 | Tara Koski |
| 2. | **Elder Shirley Williams provided an Opening Prayer** | Elder Shirley Williams |
| 3. | **Review of Previous Meeting’s Minutes & Action Items*** Action item regarding Opioid Taskforce placed on hold
* Action item regarding the Office of Equity Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Survey report was discussed noting the report was shared with Circle members before the meeting.
* Julie asked if the same questions were asked in the new Census; **Tara will invite OEDI/ORSIE to share results of the initial report, clarify the processes regarding consultation as well as provide information on the new census at the June meeting of the DCIAC**
* Michelle commented that the Durham District School Board (DDS)B had also completed a ministry mandated student census and another aimed at Staff that they spent a fair bit of time on in terms of they way categories and questions were organized
* Michelle mentioned the possibility of questions be more well received if a separate Indigenous section was created
* Michelle said she would be willing to collaborate with OEDI on the development of questions related to Indigenous peoples in future iterations of the census
* Cassie-Jean asked about whether the abandonment rate was tracked; Cassie-Jean also offered to assist with future census question development
 | Tara Koski |
| 4.  | **Review of Agenda and Additional Items*** There were no additions to the agenda brought forward
 | All |
| 5. | **FPIC Updates*** Tara reported that we currently do not have employees working in the FPIC
* Looking for the Circle’s support to help elevate one of the support staff roles in FPIC to a “Director of Indigenous Initiatives” position and then backfill a coach/advisor position
* Julie asked about whether it would be two support staff positions or one; Tara clarified it would be one support staff role and one administrative position
* Michelle asked who the Director would report to; Tara clarified it would report directly to her as dean, Students
* Michelle commented that the higher the position in the institution, the better chance there would be for attracting other Indigenous people to lead to greater change at the college
* Group consensus the individual would need to be someone who is respected by the community
* Cassie-Jean asked about the recruitment process, and whether the college would be willing to take as long as necessary to find an individual with knowledge in both western and traditional ways of knowing an doing; need to recognize and value the years of traditional knowledge appropriately
* Michelle asked if someone from community would be a part of the panel; **Michelle offered to provide names for panelists in the recruitment process**
* Tara shared her intention to invite community members from the Advisory Circle to participate on the hiring panel
* Group consensus that the questions for the interview should be sent to the entire Advisory Circle for their input
* Cassie-Jean said she thought this role would be a real opportunity for reconciliation
* Julie said they should be appropriately compensated for maintaining both sets of knowledge (western and Indigenous)
* **Group members are asked to connect with Tara regarding appropriate interview questions**
* Julie suggested connecting with the folks at IPEC to ask about existing posted positions and relative pay bands
* Michelle suggested there is a consultant group run by Kylie Fox-Peltier and Beedahbin Peltier called Indigenize.ca that would bring credibility to hiring process; Michelle reached out to Kylie electronically during the meeting. **Tara to follow-up with Indigenize.ca for consultation regarding the hiring processes (job description, interview questions etc.)**
* Elder Shirley affirmed that Kylie has a lot of experience with Student Services at Sir Sandford Fleming; both have expertise with recruitment and administration with colleges; Beedahbin is a fluent speaker
* Tara shared that Michelle Pigeon, Manager Reporting and Systems Initiatives, graciously offered to work half days from FPIC to keep the during this time of transition
* Elder Shirley will continue to provide teachings in the meantime
* Traditional Knowledge Keeper Kim Wheatley will continue will Full Moon teachings
 | Tara Koski |
| 6. | **Durham College Indigenization Council (DCIC) Update*** Tara reviewed the revised Indigenization Council working groups to better align with the objectives brought forward by the DCIAC and the Indigenous Education Protocol (IEP). The updated presentation schedule was also shared.
* DCIC - Working Groups and leads are as follows:
	1. **Office of the Registrar** – Debbie Johnston (Associate Vice-President, Academic – Enrolment and International Education)
	2. **Curriculum Development and Academic Upgrading –** Jean Choi (Executive Dean, Faculty of Liberal Studies, Professional and Part-time Learning, Teaching, Learning and Program Quality / Centre for Teaching and Learning / Student Academic Learning Services)
	3. **Employee Recruitment, Onboarding and Professional Development** – Kelly Doyle (Director, Organizational Effectiveness, Human Resources)
	4. **Communications and Events** – Lindsay Holley (Director, Communications) / Nicole Gilkes (Senior Recruitment Strategist)
 | Tara Koski |
| 7. | **DCIC – Presentation: Curriculum Development working group*** Jean spoke about the Indigenous Histories and Reconciliation Modules (IHRMs); content was enclosed in a learning management system; after a number of technical hurdles, now public facing, exists on the FPIC page
* In the past year, 577 external individuals completed at least one of the modules; within the DC Connect modules (on the College’s learning management system), 1,806 staff and students from the DC campus community have engaged with the modules; e-Campus Ontario had a peer review for the Open Education Resources (OERs) and the IHRMs scored 5/5 out of all categories by a professor at Algoma University
* DC Connect has a Land Acknowledgement template that is available for all faculty to include in courses; Jean shared that a suggestion was made to have a Land Acknowledgement widget created to hold space on the landing page of DC Connect that could link to the FPIC Land Acknowledgement webpage (A widget is a stand-alone element on a webpage that may provide information or take users to another online resource)
* Michelle said it could be an important signal to help send a message to students regarding Land Acknowledgements but remained neutral in terms of its value
* Elder Shirley said it was important to have Land Acknowledgements in many places and that they teach students about how to live and respect and take care of the land; would be important to get the word out
* Julie asked if there was any way the widget could be linked to more detailed information like the Williams Treaties video in the modules
* Brandon confirmed the widget could link to additional content
* **Jean will look into having the Land Acknowledgement widget included on the main DC Connect page**
* Note: The Curriculum Development working group will expand to include faculty members who are teaching Indigenous content; also including Academic Upgrading faculty and staff to ensure there is a smooth transition to post-secondary studies
 | Jean Choi |
| 8. | **DC Alumni Association Updates*** Due to timing in the meeting, Cassie-Jean did not have an opportunity to speak to this item
* Cassie-Jean will provide updates on the Indigenous Alumni Network at the following meeting in June
 | Cassie Jean Dillon |
| 9.  | **Elder Shirley closed the meeting with a Prayer** | Elder Shirley Williams |
| 10. | **Action Items*** **Tara will invite OEDI/ORSIE to share results of the initial report, clarify the processes regarding consultation as well as provide information on the new census at the June meeting of the DCIAC**
* **Tara to follow-up with Indigenize.ca for consultation regarding the hiring processes (job description, interview questions etc.)**
* **Michelle offered to provide names for panelists in the recruitment process**
* **Circle members are asked to connect with Tara regarding appropriate interview questions**
* **Jean will look into having the Land Acknowledgement widget on the main DC Connect page**
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**Addendum Meeting Notes (Summary of emails following meeting) – March 21 – 31, 2023**

Julie Pigeon expressed her deep concern on reducing the number of front facing support staff for Indigenous student in order to create a Leadership position. This does not align with commitment #5 (Commit to increasing the number of Indigenous employees with ongoing appointments, throughout the institution, including Indigenous senior administrators) of the Indigenous Education Protocol which was signed in 2015. She shared that the appointment of a director would add additional workload to the support staff position within FPIC. Having Senior Leadership is essential and they can be guiding the work of the institution, while the support staff are there for students and developing meaningful reciprocal relationships with community.

Elder Shirley Williams shared that FPIC staff are being overworked and did not think it wise to create another position by taking another position away. A Director is needed to do administrative work and the support staff is needed for other work; overworking support staff is how we lose staff; the college needs to provide more help in order to have healthy staff to work for students.

Michelle Evans agreed with Elder Shirley and Julie and suggested a further conversation would be appropriate, noting that the Advisory Circle had recommended the hiring of a VP level role during their 2021 brainstorming activity. She shared her support for this as an appropriate next step.

Julie requested the above sentiments be included in an addendum to the meeting minutes with the addition of the following agenda items to be discussed at the next Circle meeting: “Consultation” and “External Co-Chair”.

Tara provided a response to the emails above summarized below:

**Background:**

In the current structure, FPIC has two support staff reporting to the manager, Student Development who reports to the director, Career and Student Development who reports to the dean, Students.  The dean, Students position holds a seat on the senior leadership team which is called Durham College Leadership Team (DCLT).

The proposal would maintain the Indigenous Student Success co-ordinator role, and create a director, Indigenous Initiatives role.  The director would report straight to the dean, Students, eliminating two levels of administration.

At this time, FPIC support staff cover many areas of responsibility, which in the past couple of years presented have some challenges as many more departments were looking to Indigenize their work.

There are 5 main areas noted in the current job description:

1. **Indigenous Student Support** – for example: Providing individual supports through mentorship and guidance to Indigenous students promoting persistence, increasing retention and enhancing student success.
2. **Outreach and Community Engagement** – for example: Recruiting students through participation in Aboriginal Post-Secondary Information Program (APSIP)
3. **Centre Co-ordination** – for example: Hiring and training new staff to FPIC and overseeing work assignments for staff and student employees, placement students and volunteers in FPIC.
4. **Administration** – for example: Co-chairing Durham College (DC) Circles and Councils, membership at Indigenous Peoples Education Circle (IPEC) through Colleges Ontario and attending DCLT and Board of Governors meetings to provide updates to Indigenization Council efforts.
5. **Academic Enrichment** – for example: Meeting with faculty to discuss ways to Indigenize courses, consult on DC’s Indigenous Histories and Reconciliation Modules, providing guidance on new general education electives and program specializations.

With the proposed change, the director role could assume leadership for responsibilities 3 and 4 and they would support with items 1 and 2 as needed noting that is common for directors at the college to provide direct supports to students when required.

**New Role:**

The DC Indigenization Council has been working through the Advisory Circle’s suggestions on ways to Indigenize the college and a full-time Indigenous Curriculum Specialist was recommended.  This position was notionally approved through the budget process for 2023-24 for the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL). This role would work collaboratively with the employees in FPIC and their main duties would cover the responsibilities listed in number 5 (above).  It may be worth noting that the CTL typically hires curriculum specialists for contracts while this position would be a full-time role at DC.

**Going Forward:**

The proposed changes are aimed at increasing the FPIC’s ability to support Indigenous students by realigning the duties of the employees in the Centre to create effectiveness and efficiency. The initial thought was to post the director position first so they may participate in the selection and hiring of the new support staff role in FPIC.