



## **GFC Aboriginal Education Committee Annual Report 2015-16**

The Aboriginal Education Committee (AEC) held six meetings in the period from September 2015 to August 2016:

September 17, 2015

October 28, 2015 (no quorum)

December 16, 2015 (no quorum)

February 10, 2016

April 7, 2016 (no quorum)

June 7, 2016

Attaining quorum has been difficult, three out of six meetings reached quorum. To help eliminate challenges reaching quorum, AEC suggested that members be allowed to send designates if they are not able to attend. The GFC Bylaws state that voting by proxy is not permitted. Designates are only allowed if the GFC Bylaws indicate it for that position. It was recommended that the AEC Chair have further discussions with the GFC committee representative regarding approval of designates.

In Fall of 2015, AEC began a review of the working groups. Some working groups are having a difficult time meeting and may not be functioning to their full capacity. The AEC Chair and working group chairs met to explore challenges and solutions. The following initiatives were passed:

- The Gathering Place working group and the Cultural Advancement working group be merged to create one group: The Cultural and Gathering Place working group.
- The working group chairs be invited to attend all Aboriginal Education Committee meetings as resource (non-voting) members.
- A schedule of working group report dates be developed and that chairs are notified in advance. Each working group chair will also provide one written report at AEC over the course of the year.
- The Chair of the AEC, in collaboration with the working group chairs, identify a source of administrative support for each chair while in their role.
- AEC approved the name change of the FNMI Research working group to Listening Circle for Indigenous Inquiry and changes to their mandate which include: the Listening Circle for Indigenous Inquiry shall propose a plan including recommendations for encouraging appropriate research and creative activities by, with, and for the benefit of First Nations, Metis and Inuit peoples and other Indigenous peoples worldwide.
- Each AEC member be encouraged to participate in one or more working groups.
- In Fall 2016, the AEC review the current working group membership and make suggestions as to which working group they would like to join.
- AEC conduct a review of the working groups in 2017.

In response to the release of the Truth and Reconciliation preliminary report, the University reviewed the recommendations and begin to plan a response. A group brainstorming session was completed in the summer of 2015 to develop ideas and activities responding to the recommendations of the TRC report. A TRC Committee, reporting to the AEC, was struck. The TRC Committee's task is to begin to create a TRC Framework and Activities document. The TRC Report for 2015 - 2016 will be presented to the AEC for approval at our October 13th meeting, then submitted to the Dean's Council for their review and approval before it's presented to the GFC.

AEC was informed that smudging will not be allowed in the Gathering place due to risk and safety issues. It was suggested that a smudge procedure for the campus be developed. Smudge ceremonies are to be held in the smudge room in the NASA lounge. AEC suggested security monitor the area afterhours and on weekends to eliminate cause of concerns that are being brought forward by Faculties. It was proposed to develop a general FNMI Code of Conduct based on values that are common to all FNMI groups. The Code of Conduct should be displayed in the NASA lounge and in the smudge room. AEC suggested the following groups be included in further discussions about the matter: Faculty of Arts and Science, Security, Elders and the FNMI Student Association. M. Many Grey Horses will propose a suggested course of action to AEC.

AEC recommended that the University correct its documents and communications to reflect the intended Blackfoot name for the University, Iniskim (Sacred Buffalo Stone), as gifted by Elder Bruce Wolf Child. The story of the University's Blackfoot name is written on a plaque and hung in University Hall, AEC would like the story revised to reflect the true intention and would like the plaque to be relocated to a more central location. The committee would like to see the university host an event to celebrate the installation of a work of art and a plaque recognizing the story of the University's Blackfoot name. AEC also recommended that the University add our Blackfoot name Iniskim to the University calendar, letterhead, and website as well as other University documentation as appropriate. These recommendations were forwarded to the President's Office. The Communications and Advancement Office will conduct an audit to identify where the name is currently being used. A protocol on the use of the name will be established and brought to AEC for review.

The Liberal Education Revitalization Team was invited to an AEC meeting in the Fall of 2015 to bring better understanding of Liberal Education to AEC members. AEC recommended that the Liberal Education Revitalization Team strive to encourage Indigenous content in the Liberal Education list through course options and by adding Indigenous content and focus to existing courses. AEC suggested that the Indigenization of Curriculum Working Group survey each Faculty to create an inventory of what is being done in this regard, synthesize the information, and then present a summary to AEC and to Faculty Councils.

The UofL has partnered with Lethbridge College and Red Crow College on an FNMI Data Collection Project. The project will focus on gathering feedback from FNMI students and career advisors in the region. The purpose is to better understand students' career interests and potential barriers to post-secondary education. Updates on the project will be presented to the AEC on a regular basis.

Submitted on August 31, 2016 by:

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Chair of the GFC Aboriginal Education Committee and  
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Committee Support to the GFC Aboriginal Education Committee