

## **GFC Aboriginal Education Committee Annual Report 2012-13**

### *Overview*

The Aboriginal Education Committee was established midway through the 2012-13 academic year. The Aboriginal Education Policy was approved at a General Faculties Council meeting on December 10, 2012. The Aboriginal Education Committee was established as a General Faculties Council Standing Committee at the same meeting of the General Faculties Council on December 10, 2012, including the statement of mandate, committee structure, and the powers and duties of the Aboriginal Education Committee. The approval of the Aboriginal Education Policy and the formation of the GFC Standing Committee – Aboriginal Education realize two of the strategic recommendations in the May 2012 *Report to the President: FNMI Centre*.

The mandate of the committee is as follows:

The GFC Standing Committee - Aboriginal Education will be responsible for the overall implementation, periodic review, and evaluation of the Aboriginal Education Policy. Academic and Student Support initiatives related to First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples will continue to be subject to the relevant and appropriate approval procedures and authority outlined in the governance and management structures of the university. The GFC Standing Committee – Aboriginal Education, however, will serve as an overarching supportive and coordinating structure.

The powers and duties assigned by General Faculties Council include:

- Realize an overarching strategy that both commits and guides the university in First Nations, Métis and Inuit related matters.
- Guide and assist in the implementation of the principal objectives of the Aboriginal Education Policy.
- Facilitate, communicate and provide assistance with the coordination of First Nations, Métis and Inuit related programs, research and creative activity, supports and initiatives across campus.
- Analyze, interpret and synthesize available information and opinion in order to provide recommendations on updating and, amending policy content and implementation strategies.
- Disseminate information regarding the Aboriginal Education Policy to ensure the university community is aware of and understands the policy and related procedures.
- Liaise with internal and external groups and communities working in First Nations, Métis and Inuit areas.
- If deemed necessary, establish working groups or sub-committees to address specific issues.

- Establish and periodically review terms of reference for the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Education
- Prepare an annual report on its activities to be submitted to General Faculties Council.

### *Meetings*

The GFC Aboriginal Education Committee met twice, on March 28, and June 12, 2013.

### *Activities*

The committee reviewed the University's history of engagement with Aboriginal Education and its responsibility for overall implementation of the Aboriginal Education Policy. The committee affirmed its commitment to First Nations, Métis and Inuit students, the University, and broader communities, and the committee's role in moving forward FNMI initiatives as a core priority of the institution.

The committee began establishing the processes that will guide the committee's work. These included:

- Starting each meeting with a welcome by a Kaahsinooni (Elder)
- Establishing a nomination process to fill the vacant committee positions for two Aboriginal community representatives
- Determining the need for resource members to support the committee
- Adopting a consensus approval approach, except for items that involve committee membership or terms of reference, or if the committee does not reach agreement via consensus
- Determining a schedule of meetings.

Recognizing the historic import of its formation, the committee agreed to preserve a recording of the inaugural meeting of the Aboriginal Education Committee for archival purposes. The committee welcomed Tanya Pace Crosschild as the Blackfoot FNMI community member and Evelyn Good Striker as the non-Blackfoot FNMI community member. The committee identified Jodie Black, Laurel Corbiere, Leroy Little Bear, and Crystal Volk as resource members to the committee.

The committee reviewed and approved the *Blackfoot and First Nations, Métis and Inuit Protocol Handbook*. The Handbook will go forward to the GFC Convocation committee for information and to General Faculties Council for approval. The committee agreed to establish Working Groups, with one of these to be a Gathering Place Working Group. At a future meeting, the committee will discuss the nature of the working groups, their structure, purposes, membership, and processes. The committee affirmed its support for the Canada-Mexico Round Table on

Aboriginal/Indigenous Higher Education hosted at the University of Lethbridge in June 2013.

Submitted by Judith Lapadat  
September 17, 2013