

University of
Lethbridge



Blackfoot and Other Indigenous Peoples Protocol Handbook

This handbook is meant to provide information for university faculty and staff who are hosting university events that incorporate recognition of Blackfoot and Indigenous cultures and/or hosting Blackfoot and other Indigenous peoples at the University of Lethbridge.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to provide guidelines for University of Lethbridge faculty, staff, students, board, and senate members when incorporating Blackfoot and other Indigenous cultures into activities or ceremonies on campus. These guidelines will continue to evolve as we progress as a community.

In the Blackfoot culture, traditional teachings express that education should be perceived as a gift. Giving and receiving are viewed as equally important and create an environment where sharing is of utmost importance. Given that the university rests on traditional Blackfoot territory, it is important to recognize elements of the Blackfoot culture in appropriate ways across campus. This pays respect to our mutual identities and the knowledge that we are sharing our land and our ways with each other. In the words of Andy Black Water, Blackfoot Elder, “sharing brings honor and we will all move forward together”.

Elder Bruce Wolf Child named the University “Iniskim” meaning Sacred Buffalo Stone. The University of Lethbridge is within the geographic location of a Blackfoot legend about a “medicine rock”. Wolf Child originally gave the name “Nato’ohkotok” (Medicine Rock) in 2002 to indicate the wisdom, knowledge, solidarity, and connection to the land and people of Blackfoot territory. In 2014, he refined the name to “Iniskim” (Sacred Buffalo Stone). This is a great honor for the University of Lethbridge, and so in the spirit of sharing, we are committed to recognizing the Blackfoot and other Indigenous peoples who are such an integral part of our community.

The legend of the Medicine Rock is provided in Appendix A.

2. TERMS

There are many terms associated with Indigenous peoples such as First Nations, Aboriginal, Indian, Inuit, Métis and of course the various names associated with the diverse cultures, languages, and peoples across the province and the nation. It is important to note this diversity and our commitment to inclusion. At the University of Lethbridge, wherever possible, we will refer to our local community first and include other Indigenous peoples by saying “Blackfoot and other Indigenous” people or cultures. This respect to the local community and the traditional territory of the local people is in keeping with Indigenous protocol across the nation and around the world.

3. TERRITORIAL STATEMENT

A territorial acknowledgement recognizes and pays respect to the Indigenous Peoples’ connection to their land. This recognition is important in fostering healthy and reciprocal relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. Building meaningful relationships is vital towards becoming a campus of reconciliation.

While acknowledging territory is extremely important, it is only a small part in cultivating and building relationships on campus. Acknowledging territory has to be intertwined with an understanding of our shared colonial history in Canada.

Territorial acknowledgements will open gatherings, start meetings and will be used in the classroom, but their use goes beyond a “pro forma” statement made before getting on with the “real business” of the meeting; they must be understood as a vital part of the relationship of the University with the Blackfoot and other Indigenous Peoples.

The University of Lethbridge’s Territorial Statement are as follows:

Long Statement for large institutional meetings or small public events:

Oki, and welcome to the University of Lethbridge. Our University’s Blackfoot name is Iniskim, meaning Sacred Buffalo Stone. The University of Lethbridge acknowledges and deeply appreciates the Siksikaitapii peoples’ connection to their traditional territory. We, as people living and benefiting from Blackfoot Confederacy traditional territory, honour the traditions of people who have cared for this land since time immemorial. We recognize the diverse population of Aboriginal peoples who attend the University of Lethbridge and the contributions these Aboriginal peoples have made in shaping and strengthening the University community in the past, present, and in the future.

Sample Short Statement for opening remarks at small, internal events/meetings: Oki, and welcome to the University of Lethbridge. Our University’s Blackfoot name is Iniskim, meaning Sacred Buffalo Stone. The University is located in traditional Blackfoot Confederacy territory. We honour the Blackfoot people and their traditional ways of knowing in caring for this land, as well as all Aboriginal peoples who have helped shape and continue to strengthen our University community.

Sample Statement for Calgary Campus to be used at events/meetings at the Calgary Campus:

Oki, and welcome to the University of Lethbridge. Our University’s Blackfoot name is Iniskim, meaning Sacred Buffalo Stone. The University of Lethbridge is located on the Bow Valley College Campus located in traditional Niitsitapi territory in the City of Calgary. We honour the Blackfoot people and their traditional ways of knowing in caring for this land, as well as all Aboriginal peoples who have helped shape and continue to strengthen our University community.

* Siksikaitapii (Sik-si-kay –tsida-be) is Blackfoot for Blackfoot Confederacy

** Blackfoot Confederacy comprises the Kainai, Piikani, Amskapiipikani, and Siksika First Nations

*** Niitsitapi is Blackfoot for “Blackfoot-speaking real people”

**** Blackfoot Elder Bruce Wolf Child named the University of Lethbridge “Iniskim”

4. CONVOCATION AND CEREMONIAL EVENTS

Convocation is the most important ceremony on the University of Lethbridge campus that includes Blackfoot and other Indigenous elements within the ceremony. There are several other events across campus where it is appropriate to recognize Blackfoot and other Indigenous cultures and this will also be outlined.

- a. Blackfoot and Indigenous Elements of Convocation

There are three main elements to recognize Blackfoot and Indigenous culture during Convocation ceremonies.

b. The University of Lethbridge Honor Song

The Fall Convocation ceremony opens with the University of Lethbridge Honor Song. Further information on the Honor Song is located in Appendix B.

The Honor Song may also be sung for the Graduands. If the University of Lethbridge Honor Song has been sung at the beginning of the convocation, this additional song will not be necessary.

c. Report to Convocation

The President & Vice-Chancellor recognizes Indigenous peoples by stating that the “University of Lethbridge is located on traditional Blackfoot territory”. They may include a welcome in the Blackfoot language as follows:

Oki, ni kso koo wa wa (O-kee.... Niksoo koo wa waaa):

Welcome to our relatives and friends

And/or, an address to the students:

Oki, no ko saak (O-kee... no ko saaaaak): Welcome our children

d. Presentation of the Indigenous Stole or option to wear cultural regalia

First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Non-status self-identifying students will be offered a University of Lethbridge stole. This stole is inclusive of Indigenous identity with the eagle feather representing our First Nations students, the Inukshuk representing the Inuit students, and an infinity sign representing the Métis students. The buffalo acknowledges the University is situated on Blackfoot territory.

Graduating students also have the option of wearing their cultural regalia in place of the cap and gown at the Convocation ceremony.

e. The Blackfoot Confederacy Flag is present alongside the National Flag, Provincial Flag, and University Flag at convocation with a blanket and an eagle feather at the main podium.

f. Honorary Degree

If an honorary degree is being awarded to a person of First Nations, Métis, or Inuit background, the honor song should be performed. If it is performed at the beginning of the ceremony, this first performance is sufficient to honor the recipient.

It may be that the person being honored is an Elder or a Blackfoot Elder. In this case, it is appropriate if the Special Assistant (Indigenous) to the President or the Manager of Iikaiskini (Indigenous Gathering Place) reads the citation during the ceremony.

It is appropriate to invite elders or members of the Kanai Chieftainship (see Appendix D) to the ceremony. These people can be identified in consultation with the Special Assistant to the President (Indigenous). It is appropriate to include these people within the platform party. It is important to note that it may be difficult for Elders to join the procession so they can wait at the entrance to the gymnasium.

It is not unusual for a Blackfoot Elder to draw many members of the community when they are being honored. It is also custom for people in the audience to get up and sing a Praise Song, dance, or call-out in honor of that person during the ceremony.

g. Other Ceremonial Events

It is appropriate to include recognition of Blackfoot culture at other ceremonial events on campus. This includes (but is not limited to):

- Special events surrounding convocation (luncheons, alumni functions etc.)
- The opening of new facilities or buildings
- Events that are specific to Indigenous-related priorities

Appropriate recognition includes a statement that the university is located on Blackfoot territory by the senior officer who is bringing remarks. Also, depending on the event, it may be appropriate to invite the Special Assistant to the President (Indigenous) or an Elder from the community to give a blessing. When attending any ceremonies (for example, Pipe Offerings, Face Painting) women are to cover their legs and arms or wear long dresses or long pants (no shorts, short skirts, or sleeveless shirts).

5. ELDERS

a. Overview

Elders are a very important part of Blackfoot and other Indigenous cultures. An Elder is very respected and often consulted on various issues within the community. Each Elder has their own special knowledge and often must consult other Elders on issues outside of their specialty to provide a consultation to anyone who asks.

To summon an Elder, it is customary to visit them in person or send a relative or friend. They are usually met with a symbolic gift that indicates the seriousness of the meeting or question at hand. The gift is in anticipation of the exchange that will occur as the Elder will share

knowledge or perform a special task. It is important to give the Elder a lot of notice. This is because they often need time to consult others regarding the request.

There is a difference between “inviting” an Elder to an event and “summoning” an Elder to provide a consultation or perform a certain task. Several Elders may be invited to an event with the knowledge that one has been “summoned” to perform according to their special knowledge. When an Elder is “summoned”, it is important to arrange for an honorarium and this is discussed in the next section. Further information on the protocol for summoning elders is found in Appendix E.

At the University of Lethbridge, Elders may be summoned through the various departments who have already established relationships. Or, certain individuals may be consulted or provide liaison such as the Special Assistant (Indigenous) to the President, the Manager of Iikaiskini (Indigenous Gathering Place,) the Chair of Indigenous Studies, or the Indigenous Student Advisor.

It is recommended to ask the Manager of Iikaiskini (Indigenous Gathering Place) to provide advice on proper protocol to summon an Elder for special ceremonies. It is important to note that only men are to summon an Elder. The person who summons an Elder must enter the room of the Elder, place his blanket on the right side of the entrance with arms crossed bent over slightly, approach the elder with arms on his sides, and swipe the Elder’s hair down the arms then to the floor.

Elders may be summoned for the following tasks/consultations:

- Perform offer of prayer or a spiritual meeting (e.g., Offer of a Pipe or an all-night sweat/smoke)
- Student support and consultation
- Consultation with Faculty regarding research or an invitation to a lecture or classroom setting
- Talking circles or other Indigenous-related events
- Attendance at a special event and request to give a blessing or opening prayer*

* Please note that there are members of the campus community who also qualify to give a blessing at a special event or perform various tasks. The Special Assistant to the President (Indigenous) and/or the Manager of Iikaiskini (Indigenous Gathering Place) may know of others within the campus community that will assist. When this occurs, a small gift of appreciation will suffice as opposed to an honorarium. It is important to note that anyone who is requested to perform a blessing will look at the gathering to determine if they are actually the eldest or the most appropriate person to address the gathering. If they determine that someone else is more fitting, they may decide to pass this duty to that person. It is uncomfortable for them to perform a task when someone more fitting is in their presence.

b. Honorariums

Elders who are “summoned” to provide special knowledge are given an honorarium for their requested task or consultation. Honorariums consist of a lump sum for the consultation and

another sum for their travel expense. Honorariums are requested through Financial Services and this must be done at least one week prior to the Elder coming to campus. Refer to Appendix E, F, G and H for detailed University of Lethbridge procedure for arranging for an honorarium.

c. Attendance at Events

It is important to note that Elders may not be comfortable in the presence of alcohol. If there will be alcohol served at an event, it is important that this is communicated so that the Elder can decide whether to attend or request special arrangements so that they feel comfortable.

It may be customary for some Elders to be served their meal. If there is a buffet meal and there are Elders present, someone should speak to the Elders to determine if they require assistance with their meals. Elders will feel obligated to eat everything that is on their plate so asking them how much food they would like is a thoughtful gesture. Do not ask an Elder if they are hungry, just provide them with food. Provide a way for them to carry what they are unable to eat (e.g., a container or bag).

d. Proper dress code, according to Blackfoot ways, when preparing for blessings – especially when going before a Spiritual Blackfoot Elder/Grandfather (Aa' wah ' staaksa – Kaahsinnoon)

If one is going to ceremony there is an expected dress code -- especially in front of, and in respect to, the Grandfather (Spiritual Elder). Woman must wear proper clothing; no miniskirts, short dresses, shorts or low-cut blouses or tops. A woman's legs must be covered. This is part of the respect for the Blackfoot woman. Women can wear long pants. Men also must not wear shorts, t-shirts, and/or sleeveless shirts.

There are certain requirements for women prior to being near the smudge that should be addressed with the host prior to participating or being near the smudge.

6. GIFTS – GIVING AND RECEIVING

A gift is symbolic and indicates there is a respect in the sharing or exchange that is to take place or that has taken place. Harmony and balance are important in Blackfoot culture and the exchange of a gift for what you are about to receive assists to restore this balance. Traditional Blackfoot gifts include sweetgrass, tobacco, and blankets. If there is a short meeting or task that does not include an honorarium, it is appropriate to give a small gift to a Blackfoot or other Indigenous person. Sweetgrass and tobacco (any kind) is a small token of appreciation that is appropriate in many situations. These gifts are used for ceremonial purposes.

7. SMUDGING AND PIPE OFFERING GUIDELINES ON CAMPUS

The Standard Operating Procedures for the Support of Smudging and Pipe Offerings can be found [here](#). It is located on the University of Lethbridge’s website under Policies and Procedures (<https://www.uleth.ca/policy/external-resource>). Please note that Smudging is also sometimes known as “sweetgrass over the coals”.

APPENDICES

A. INISKIM – SACRED BUFFALO STONE NATO’OHKOTOK

Medicine Rock (Nato’ohkotok) is the Blackfoot name given to the University of Lethbridge by Blackfoot Elder, Bruce Wolf Child, at the 35th anniversary or “Founders Day Celebration” on January 17, 2002.

The story of MEDICINE ROCK:

In days gone by, groups of Blackfoot people were travelling across the river and saw a red rock. A young boy was watching the rock when he saw it turn into an old man. The boy told the others what he had seen and they told him to run over and look. However, when the boy reached the rock, he saw that that it was just a rock.

That night the rock came to the boy in a dream and told him, “The rock you saw is me. I am the rock”. Years later, the people from the tribe told others about the rock. Everyone came looking for it, but it was nowhere to be found. The rock had disappeared.

Now we know where the rock has gone. It has moved across the river. The rock is here-it is the University of Lethbridge. Anyone who comes to study here can be wise and solid as a rock. That is why The University of Lethbridge has been named, “SACRED BUFFALO STONE”.

B. UNIVERSITY OF LETHBRIDGE HONOR SONG

Blackfoot traditional music is an art of voice. Blackfoot music artists create songs. Some songs come into existence through dreams. For the Blackfoot, there are different types and styles of songs for different purposes and occasions. There are songs that belong to clans, societies, and individuals. There are songs that go with different ceremonies. There are songs that go with names. In the traditions of the Blackfoot, it is a great honor and a great gift to have a song go with a name. In honor of its name, SACRED BUFFALO STONE (INISKIM), Leroy Little Bear, gifted an honor song to the University of Lethbridge to accompany its Blackfoot name.

C. INDIGENOUS STOLES

The Aboriginal stole represents and reflects an inclusiveness to our students on campus. The eagle feather represents our status and non-status First Nations students, the infinity sign represents our Métis students, the Inukshuk represents our Inuit students and the buffalo acknowledges the University is situated on Blackfoot territory. The stoles are gifted to our

Indigenous graduates to celebrate their success and accomplishments throughout their academic journey and the wearing of cultural regalia portrays and active commitment towards reconciliation by the University of Lethbridge.

D. KAINAI CHIEFTAINSHIP

The Kainai Chieftainship organization was officially formed in 1951 to honor those from mainstream society who have contributed to the betterment of the Kainai people of the Blood Tribe in Southern Alberta, Canada. “To be recommended as an honorary chieftain, a person had to demonstrate “past and present interest, sympathy and assistance towards progressive endeavour to the Indian’s welfare in general” or alternatively for “his recognized standing in the realms of Science, Art, Church, State, Business, and acknowledged integrity of character. “ The official motto of this organization was Mokokit ki Aekakimat which means “Be wise and persevere”

Kainai Chieftainship (Tribal Honors, A History of the Kainai Chieftainship, Hugh A. Dempsey, 1997).

E. PROTOCOL FOR SUMMONING BLACKFOOT ELDERS

Protocol for Summoning Kaahsinnooniks¹ (Blackfoot Elders) to University of Lethbridge

Roy M. Weasel Fat, President, Red Crow College

Awaaskataks² (Blackfoot Elders) may be summoned to the University of Lethbridge campus using one of the following procedures: (1) instructors who know someone in the Blackfoot community may make their own arrangements to involve Kaahsinnooniks (Elders) in teaching;³ (2) someone within the various faculties/schools may provide assistance in finding the appropriate Kaahsinnooniks (Elder); or (3) the Manager of Iikaiskini (Indigenous Gathering Place) may be contacted and asked to summon Awaakataks (Blackfoot Elders) for a class, student support or university event.

To ensure that appropriate Awaskataks (Elder/s) are brought in to teach traditional knowledge, mentor and support students, or to open special events within the university campus, it is important to understand what constitutes Kaasinnooniks (Elder/s) in Blackfoot communities. The following definition crafted by the Red Crow Community College Kaahsinnooniks (Elders) Advisory Council⁴ states:

Kaahsinnooniks (Blackfoot Elder/s) is someone who has been a member of the Blackfoot societies (Horns or Buffalo Women’s group) and who is recognized by the community to have and possess Blackfoot traditional/spiritual knowledge. A Blackfoot Elder is bestowed

¹ Kaasinnooniks, a Blackfoot term defines a Blackfoot cultural resource person (Elder)

² Awaaskataks, a Blackfoot term (verb) meaning the act of summoning a Blackfoot cultural resource person (Elder)

³ Cathy Campbell, Faculty of Education. Instructor Qualifications and Traditional Teaching. Questions for Consideration. University of Lethbridge Response Document

⁴Red Crow Community College Advisory Council: Pete Standing Alone, Andy Black Water, Frank Weasel Head, Bruce Wolf Child, Sophie Tailfeathers, Evelyn Striped Wolf

certain rights and privileges to conduct ceremonies for the Blackfoot community. Kaahsinnooni (Elder) status is earned when community members begin to approach certain individuals for their expertise in traditional Blackfoot knowledge areas⁵.

Honoraria and Gifting

In the Blackfoot community whenever Kaahsinnooniks (Elders) are summoned, an honorarium is provided to honour the presence of the summoned Kaahsinnooni (Elder) and to recognize the blessing, face painting, and wisdom / knowledge they are gifting / offering to whomever is calling on them. It is also customary to offer a symbolic gesture of appreciation e.g. a braid of sweet grass, tobacco, or a blanket for the gifts offered by Kaahsinnooniks (Elders). When Kaahsinnooniks (Elders) are summoned to the University by a professor as guest speakers or lecturers the same procedure applies. Kaahsinnooniks who are summoned as guest speakers or lectures should be provided an honorarium to cover their time away from community, preparation for the topic to be addressed, and travel expenses for commuting to the University of Lethbridge if they reside outside the area. Class members should also offer a small symbolic gift such as sweet grass or tobacco.

Start-up funding to support Kaahsinnooni involvement in the University Community has been donated to the university and is administered by the Manager of Iikaiskini (Indigenous Gathering Place). This funding may be utilized for summoning Kaahsinnooni should a requesting faculty or department not have available funds to provide an honorarium. Since the funding donated is limited, however, it is hoped that in the future faculties and departments will try to establish in their operating budgets some designated funding for Kaahsinnooni program involvement.

The following procedure is suggested.

1. Faculties and Departments are encouraged to create relationships with Elders, assistance in guiding these relationships can be made through Iikaiskini (Indigenous Gathering Place). Honoraria should be provided to Elders for their guidance, support, knowledge and consultation.
2. If faculties or departments require assistance in accessing an appropriate Kaahsinnooni to address a particular topic, staff at Iikaiskini (Indigenous Gathering Place) will summon Kaahsinnooni with recognized expertise in a specific knowledge area
3. Lead time is approximately one-month notice to allow time for processing the honorarium, and to allow Kaahsinnooni time for preparation.
4. Honorarium is \$ 300.00 plus \$ 75.00 travel. This covers time for participation in the requested event (opening ceremony, classroom presentations, spiritual ceremony, student support / mentoring)⁶

⁵ Report to the President First Nations Metis Inuit (FNMI) Centre. pg. 19 – 20.

⁶ Red Crow Community College Kaahsinnooni (Elder) rates established 2010

The foregoing procedure is intended as a guide to facilitate summoning Kaahsinnoni to University of Lethbridge campus. It is hoped that it will be viewed as a living document that continues to evolve and develop as time goes on and the needs of the University of Lethbridge in Indigenous areas are appropriately addressed.

Instruction and Research:

Currently, Kaahsinnooniks have given their consent to video record their oral presentations for instructional use only. Kaahsinnooniks will consider other uses for their video recorded presentations in the future.

F. PROCEDURE – HONORARIUMS

The procedures in the Blackfoot and Other Indigenous Peoples protocol handbook are an exception to University procedures for issuing honorariums which are otherwise processed through Payroll.

The standard honorarium for an Elder who is summoned is \$300 plus \$75 travel reimbursement. Some Elders may accept a cheque but others may require a cash honorarium. This should be discussed with the person who is inviting the Elder to campus.

To request an honorarium from Financial Services, a miscellaneous cheque requisition form is used and the Elder's name and address are required. An honorarium should be requested as far in advance as possible and a minimum of seven business days prior to the date required. Cheques are issued on Thursdays. Indicate on the requisition form the date required and that the cheque will be "picked up" or to send it in internal mail. Otherwise, a cheque may be automatically mailed to the address indicated or a direct deposit payment issued. If the cheque will be picked up, include a name and phone number for the individual who will be picking it up.

It is culturally appropriate to provide an honorarium to the following Blackfoot or other Indigenous persons directly after the event or ceremony:

- Elders
- Performers such as dancers or drummers
- Master of ceremonies

Per Canada Revenue Agency, an honorarium is taxable income. Where Blackfoot or other Indigenous persons receive an honorarium and are also an employee of the University, the honorarium will be reported to Payroll and included on the employee's T4.

G. CONTRACTED SERVICES

Vendors providing contracted services will not receive payment on the day of the event or ceremony. Examples of contracted services include photography and catering (caterers must be pre-approved). Contracted service vendors supply an invoice to the University after the goods or services have been provided, for payment in accordance with Accounts Payable guidelines, currently 30 days from the invoice date.

H. ACCOUNTABLE ADVANCES

If the payee is not known in advance of the event or an honorarium is required in cash, a University employee may arrange for an accountable advance through Financial Services. It is important to create a receipt that the payee will sign at the time the cash is received. This will then be used as proof that the cash was distributed. The employee will submit an online expense claim to reconcile the advance. Contact Financial Services for an accountable advance application and sample receipts. An accountable advance should be requested as far in advance as possible and a minimum of seven business days prior to the date required. There are additional risks and administration associated with cash payments - a cheque should be issued instead of cash whenever possible.