

Indigenous Education Council (IEC)

**December 2, 2021
10:00 am – 12:00 pm
Teams Meeting**

Minutes

Attendees:

Amanda Tarbell	Iohahi:io Akwesasne Education & Training Institute
Heather Green	Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte
Kayleigh Jordan-MacGregor	The Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Fund
Kelly Maracle	Limestone District School Board
Sheila Lafrance	Iohahi:io Akwesasne Education & Training Institute
Helena Neveu	St. Lawrence College
Glenn Vollebregt	St. Lawrence College
Holly Brant	St. Lawrence College
Jessie Pengelly	St. Lawrence College
Katie Lamarche	St. Lawrence College
Laura Beaudry	St. Lawrence College
Michael Cooke	St. Lawrence College
Ross McMillan	St. Lawrence College

Regrets:

Elaine Jeffery	Metis Nation of Ontario
Shirley Chaisson	St. Lawrence College

Guests:

Sherry Lance	Metis Nation of Ontario
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1. Welcome and Opening

Glenn Vollebregt welcomed the group to the meeting. Glenn invited Helena Neveu to formally open the meeting.

Helena opened the meeting by offering greetings and thanks. Helena called upon Kelly Maracle to also say a few words of opening.

Glenn invited all members and guests to introduce themselves.

2. Context Setting

a. IEC Story

Glenn noted that, in 2010, the provincial government mandated all postsecondary institutions to establish an Indigenous Education Council. He also stated that irrespective of the legislation, the IEC is essential to the work we are doing at St. Lawrence College and to our relationships with the Indigenous communities in the regions we serve.

Jessie Pengelly added that since our last IEC meeting in 2019, there have been many changes in membership. It is timely for SLC to renew the membership and reactivate the Council in order to allow for new perspectives and insights. She noted that at the time of our last meeting, we were at the beginning of our Strategic Plan, SLC in Five. Now that we are a few years into this Strategic Plan, we are able to share some of the great work that has been happening.

Glenn welcomed Michael Cooke to speak to SLC in Five and the commitment to Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Being.

Michael presented the framework that is being used to embed Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Being into our programs and our operations (see attached). Michael provided a high-level overview of the Medicine Wheel structure of this framework and the information within. He noted that we are looking to this Council to provide us with advice to ensure that St. Lawrence College is well connected to the communities where we live and work and that we are making meaningful contributions.

He asked the group to review this document and offer comments and advice at our next meeting. The group agreed to use this document as a “Charter” to guide our vision and the work we are doing, while also monitoring the progression of the commitments.

Ross McMillan provided a quick overview of the structure of the Indigenous Services Team and invited the members of the team to speak about their roles. Jessie, Holly Brant and Katie Lamarche provided a summary of their roles and the work that they do to support students. Unfortunately, Shirley Chaisson was unable to attend.

Ross invited Helena to speak to her role as Knowledge Keeper in Residence for St. Lawrence College. Helena engaged in a conversation about her history and journey to get where she is today. Helena spoke about the role of the Knowledge Keeper and the work she intends to do during her time at SLC.

b. Election of Co-Chairs

Noted change: Item 2b is now 'Election of Co-Chairs' and item 2c is now 'Terms of Reference'.

Glenn noted that his vision for his role in the IEC is to support this group and to be a connection to the Board of Governors. Glenn shared that he feels that it is most appropriate for the co-chairs to lead the discussion on the Terms of Reference. With this, Glenn announced that Jessie has agreed to take on the role of co-chair for the IEC, as the representative from the College. Glenn thanked Jessie for taking on this important role. Glenn added that it is important that the other co-chair be a community member. The group moved that Jessie will be the College co-chair and the community co-chair will be elected at the next meeting.

Glenn turned the meeting over to Jessie.

c. Terms of Reference

Jessie led the group in a discussion of the Terms of Reference and noted that these terms have not been reviewed recently and may need to be updated. Jessie noted that we would like to alter the Terms of Reference to ensure they outline our commitment to being as inclusive as possible, to give our community members the primary voice on the Council and to support a reciprocal relationship between the communities and organizations they represent and SLC.

Jessie opened the discussion and posed the question to the group: "As an IEC member on this committee, what do you hope to get from these meetings or what would be of value to your organization?"

Feedback received on the Terms of Reference:

- Outlining the commitment for a reciprocal relationship between SLC and community members' organizations
- Speak to First Nation, Metis and Inuit (rather than just Indigenous)
- Creates an environment that prioritizes the voices of the community members and situates SLC staff as being in a support/service role

Members are encouraged to send additional feedback to Laura to be included in the next iteration of terms. Michael and Ross will take the feedback shared today and will revise and bring a draft back to the next IEC meeting for comment and recommendation.

d. Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Being (IWKB) and the SA Plan

Jessie invited Michael to speak to this agenda item.

Michael noted that the Student Affairs division has developed a comprehensive Student Affairs Plan which outlines the commitment to the vision, goals, deliverables and measurements for IWKB.

Michael complimented this group on the breadth and depth of skills and expertise that each member brings to the table.

Michael outlined that we are challenged to find a way to bring more Indigenous students to study at SLC. We also need to work to increase the number of Indigenous staff at SLC in order to meaningfully embed IWKB into what we do. Additionally, we need to educate our staff and students on Indigenous culture and history in order for them to be good allies.

Michael expects that this Council will hold SLC accountable for its commitments.

Question: Are there Indigenous courses already being offered at SLC? Are they mandatory?

Answer: Currently, there are no mandatory Indigenous courses. Over the past few years, there has been an increase in the number of Indigenous general education courses and some programs have taken initiative to develop their own Indigenous focused courses.

It was noted that there is a need to expand Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Being beyond the Indigenous Centres at the College. Indigenous students should not feel isolated to only one safe space on the campuses.

3. Community Advice and Input

a. Challenges, opportunities, ideas for outreach and engagement and opportunities for collaboration

Jessie opened the floor for members to share any challenges, opportunities and/or ideas for outreach and engagement.

Sherry Lance noted that regarding curriculum development, the Metis Nation of Ontario now has a curriculum developer that is working to develop curriculum focused on Ontario information, rather than western Canada information.

Kelly added that there could be an opportunity to collaborate with LDSB and SLC to create outdoor learning spaces. There is also an opportunity to further bridging programs specific to indigenous students.

Holly shared that SLC had put together a flyer of Indigenous Services and noted that it would be beneficial to share this with students and partner organizations. Jessie will share the digital copy of these flyers with the group.

Glenn added that we now have a mobile lab that introduces students to the Trades. As this is a mobile lab, we are able to take this out to students and bring the education to them.

Kayleigh noted that through the Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Fund there is a Youth Ambassadors Program for students aged 16-26. This is a good opportunity for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.

Amanda added that Iohahi:io Akwesasne Education & Training Institute is committed to continuing the working relationship with SLC. Sheila added that Amanda has been doing a lot of great work with students to support their mental health. There have been a lot of cultural activities to ensure students and community members are engaged.

4. Conclusion and Next Steps

Jessie acknowledged that this year has been particularly challenging for Indigenous communities and Jessie noted her thanks to the group for making time to attend and participate in the IEC meeting today.

In terms of next steps, the group is looking to meet at least three times in the academic year. Upcoming meetings will take place in February 2022 and April 2022. Final meeting dates will be confirmed in the near future.

5. Closing

Jessie invited Helena to close the meeting.

Helena offered words of thanks to the group members and closed the meeting.