

**ABORIGINAL COUNCIL  
YORK UNIVERSITY  
MANDATE AND TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**1. Purpose**

The York University Aboriginal Council (the Council) <sup>1</sup> is committed to addressing the educational needs and provision of services that meet the cultural needs of Aboriginal <sup>2</sup> students at York University through the processes of recruitment, retention and ultimately graduation.

The Council is committed to supporting and building reciprocal relationships between Aboriginal communities and York University in the area of Aboriginal education. Its purpose is to advocate for Aboriginal Peoples to have greater access, input and opportunities for higher education to the fullest extent possible at York University now and for future generations.

**2. Functions and Responsibilities**

The Council will:

- Promote and support the educational needs and aspirations of Aboriginal students and communities
- Work with York University in assessing and proposing changes to existing and emerging programs/services of direct interest to Aboriginal students and communities
- Provide advice and support to individual students and to the Aboriginal Student Association as necessary.
- Receive and exchange information on new and existing programs and services provided by York University that have particular relevance for Aboriginal students.
- Promote the University's programs and services in the Aboriginal community at large
- Develop a five year action plan to implement the Council's mandate
- Be involved in the financial planning with regard to externally generated funds allocated for Aboriginal education
- In partnership with York University, prepare and approve the annual funding request from the Province for the Aboriginal Education and Training Strategy funds (AETS proposal)
- Delegate the two Co-Chairs to speak on behalf of the Council
- Periodically evaluate and revise the Mandate and Terms of Reference in order to ensure that the needs of Aboriginal students and communities continue to be met in meaningful and relevant ways

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<sup>1</sup> Formerly known as the Aboriginal Education Council, at a meeting on October 18, 2005, by consensus, the Council renamed itself the Aboriginal Council.

<sup>2</sup> For purposes of this document, Aboriginal includes Status, Non-Status, First Nations, Metis, Inuit and all indigenous people.

### **3. Membership**

The Council's chosen governance model, in keeping with other university aboriginal education councils, comprises membership from the University, from the university Aboriginal constituency and from the broader Aboriginal community.

While there will be representation from the Aboriginal communities and the University, the majority of Council members must be Aboriginal.

#### **3.1 Co-Chairs**

The Council shall choose two Co-Chairs, one drawn from the Aboriginal representation and one from the University. The Co-Chairs will be chosen by nomination and consensus by the members present.

The Co-Chairs are responsible for keeping the Council focused on the purpose, mission, goals and plans of the Council; chairing the meetings; corresponding with Council members and others as required; consulting and liaising with members of the community as appropriate; initiating an annual update of the Council's plan; ensuring the Council operates according to its Mandate and Terms of Reference; holding nominations and elections; acting as official spokespersons for the Council; setting meetings four times yearly; and holding an Annual General Meeting for information dissemination and community feedback.

#### **3.2 Secretary**

The 'Coordinator - Aboriginal Student Community' is responsible for supporting the work and mandate of the Council; taking meeting minutes; preparing meeting agendas under the direction of the Co-Chairs; drafting correspondence as required; sending welcome packages to new members and appropriate information to returning members; preparing and updating materials as directed by the Co-Chairs; maintaining files and records; maintaining membership lists - current and archival; booking room for meetings; preparing and circulating meeting minutes and agenda.

#### **3.3 Members**

Members are responsible for championing the mission of the Council; attending meetings on a regular basis; participating at the meetings; sitting on Council committees and fully committing to the work of the Council and its committees; reading the minutes of the last meeting in advance of the meeting at which they will be approved; reading the agenda for the upcoming meeting and seeking any clarification necessary in order to be able to discuss/deal with the item at the meeting; completing any Council business agreed to by the deadline or meeting indicated; responding promptly to e-mails or other correspondence with regard to Council business; regularly reporting to their constituencies and reporting back to the Council as relevant.

Seats will be reserved for the following members as minimum conditions within the Council membership:

- At least four seats will be reserved for members from the Aboriginal community at large
- At least two seats reserved for members of the Aboriginal Students Association at York
- At least one seat reserved for a member of the Osgoode Indigenous Students Association
- At least one seat each reserved for the Vice Presidents of Academic and Students or their designates

Current members of the University's Aboriginal faculty and staff, upon application to the Council can become Council members.

The Ombudsperson and Director, Human Rights or designate is an ex-officio member of the Council.

#### **4. Term of Office**

Membership on the Council is a two year term and may be renewed at the annual general meeting. The term of the two Co-Chairs is a two year term with opportunity for renewal to a maximum of three consecutive terms.

#### **5. Quorum**

A quorum shall constitute a minimum of five (5) Council members bearing in mind section 3 that requires a majority of Aboriginal members.

#### **7. Meetings**

The Council shall meet at least four times a year and additionally as deemed necessary and appropriate by the Co-Chairs.

#### **8. Agendas**

The meeting agendas and relevant material will be sent out one week in advance of the meeting. The agenda is developed by the Co-Chairs with the support of the Coordinator - Aboriginal Student Community.

#### **9. Decision Making**

Decisions will be made by consensus whereby everyone either agrees with the decision or, if not in full agreement, can abide by the decision made by the other members of the Council.

To identify a consensus, a Co-Chair will state the decision as he/she understands it for the record. In the case where consensus is unclear, the Co-Chair should first ask every Council member in attendance to state his/her opinion on the subject at hand. If no consensus exists, the Co-Chair may defer the decision to the next meeting.

Only those who are identified members of the Council shall participate in arriving at consensus.

## **10. Attendance**

In the instance where a Council member does not attend three consecutive regularly scheduled meetings, under normal circumstances he/she will be deemed to have resigned and will be removed from the membership roster by the Council.

## **11. Evaluation and Review**

The performance of the Council including the Mandate and Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually.

The Mandate and Terms of Reference will be reviewed once per year based on the work done by the Council. Based on this review, the Mandate and Terms of Reference may be revised and the five year work plan revised accordingly.

## **12. Mandate and Terms of Reference Approval History**

Approved by: the Council, September 28, 2006

Amendments accepted by Co-Chairs: David McNab and Bonita Lawrence