

# INDIGENOUS COUNCIL OF YORK UNIVERSITY

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

### 1. Mandate

The Indigenous Council of York University (the Council) is committed to supporting and building reciprocal relationships between Indigenous communities and York University in the interests of expanding all aspects of an Indigenous presence at York. Its purpose is to advocate for Indigenous Peoples to have greater access, input and opportunities for higher education to the fullest extent possible at York University now and for future generations. As such, its mandate includes addressing the quality of the education that Indigenous students receive, through engaging with all aspects of the Indigenous strategy at York University.

### 2. Mission Statement

The Council is committed to addressing the educational and cultural needs and services of Indigenous<sup>1</sup> students at York University through processes of recruitment, and through addressing the issues that encourage retention and ultimately graduation.

### 3. Functions and Responsibilities

The Council will:

- Promote and support the educational needs and aspirations of Indigenous students and communities.
- Work with York University in assessing and proposing changes to existing and emerging programs/services for Indigenous students and communities.
- Provide advice and advocacy support to individual students and to Indigenous Student Associations as needed.
- Engage with academic departments across the university to provide advice and exchange information relating to the development of new curricula or programs or other developments relating to Indigenous peoples.
- Promote the University's programs and services in the Indigenous community at large.
- Be involved in the financial planning with regard to externally generated funds allocated for Indigenous education.
- In partnership with York University, prepare and approve the multi-year funding request from the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skill Development (MAESD) for the Postsecondary Education Fund for Indigenous Learners (PEFAL).
- 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 Indigenous students and communities continue to be met in meaningful and relevant ways.

### 4. Membership

The Council's governance model includes membership from York University's community and its Indigenous constituency, and from broader Indigenous communities. While there will be representation from the Indigenous communities and the University at large, the majority of Council members must be Indigenous.

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<sup>1</sup> For purposes of this document, Indigenous includes First Nations (Status, Non-Status), Métis, Inuit and all Indigenous Peoples from Turtle Island.

#### **4.1 Co-Chairs**

The Council shall appoint two Co-Chairs, one drawn from the Indigenous community and one from the University. The Co-Chairs will be appointed by nomination and consensus with 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; and setting meetings six times yearly.

#### **4.2 Secretary**

The 'Coordinator, Aboriginal Student Services' is responsible for supporting the work and mandate of the Council; circulating meeting agendas under the direction of the Co-Chairs; drafting correspondence as required; sending appropriate information to 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.

#### **4.3 Academic Director**

The Academic Director to the Indigenous Council is responsible for:

- Acting as Liaison between Academic departments across the University and the Indigenous Council
- Addressing academic issues, supporting students, and responding to concerns relating to the Centre for Aboriginal Students Services (CASS) and the university.
- Engage in diverse academic projects relating to CASS and the Indigenous Council

#### **4.4 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 prior to 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.

Council membership will be chosen to reflect the diversity of the York community and the broader Indigenous communities as follows:

- Four seats reserved for representatives from the Indigenous agencies/organizations and First Nation communities in the GTA and surrounding area.
- Two seats reserved for representatives of the Aboriginal Students Association at York (ASAY).
- One seat reserved for a representative of the Osgoode Indigenous Students Association (OISA)
- One seat each reserved for the Office of Vice-President Academic & Provost and the Office of Vice-Provost Students or designates of their choosing.
- One seat reserved for an Indigenous graduate student.
- One seat reserved for an Indigenous York alumni.
- One seat reserved for an Elder/Traditional Knowledge Keeper.
- One seat reserved for a representative of the Indigenous community at large.

- Seats are available for Indigenous faculty and staff.
- The Director for the Centre for Human Rights, Equity and Inclusion or designate is an ex-officio member of the Council.

#### **4.5 Indigenous Council Executives of York University (ICE)**

The ICE Executive Committee is a working group that will meet as needed and be responsible for carrying out the Terms of Reference for the ICE with a focus on:

- Finances
- Programming
- Reporting requirements

The ICE Executive Committee will be composed of:

- 2 ICE Co-Chairs
- 2 Student Representatives (1 from ASAY and 1 from OISA)
- Academic Director
- Coordinator, Aboriginal Student Services

When required and at the invitation of ICE an Administrative Representative will be engaged to support the mandate of the ICE.

#### **5. Term of Office**

Membership on the Council and the ICE Executive Committee is a two-year term and is to be renewed at the October meeting. The term of the Co-Chairs is two-years with the opportunity for renewal, to a maximum of three consecutive terms.

#### **6. Quorum**

A quorum shall constitute a minimum of five (5) Council members bearing in mind section 4 that requires a majority of Indigenous members.

#### **7. Meetings**

The Council shall meet six times a year or more, depending on what the Co-Chairs deem necessary and appropriate. The six main meetings will be scheduled for early September, October, December, late January, mid March and May.

- Honouraria will be provided to external Council members as requested.
- Parking passes will be provided to external Council members as requested.
- Every effort will be made to engage the larger Indigenous community, both on and off campus, through the use of virtual meetings.

#### **8. Agendas**

The meeting agendas and relevant material will be sent out one week in advance of the meeting. The agenda is to be developed by the Co-Chairs with the support of the Co-ordinator, Indigenous Student Services.

#### **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 position 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 a consensus.

**10. Evaluation and Review**

As per PEFAL requirements, the performance of the Council will be reviewed as required.

**11. Terms of Reference Approval History**

Last approval by the Council: January 31<sup>st</sup> 2017