

Aboriginal Engagement Committee Meeting

17 April 2014

8:30 a.m. in Conference Room 2-084

PRESENT: Jérôme Melancon (Chair) Allen Berger Glynnis Hood
 Petra Cegiely Trina Harrison
 Mike Clermont Michelle Pratt (Recorder)

REGRETS: Mark Chytracak, Eagle Willier

1. **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 8:33 a.m.

2. **Agenda**

The agenda was accepted as presented.

MOTION: CLERMONT/HARRISON

CARRIED

3. **Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes**

Item d should read: TYP – corporate donations could be an option for Augustana.

The minutes of 26 March 2014 were approved as amended.

MOTION: HARRISON/BERGER

CARRIED

4. **Remarks from Committee Members**

Jérôme thanked everyone for coming to the meeting. He will be reporting to Faculty Council on the activities of the committee and asked members to forward any items for inclusion in his report i.e. specific events or achievements. He will circulate the report to members before sending it to Sarah.

Jérôme also mentioned having a discussion with David Goa about using funding through the Chester Ronning Centre (CRC) to host events on campus. One possible presenter is Ronald Niezen, the author of Truth & Indignation and a professor at McGill University's Faculty of Law. Another possible presenter is Leanne Simpson philosopher and activist, and author of Dancing On Our Turtle's Back. He suggested bringing in speakers to both Augustana and North Campus

- a. and is looking to organize an event this fall on Truth & Reconciliation and where we go from here.

Allen mentioned that the CRC Strategic Planning Committee had reached out to people who attended programs, participated on advisory board and visiting speakers with a questionnaire. The responses included praise for the Centre, as well as identifying possible holes, needs or new directions. One comment that was included on many responses was having the Centre engage with Aboriginal issues and populations.

Trina mentioned the possibility of using a lunch and learn funded through Alumni to bring in speakers on Aboriginal issues.

5. **Business**

- a. **Space for Students to Gather** – Feedback from students who attended the meeting with the architect was positive. They were excited about the fact that their comments were being noted and they felt the consultants were really listening to them. They were being asked to describe the spirit and the feeling of the space. Planning thus far hasn't been satisfying because the focus was on space allocation rather than creative design. General comments were made on the use of Aboriginal symbols, traditions and the need to create a flexible space.

It was agreed to hold a meeting in May to consult with students, alumni, Elders and others to determine a vision for the space, defining the spirit of the area. It was agreed that the meeting be held in the space in order to give participants a feel for the area while ideas are being

generated, talked about. It was suggested that the meeting could be a three-hour session with the architect and consultant providing some possible design ideas, use of symbols, space, etc. that could stimulate the imaginations of those sitting in the space. Then follow up with a meeting of this committee with Ben and his team to create a game plan for the remainder of the summer. With the feedback from the meeting, the architect should be able to move into a more focussed design phase.

Concerns were raised that the project could be delayed if the committee keeps meeting about the space, the spirit of it, and doesn't move forward. It was also suggested that the committee forward some theme ideas to Ben prior to the May meeting from which he could draft some design ideas to stimulate imaginations.

The committee agreed to ask Ben to create draft designs keeping in mind the moon, the medicine wheel and sewn slippers/moccasins. The sewn slippers represent the relationship between the sense of home and a meeting place/pathway/journey.

The University has a very specific policy with respect to naming spaces and the appropriate office will need to be consulted. Timeline will depend on the time needed to move through consulting process. Naming could be determined by a sponsor. Focus on the spirit of the space and the name will come.

Dean's Office to organize the event with Petra's assistance. Petra and Trina to see if they can speak to Maskwacis community members at Spring Soiree.

Glynnis offered to research various websites to see what other universities call their spaces.

ACTION: Michelle, Petra to organize a May event. Glynnis to review university websites and Petra and Trina to reach out to Maskwacis community members at the Spring Soiree. Jérôme to ask Ben to bring some design ideas around the three themes for a May consultation with students, Elders, etc. Michelle to check with members for availability in May.

b. **Plans for the Summer – deferred.**

c. **Territorial Acknowledgement Statement –** Jerome distributed three draft statements. Glynnis suggested the names listed be reviewed by Jeremy Mouat for accuracy. Suggestions for revisions included:

- that the last line be phrased in an aspirational way: "a rich heritage that we honour and continue to learn from.";
- something that looks for a deeper integration rather than claims that one already exists; something thriving despite the marginalization;
- hard to find any history in Camrose other than Norwegian;
- "spiritual and practical relationships to the land"; sense of place – psychological connection to a place;
- captures people's relationship to a location or a memory of a location.

Revised draft statement:

I wish to acknowledge that the land on which we gather is a traditional territory and meeting ground for many Indigenous peoples. The territory on which the Augustana Campus of the University of Alberta is located provided a pathway for travel and the necessities for life to the Cree, Blackfoot, and Métis who made it their home, as it did for the Nakoda, Tsuu T'ina, Shoshone, Chipewyan, and Kootenay. Their spiritual and practical relationships to the land create a rich heritage for our learning and our life as a community.

It was agreed to bring this draft forward for consultation. Consultation to include people who have been involved in meetings, or activities; send out to those students and ask for their thoughts. Also ask Elders for their comments, input.

Gifts given to people if they come from Maskwacis – thank you for coming.

ACTION: Jérôme to check with Jeremy on the list of names.

6. **Next Meeting Date – to be determined**

7. The meeting adjourned at 9:45 a.m.

MOTION: HARRISON/CLERMONT

CARRIED

DRAFT