

Aboriginal Engagement Committee Meeting

3 October 2014

10:00 a.m. in Conference Room 2-084

PRESENT: Jérôme Melançon (Chair) Glynnis Hood Petra Cegielly
Trina Harrison Alyssa Belanger
Michelle Pratt (Recorder)

REGRETS: Mike Clermont, Allen Berger

1. **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m.

2. **Agenda**

The agenda was accepted as presented.

MOTION: HOOD/CEGIELNY

CARRIED

3. **Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes**

To defer the approval of the minutes of 11 September 2014 to the next meeting.

MOTION: HOOD/CEGIELNY

CARRIED

4. **Remarks from Committee Members**

- a. Jérôme will meet with Allen after the meeting and provide an update.

5. **Business**

- a. **Student Members** – The chair welcomed Alyssa Belanger, the Aboriginal Student Representative from the ASA. Brittany Johnson would like to continue to be involved. The Dean received a number of nominations for a second student representative, however a decision has not been announced. Jérôme to speak with Allen next week about the process.

ACTION: Jérôme to meet with Allen.

- b. **Tipi on Campus** – The results of Glynnis' research into placing a tipi on campus have been positive. The only concerns from Facilities & Operations were that no open flames be allowed inside the structure and if placed on the piazza south of the Forum Building, the poles cannot be cored or drilled into the paves or concrete. The material would also need to be flame retardant. Glynnis will meet with Don Johnson and Garry Waskahat from Maskwacis to discuss timelines, design, formalities, etc. if the project is to go ahead.

Questions were raised as to the permanence of the structure and where it would be located. If the tipi is to be semi-permanent being raised and lowered annually, there needs to be budget set aside for the costs associated with that activity e.g. honorariums for Elders, storage fees. One possible location suggested for the tipi was between Founders' Hall and the First Year Residence. The Building Committee will need to be involved once the decision is made to go ahead.

Reasons for having a tipi on campus included:

- a good teaching tool: could have classes in the tipi; each pole has a teaching;
- indigenous knowing/learning is facilitated through setting up and taking down; e.g. the setting up was done by women;
- can be used by faculty, by Elders, and by Aboriginal students for teaching;
- could be worked into a CSL project in the teaching of the tipi itself
- brings the Aboriginal space outside, a visual link to the space downstairs
- smudging could be done in the tipi

- could be used as ceremonial space
- a good connection between the community and the campus as there is no other tipi in Camrose
- could attract schools to a ceremony

Other comments included:

- could be used all year long
- remove the canvas and leave the poles for the winter depending on the type of tipi
- need to confirm the number of poles as this could vary from group to group
- tie in to Aboriginal Day with the City of Camrose
- seek funding support from Alberta Life-Long Living (Jane Ross) and the Arts Society (Jane Cherry) as far as funds to support
- also to seek ongoing funding support from the Chester Ronning Centre with respect to Religion & Public Life and the spirituality of Indigenous people
- could be used in multiple ways by students that could lead to an enhanced understanding between all students
- people might use it inappropriately, so the need for security is a concern, along with appropriate lighting for the tipi
- solar powered lights were suggested

The consensus was to have a tipi on campus with the recognition that a plan needs to be developed for the location and a budget along with a procedure for raising and lowering. The plan would need to include security costs and annual costs of maintaining the structure including identifying who is responsible for managing the project. A member of the committee may need to be a supervisor if it was to become a CSL project. If the Ronning Centre became a sponsor, supervision for the placement could happen through them as well.

Jérôme will ask Allen to take the project to the Building Committee before it can go before Executive Council for final approval. Members expressed their thanks to the anonymous donor for their sponsorship of the purchase of the tipi, and their thanks to Glynnis for her work in researching the possibility.

ACTION: Glynnis will work on the plan with input from Jérôme, Petra and anyone else who would like to be involved. Jérôme to connect with David Goa about possible ongoing funding.

- c. **Communications About the Space** – Jérôme and Trina met with Christopher Thrall to discuss the Communication Strategy for the space in the lower level of the Forum. They identified the audiences that need to receive communication about the space, but announcements to external audiences will have to wait until the name is confirmed and the plans and timelines have been finalized.

Alyssa is on the Awareness Committee for the ASA and could help with dissemination of information when the time comes.

Jérôme will be working on a piece that will be brought back to the committee. It will be a half-page backgrounder that can be shared with anyone who gives tours on campus.

It was suggested that poster boards be designed to be displayed on easels that could be located in the space but also moved to different areas. Another suggestion was roll-out display pieces printed on vinyl with grommets. If approved and funded, Christopher could design the boards and get them printed.

A video of students excited about the project was suggested, however it was decided that five or six students could be interviewed and a quote along with their photo could be published to the web page. Petra will identify four students along with the ASA President Hans Asfeldt who could be interviewed. It would be exciting to do a video with Elders speaking about the space once it is complete that could be sent out province-wide.

Once the information and photographs are on the web, Christopher will place in the Newsletter and Allen will be asked to send an email directing everyone to look at the web page.

There were a number of ideas coming out of the consultation meeting with respect to the naming of the space. Petra will compile a list and send it to Michelle. It was suggested that the name be decided at the next meeting and that 30 minutes be set aside to discuss the suggestions.

d. **Consultations About the Space**

ACTION: Alan Heyhurst to be requested to call a Steering Committee meeting to move the design process along.

e. **Smudging in Small Prayer Room** – at the last consultation meeting, Petra received the Elders' agreement to allow students to use the space immediately. Chris Blades, Mike and Petra will meet 9 a.m. Monday morning for a quick demonstration by Don Johnson after which Petra will email students. She will also talk to Chaplaincy about appropriate signs on the door. The Committee agreed to invite Elders back to campus for an educational session about smudging. Judy Louis was going to send a copy of a school policy on smudging to Chris. Petra will follow up to see if it has been received.

ACTION: Petra and Alyssa to meet to get the word out to students. Petra to check with Chris about the policy.

f. **Ideas for Future Projects for the Committee**

Bridging Program – for her next project, Glynnis would like to be involved with a larger committee to discuss a Bridging Program.

Jérôme, Petra and Alyssa to meet about mature students with children and their needs.

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

The meeting adjourned at 11:04 a.m.

7.

MOTION: HOOD/BELANGER

CARRIED