Smudging Policy

1. Purpose
Smudging is the burning of sacred plants. It is done individually to begin a new day and as part of prayer, or to cleanse a space; collectively it is used to begin ceremonies, meetings, as well as different gatherings. Most often sage and sweet grass are used in Cree (Nehiyaw) culture, especially for individual prayer and gatherings. Other plants may be used for specific purposes (healing, for example) and other cultures. The smudge is lit and the resulting smoke is regarded as a purifying agent for the mind, body, and spirit. Smudging is a sacred practice; to respect it is also to respect the cultures of which it is an important practice.

Whereas:

a. the Augustana campus of the University of Alberta is located on the traditional territory of the Cree, Blackfoot, Métis, and other Indigenous peoples who continue to practice traditional ceremonies involving smudging;

b. Aboriginal students and employees are affected by ongoing colonialism and its legacy (notably the interdiction to practice traditional and new ceremonies), the banning of smoke in University buildings having a deterring effect on the possibility of smudging;

c. students, staff, and faculty may wish to smudge in their place of work and residence; honour and learn Indigenous ways of knowing and thus hold ceremonies and teachings which require smudging; and may invite guests for whom smudging is the proper way to begin an event in a good way;

d. building, facilities, and other policies present specific demands and requirements in terms of fire safety and limit the presence of any smoke;

e. some members of the Augustana campus suffer from medical conditions that make them sensitive to smoke and may become ill as a result;

f. the Augustana campus is committed to providing an inclusive, respectful, and relevant environment for all its members as well as opportunities for inter-cultural and inter-national understanding and relationships,

The primary goals of this policy are to make smudging possible on campus and to ensure the health and safety of everyone on campus as well as the prevention of fire and false fire alarms.

The following policy is meant to allow for a clear process for smudging to take place in an appropriate manner. The policy does not constitute a process to request and gain permission to smudge; rather it is meant to ensure that any smudging follows other University policies and to provide clear direction so that all appropriate steps are taken on each occasion.

This policy does not address other uses of smoke or incense. For pipe ceremonies and related ceremonies, please consult the addendum to this policy as well as the related form. For other ceremonies, please contact the Manager of Facilities and Operations.
2. **General Guidelines**

- Outside of smudging in the Multi-faith Prayer Room, staff and faculty are required to submit a request to Facilities and Operations with at least 72 hours’ notice (three working days), unless indicated otherwise below. Authorization can only be given on a per-event basis.
- The Smudging Form must be completed. It can be accessed on MyWeb. If needed, a work order will be created by Facilities and Operations.
- Only employees of the University of Alberta (including students working for the University) may submit a request, and may do so on behalf of a student or a guest, but the person making the request remains responsible for following University policy.
- The completed Smudging Form will be forwarded to Facilities and Operations and reviewed by the Manager of Facilities and Operations, who will authorize a specific event on the basis of the demands placed upon Facilities and Operations and may request a discussion to finalize details before granting authorization for the event.
- The person requesting authorization will be responsible for ensuring that 30 minutes after the end of the event there remains no source of ignition (i.e. that there is no open flame and no embers).
- Although it is customary to let traditional medicines extinguish on their own, they cannot be left unattended. As a result, they must be left in the Multi-faith Prayer Room, or outside of the building, at least 5 metres from entrances or air intakes.
- Facilities and Operations can be reached by phone at 780-679-1618 or by email at facility@augustana.ca.

3. **Smudging in the Multi-faith Prayer Room**

The Multi-faith Prayer Room F1-350B has been equipped with a fan and cast iron pan to allow for smudging on a day-to-day basis. Up-to-date and detailed guidelines can be found next to the doors entering the room itself. Any questions can be forwarded to Student and Residence Services Administrative Assistant - Office F 2-336 or by calling 780-679-1163.

- Traditional medicines may be left to extinguish on their own;
- The fan must be turned on prior to smudging, and left on when exiting the room.

4. **Smudging in Residence**

a) **At Move In** - in conformity with the practice of cleansing a new living space, students may smudge their residence room when they first move in. Students who desire to smudge when first moving in to University residences will have the opportunity to indicate their desire to do so [in response to documents and emails sent by Residence Services before the beginning of the term]. The Residence Coordinator will then contact them to find an adequate time to do so.

b) **At Other Times and For Special Occasions** - students desiring to smudge as part of prayer are asked to use the Multi-faith Prayer Room. Students desiring to smudge their residence room on special occasions may ask the Residence Coordinator to submit a request and provide seven days’ notice. The Residence Coordinator will forward the request to Facilities and Operations.
5. Smudging in Classrooms
Smudging may take place in classrooms in the context of special ceremonies or in relation to academically related activities. One of the following classrooms ought to be considered as the best locations for smudging: Classroom Building – C014, C101, and C103. If they are not available, it is recommended that an arrangement be made for a professor using one of these rooms to use one that is free elsewhere on campus. Since smudging in other classrooms than those designated leads to increased demands on Facilities and Operations, it is respectfully requested that smudging be limited to the listed classrooms or, if it is not possible, that the Manager of Facilities and Operations be consulted when submitting the form.

6. Smudging in the Forum, Gymnasium, Faith and Life Lounge, Chapel, and Roger Epp Conference Room
In these places for large gatherings on special occasions, please refer to the “general guidelines.” The Smudging Form must be submitted as with any other event, with the knowledge that a detailed discussion with the Manager of Facilities of Operations will be necessary.

7. Smudging in Other Locations
For smudging in other locations than those indicated above, please refer to the General Guidelines noted above. In accordance with the Provincial Code, smudging outside is prohibited within five metres of building entrances, windows and air intakes.

Any questions about the smudging policy may be directed to Facilities and Operations or to the Chair of the Aboriginal Engagement Committee.

Addendum: Pipe Ceremonies
As an integral part of large, formal ceremonies and gatherings such as round dances and pipe ceremonies are covered under the same guidelines and demand the same authorization process as smudging. They may not take place in the Multi-faith Prayer Room without prior authorization.