



University of Manitoba
Indigenous Senior Leadership Consultations:
What We Heard

Dated: June 11, 2019



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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



When Dr. Janice Ristock, Provost and Vice President and (Academic) asked me to chair a committee to look at the role and mandate for Indigenous senior leadership at the University of Manitoba, I was pleased to accept the challenge. I feel privileged to lead an Advisory Committee that is well versed in the systemic barriers for First Nations (status and non-status), Métis and Inuit communities and students, to have the opportunity to consult with key stakeholders in establishing priorities for action, and in developing recommendations for University of Manitoba leadership to guide next steps in the goal of Indigenous achievement and engagement.

Between March and May of 2019, we held 16 consultation sessions with Elders, University of Manitoba senior leadership, Deans and Directors, Indigenous and non-Indigenous faculty, staff and students, and the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation including town halls at the three urban campuses of the University of Manitoba.

This document reflects 'What We Heard' from the feedback sessions, and includes four key themes of 'Organizational Structure', 'Governance', 'Community' and 'Accountability'. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission released its Final Report in 2015, and with that, 94 Calls to Action that would afford opportunities for Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians to come together and address those identified matters. Included in the 94 Calls to Action was the call to fully adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) as the framework for reconciliation. The four themes of our report are consistent with the recommended changes from the Calls to Action for structural changes in Education and Health.

Overwhelmingly, feedback from participants in the sessions reflected a need to establish a culturally safe work and learning environment for Indigenous students, staff and faculty; and to foster relationships with Indigenous communities.

As we finalize our report, we have an opportunity to reflect on this feedback to make recommendations that will support Indigenous communities and the University of Manitoba in achieving common goals.

Thank you to the Advisory Committee for their commitment, their support and guidance and to Dr. Ristock for the opportunity to contribute to the future of Indigenous senior leadership at the University of Manitoba.

Dr. Catherine Cook
Chair, Indigenous Senior Leadership Advisory Committee
Vice-Dean, Indigenous and the Head of Ongomiizwin - Indigenous Institute of Health and Healing
Rady Faculty of Health Sciences

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INTRODUCTION

Background

In 2011, the Office of the President and senior administration created the University's first central leadership position dedicated to Indigenous achievement: Executive Lead, Indigenous Achievement. The position reported directly to the President.

After the departure of the Executive Lead in March 2016, an interim Executive Lead fulfilled the responsibilities of the role from 2016-2017.

The President and the newly appointed Provost, Dr. Janice Ristock, considered the organizational structures and titles to best support the University's Indigenous achievement priorities. It was decided that a process to search for a Vice-Provost (Indigenous Engagement) with a focus on the academic priorities would be launched and in 2017, a Provost's Advisory Committee was formed. The Advisory Committee was representative of Indigenous faculty, staff and students and senior leadership and supported by Higgins International, a leading executive search firm specializing in Indigenous recruitment.

The VPIE position was responsible for advancing the University's commitment to Indigenous achievement through its learning, discovery and engagement pathways. To this end, the VPIE oversaw the effective operations of Indigenous Achievement and the Indigenous Student Centre and worked in collaboration with Vice-Presidents, Vice-Provosts, Deans/Directors, other Academic Administrators and external partners to advance the University's academic strategic priorities with respect to programs/curriculum, students and faculty, and provided advice, guidance and support to the Provost relating to Indigenous matters.



Figure 1: Fort Garry Town Hall

Advisory Committee Mandate

The resignation of the VPIE in December 2018 afforded the university an opportunity to review and clarify the role and mandate of this challenging position. In response, the Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic) struck an advisory committee¹ to:

- Review background material and consider the current mandate of the Vice-Provost (Indigenous Engagement) and the structure of the Indigenous Engagement and Achievement offices.
- Through a consultative process (including deans/directors, administrators, Indigenous faculty/staff, Indigenous student groups and other relevant stakeholders) assess the strengths and weaknesses of our current approach and consider the needs and supports going forward.
- Provide recommendations on the role/mandate for the next Vice-Provost (Indigenous Engagement), the appropriate reporting structure/units, and the supports necessary to fulfill this mandate.

¹ See Appendix 1 for the advisory committee composition.

Consultation Process

The advisory committee convened multiple focused consultation sessions beginning in March and concluding at the end of May. The committee asked participants to respond to four questions to inform the committee's recommendations². This report is structured around the themes that emerged throughout the consultations.

The consultation process included:

- A dedicated webpage where university community members could view consultation opportunities and provide anonymous feedback.
- An email account to send feedback: Indigenous.engagement@umanitoba.ca .
- Three town halls (Fort Garry Campus, Rady Faculty of Health Sciences and the William Norrie Centre) open to all university community members as well as Indigenous organizations external to the University of Manitoba.
- Feedback from the advisory committee members.
- Thirteen focus groups including:
 - Elders
 - Indigenous Students (Fort Garry and Rady Faculty Health Sciences (RHFS))
 - Indigenous Staff (Fort Garry and RFHS)
 - Indigenous Faculty members (Fort Garry and RFHS)
 - The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation
 - Deans' and Directors' Council
 - Vice-President (Academic) Advisory Committee (VPAC)
 - Gaa wii ji'l diyaang
 - External Relations
 - President's Executive Team

** Although the consultations were broad and numerous, the advisory committee did not consult with the Board of Governors. The Board of Governors should be considered in the list of stakeholders for future projects that seek to gather feedback through community consultation.

² See Appendix 2 for the list of questions.

WHAT WE HEARD

Between March and May of 2019, members of the advisory committee heard feedback from Indigenous and non-Indigenous members of the university community and from various Indigenous groups. The committee asked town hall and focus group participants four questions (see Appendix 2) that intended to inform recommendations for moving forward with a community-informed approach to Indigenous senior leadership at the University of Manitoba. While the majority of the feedback responded to the questions, participants also shared feedback from their past experiences, what their expectations had been during previous Indigenous senior leaders' terms, as well as their experiences in trying to advance Indigenous achievement at the University of Manitoba.

The committee reviewed and considered feedback from all 16 consultation sessions and grouped the feedback into four key themes: 1. Organizational Structure, 2. Governance, 3. Community and, 4. Accountability.

The feedback under each theme often intersected with other themes. For example, organizational structure often had elements of governance woven throughout and similarly, accountability and community often go hand in hand. Figure 2 demonstrates the intersection between all of the themes. The next section summarizes each theme by capturing the essence of participants' feedback.



Figure 2: Themes of Indigenous Senior Leadership Consultations

Organizational Structure

For the purposes of this report, organizational structure refers to the direct and indirect roles and responsibilities, resources, and reporting structure within the purview of Indigenous senior leadership.

Feedback indicated that the university and external community expected that past centralized Indigenous senior leadership positions address 'all matters Indigenous' at the University of Manitoba. Individuals in these positions were pulled in a variety of directions such as fulfilling requirements of the academy (e.g., curriculum development), promoting research in areas tied to Indigenous studies, ensuring safe spaces were made available to Indigenous students, and meeting commitments of the community (e.g., attending Indigenous community events). In other words, the university's and community's expectations of these positions were unrealistically broad and too numerous for one person. Accordingly, feedback from consultations indicated that a team of people and thoughtful organizational structure comprised of and focused on Indigenous Engagement and Achievement through a distributed leadership model is required in order to meet the responsibilities and expectations that span across the university.



Figure 3: Fort Garry Town Hall

Feedback that also related to organizational structure, albeit indirectly, included the value of establishing a permanent Presidential Advisory Council. Increasing the number of Elders would support students and provide mentorship opportunities for faculty members, students, staff, and for individuals who may pursue future roles in Indigenous senior leadership positions.

Participants also emphasized inadequate resources as a barrier to moving forward. Examples of limited resources included positions to support the breadth of work centrally, funding to support faculties for various needs such as physical space or additional positions, and limited expertise for the purposes of cultural safety training, curriculum development, etc.

Feedback also highlighted the lack of Indigenous leadership positions and support within some faculties. Reference was frequently made to the idea of a network of Indigenous leads as a means to address the gap at the faculty level. The reference to faculties is critically important because of the authority they have to execute on the goals of Indigenous engagement/achievement. As one participant noted, the heavy lifting will happen in the faculties themselves.

Governance

Feedback highlighted existing formal governance structures as a barrier to Indigenous Achievement and Engagement throughout the consultations. For some, working within existing structures amounted to supporting colonial or western ideologies, which may not align with Indigenous methodologies and governance approaches. For others, the limited or lack of authority at the Board of Governors and the Senate curtailed the ability to assert influence on administrative or academic decisions.

Participants indicated that limited authority of previous Indigenous senior leadership positions hampered efforts. Having authority and autonomy to speak the truth and to enact change within their portfolio and having a voice at the executive level were considered essential to advance the extensive scope of the work ahead. The concept of a Vice-President (Indigenous) was raised frequently.

Participants also highlighted the need to integrate Indigenous perspectives into how research is approved, conducted and disseminated. Ensuring Indigenous criteria are integrated into research proposals, ensuring that research ethics boards apply an Indigenous lens and how research results and/or intellectual property are shared with community members was some of the feedback to the committee.

Community

Students, staff, faculty and people at more senior levels indicated a gap in how Indigenous communities are connected, either formally or informally. Students shared that, despite being involved in student governance, they did not know whom, in terms of Indigenous senior leadership, to connect with in their faculty or elsewhere in order to implement their ideas. Staff and faculty members indicated that they would like more opportunities for connecting with each other, and senior leaders indicated that they would appreciate the opportunity to learn about and build upon current initiatives but that there is currently no mechanism that they are aware of to learn of and/or share ongoing initiatives and success stories.

However, to build community, participants indicated that leadership must recognize and acknowledge the diversity within the Indigenous community and, accordingly, the different needs and support mechanisms required. Highlighted examples included First Nations (status and non-status), Métis and Inuit students, urban, rural or Northern students and students who choose to follow a more traditional versus a non-traditional path.

Participants shared that it is important that members of the university community, as well as the community at large, are informed and educated on the history, languages and cultures of Indigenous peoples in order to move forward collaboratively. Such education was referred to in the academic sense, such as integrating Indigenous knowledge

into teaching and curriculum, but was also referenced in the context of capacity building and training, such as cultural safety, the history, languages and cultures of Indigenous peoples, treaties and self-governance, and anti-Indigenous racism.

With respect to anti-Indigenous racism, participants were asked specifically how Indigenous senior leadership could approach/support/guide a related strategy. Most participants felt that Indigenous Senior Leadership should participate but not lead the development of a strategy. Suggestions frequently related to the need for education, training and capacity building. Specific examples include engaging with Elders as a resource for support, online tutorials, with some suggesting they should be mandatory similar to Accessibility Training, an Indigenous rights resource within the Office of Human Rights and Conflict Management, and/or a Wellness Office that could include support for anti-Indigenous racism. Other ideas included sharing circles, increasing the number of safe spaces similar to Migizii Agamik and smudging spaces, and the need to work with non-Indigenous allies.³



Figure 4: Fort Garry Town Hall

The Indigenous university community values the support and commitment of non-Indigenous allies in achieving the milestones and current successes of Indigenous Achievement and Engagement. However, non-Indigenous participants in particular said they experienced some fear when trying to support Indigenous engagement. They indicated that fear of moving forward in the “wrong” way, or fear of getting it “wrong” prevented them from participating altogether, thereby stalling any momentum or initiatives. Building capacity and providing education and learning opportunities would mitigate some of the fear and empower allies to continue to support Indigenous engagement and achievement.

Participants also expect Indigenous senior leadership to play an important role with respect to external relations – building relationships with Indigenous communities and representing the university at community events, meeting with potential donors, being the Indigenous representative on U of M boards and committees, and being the voice of Indigenous matters at the U of M. This reinforces the point that one individual has been pulled in too many directions.

Accountability

Developing accountability mechanisms and ways to measure progress on formalized goals, such as those in the Strategic Plan (e.g., Creating Pathways to Indigenous Achievement), featured prominently among the responses as an important role for Indigenous senior leadership. However, participants stressed that the accountability for meeting the goals needed to be a shared responsibility of all individuals in leadership positions across all portfolios. Without the commitment and action from all senior leadership, but especially within faculties, moving Indigenous engagement forward will be extremely difficult.

Other examples in which participants raised accountability included: 1. Accountability of Indigenous and non-Indigenous faculty, staff and students at the university to engage, learn and contribute to Indigenous achievement; 2. Development of institutional policies and procedures to support accountability and ensure continuity, and 3. Accountability to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Calls to Action (i.e. Call to Action 57: For example: All UM employees must be educated on“the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal

³ See definition of allyship: <https://theantioppressionnetwork.com/allyship/>

rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal-Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights and anti-racism”).

Participants identified the relationship with the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation as important, not only because of the nature of its work as a national archive and a centre for research and learning; but also as a partner to the University of Manitoba for moving forward on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) Calls to Action. Accordingly, as the relationship with University of Manitoba and the NCTR continues to evolve, Indigenous senior leadership must be an important stakeholder in the NCTR's future planning and operations.

An annual report was proposed as a possible accountability mechanism.

WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

Participants shared some thoughts on what success would look like, such as “(...) meaningful representation of Indigenous peoples in administration, scholarship positions, service positions, support positions and student body”. It is anticipated that this will be reflected by improved enrolment and graduation rates, enhanced awareness of Indigenous matters, increased Indigenous content in the curriculum, and a safer working and learning environment.

The majority of feedback indicated that it should be the Indigenous community that defines what success looks like and that work should be conducted to get a more comprehensive understanding of how success is measured from the Indigenous community perspective. One participant clearly stated that ‘If change is going to happen on the academic side, it is going to come from the grassroots.’

NEXT STEPS



Figure 5: Fort Garry Town Hall

In developing recommendations, the committee will draw from the feedback heard over the consultation period, background and other relevant information such as a U15 survey of Indigenous lead roles across Canada, the City of Winnipeg Indigenous Accord, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action, thoughts and insights from the previous Indigenous senior leadership, and Taking Our Place - UM Strategic Plan 2015-2020.

The final report with recommendations will be submitted to the Provost and Vice- President Academic at the beginning of August 2019.

Review of the Role/Mandate of Vice-Provost (Indigenous Engagement): Terms of Reference

Committee Members:

- Catherine Cook (Chair), Vice Dean, Indigenous, Rady Faculty of Health Sciences
- Marcia Anderson, Executive Director, Indigenous Academic Affairs, Ongomiizwin Indigenous Institute of Health and Healing
- Laara Fitznor, Associate Professor, Educational, Administration, Foundations and Psychology
- Susan Gottheil, Vice-Provost (Students)
- Margaret Lavalley, Elder, Ongomiizwin Indigenous Institute of Health and Healing
- David Mandzuk, Dean, Faculty of Education
- Cary Miller, Head, Department of Native Studies
- Jordan Gelowitz, Student Representative (medicine) Bannatyne campus
- Jessica Stefano, Student Representative (undergraduate) Fort Garry campus
- Laura Forsythe, Student Representative (graduate) Fort Garry campus
- Trevor Wilson, Student Representative (occupational therapy) Bannatyne campus
- Christine Cyr (resource member), Director, Indigenous Student Centre
- Ruth Shead (resource member), Coordinator, Indigenous Achievement

Support for the Committee: Val Parker, Indigenous Engagement; Maire McDermott, Change Management and Project Services

Background:

In 2011, the President's Office and Senior Administration recruited the University's first leadership position dedicated to Indigenous achievement. Ms. Deborah Young held the position of Executive Lead, Indigenous Achievement and reported directly to the President.

Upon Ms. Young's departure, time was spent to consider the organizational structures and titles to best support the University's Indigenous achievement priorities. Dr. Frank Deer served as Interim Indigenous Lead from 2016-2017. In 2016, the position was reimagined and it was determined that the position carry the title of Vice-Provost (Indigenous Engagement) and report directly to the Provost.

Currently, the Vice-Provost (Indigenous Engagement) is responsible for advancing the University's strong commitment to Indigenous achievement through its learning, discovery and engagement pathways. To this end, the Vice-Provost oversees the effective operations of the Indigenous Student Centre and works in collaboration to advance the University's academic strategic priorities with respect to programs/curriculum, students and faculty. The Vice-Provost works collaboratively with other Vice-Presidents, Vice-Provosts, Deans/Directors, other Academic Administrators and external partners to achieve the University's strategic priorities, and to provide advice, guidance and support to the Provost relating to Indigenous matters.

With the recent resignation of the Vice-Provost (Indigenous Engagement) in December, 2018, an opportunity to review and clarify the role and mandate of this challenging position is timely.

Background Material:

- Position profile of Vice-Provost Indigenous Engagement as developed in 2016
- Current Organizational Structure
- Policy and procedures governing the appointment and duties of Vice-Provosts
- U15 survey of Indigenous lead roles across the country
- Manitoba Collaborative Indigenous Education Blueprint
- City of Winnipeg Indigenous Accord
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada; Calls to Action
- *Taking Our Place* - University of Manitoba Strategic Plan 2015 – 2020
- Strategic Plan progress report (January 2015 – March 2017)
- Other external commitments

The release of 'Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls' occurred in June of 2019, and was not included as background material for this document, but will be considered in the Final Report and Recommendations of the Provost Advisory Committee on Indigenous Senior Leadership.

Role / Mandate of the Committee:

- Review background material and consider the current mandate of the Vice-Provost (Indigenous Engagement) and the structure of the Indigenous Engagement and Achievement offices.
- Through a consultative process (including deans/directors, administrators, Indigenous faculty/staff, Indigenous student groups and other relevant stakeholders) assess the strengths and weaknesses of our current approach and consider the needs and supports going forward.
- Provide recommendations on the role/mandate for the next Vice-Provost (Indigenous Engagement), the appropriate reporting structure/units, and the supports necessary to fulfill this mandate.

Timeline: Interim report May 31, 2019; Final report with recommendations July 1, 2019

Provide written reports to: Dr. Janice Ristock, Provost and Vice-President (Academic)

Appendix 2: Town Hall and Focus Group Questions

1. What are the roles and responsibilities (mandate) of Indigenous senior leadership?
2. What are some of the challenges, barriers and opportunities facing Indigenous senior leadership?
3. What strategies, supports and resources are required to help make Indigenous senior leadership at the University of Manitoba successful? What does success look like?
4. Although developing a response to anti-Indigenous racism is beyond the scope of terms of this advisory committee, how should Indigenous senior leadership approach/support/guide an anti-Indigenous racism strategy?