



---

## Indigenous Identity Engagement Working Group Terms of Reference

---

*The University of Manitoba campuses are located on original lands of Anishinaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota and Dene peoples, and on the homeland of the Métis Nation. We respect the Treaties that were made on these territories, we acknowledge the harms and mistakes of the past, and we dedicate ourselves to move forward in partnership with Indigenous communities in a spirit of reconciliation and collaboration.*

---

### Background

Recently, awareness of Indigenous Identity fraud has been raised in some of our academic organizations across the nation. This has occurred in situations where individuals have self-declared as Indigenous without legitimate claims to do so, or community support to do so; and in doing so, have received scholarships, awards, leadership or faculty or staff positions, or access to research funding.

Indigenous identity fraud disadvantages those Indigenous people who have been over-looked for opportunities that have been assumed by those individuals who are not authentically able to self-declare with legitimate historical recognition of community membership and support.

Through consultation with our Indigenous communities, the University of Manitoba Indigenous Identity Engagement Working Group will engage our Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers, faculty, staff, students, and community collaborators in establishing a process at the University of Manitoba for supporting applications for scholarship, admissions, research, employment, awards, scholarships and bursaries for individuals who self-declare as Indigenous.

### Purpose of the document

This document will identify the terms of reference and scope of the work of the Indigenous Identity Engagement Working Group (IIEWG), and the roles and responsibilities of the working group members.

### Introduction

A briefing note to the President, University of Manitoba outlining the background of the Indigenous Identity fraud issue highlighted the need to establish a process to support the self-declaration of Indigenous identity.

The IIEWG was established in December of 2021 by Dr. Catherine Cook, VP (Indigenous) at the University of Manitoba with the purpose of advising the university on a process to address the need for support from Indigenous community in the self-declaration of Indigenous identity.

Primary areas that have requested self-declaration of Indigenous identity have included the recruitment and hiring process for Indigenous specific positions, as well as recruitment efforts generally. In the area of

research, self-declaration of Indigenous identity has been recognized in grant applications for Indigenous specific research and in the research ethics approval for Indigenous community focused research. Scholarship and the awarding of scholarships, awards and financial awards requests Indigenous self-declaration for Indigenous specific scholarships and awards.

As a university, we have made a commitment to address the organizational and structural policies and practices that create barriers for Indigenous faculty, staff and students, and to more fully engage and partner with Indigenous communities. It is our responsibility to support our Indigenous communities, both in academia and at the community level in establishing a process for supporting applications for scholarship, admissions, research, employment, awards, and bursaries for individuals who self-declare as Indigenous.

## Purpose of the Working Group

The IIEWG is a visionary and advisory body comprised of individuals who are working together to bring the issues of identity, experiences, expertise and perspectives of Indigenous peoples in Canada, to the University of Manitoba. Specifically, its advice ensures Indigenous perspectives and interests are incorporated into the proposing of a process for identifying Indigenous identity fraud.

The collective advice from the IIEWG will provide direction to the VP (Indigenous) and will be used to steer continuous improvement.

The engagement and consultation process will provide guidance to the University of Manitoba on how to:

- ✦ Develop a process and guidelines to identify Indigenous identity fraud within the university
- ✦ Develop a process and guidelines that will identify for further scrutiny and evaluation of persons believed to have falsely claimed Indigenous identity
- ✦ Support the hiring of Indigenous people through an identification process and guidelines
- ✦ Support Indigenous specific awards and scholarships for students, faculty or staff through an identification process and guidelines
- ✦ Support Indigenous community engagement with research grant applications and research ethics approval processes

It is anticipated that the duration of this working group will be from 6-12 months and completed within 2022. Following the receipt of the recommendations from this WG, the President and Executive Team will convene a meeting of this WG to discuss the planned implementation of the recommendation and identify any ongoing implementation support needs.

## Membership

The University of Manitoba **Indigenous Identity Engagement Working Group** will engage UM Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers, faculty, staff, students, community collaborators and First Nation, Inuit and Métis organizations and governmental bodies.

The sponsor, upon advice from the co-leads, will invite and appoint members that provide a fair representation from each of the Indigenous groups, that is, First Nation, Inuit and Métis.

- ✦ Sponsored by the VP (Indigenous): Dr. Catherine Cook
- ✦ Co-Leads:
  - Ovide Mercredi, First Nation Leader, Citizen and Knowledge Keeper
  - Barbara Bruce, Métis Leader, Educator and Knowledge Keeper
  - Marti Ford, Inuit Leader, Educator and Knowledge Keeper
- ✦ Community Elders and Knowledge Keepers
  - The Elders and Knowledge Keepers will provide guidance and support to the process of consultation and decision making as it reflects on Indigenous traditional values and principles of community Indigenous identity
- ✦ University Elders and Knowledge Keepers
  - The Elders and Knowledge Keepers will provide guidance and support to the process of consultation and decision making as it reflects on Indigenous traditional values and principles of community Indigenous identity
- ✦ University Leadership:
  - The representatives will be responsible to ensure that issues requiring clarification or decision making from the university leadership will be addressed in a timely way to support the decision making of the working group
- ✦ Indigenous Faculty
  - The representations will be responsible for raising issues that have impacted or will impact specific faculty mandates on admissions, research, scholarship, and granting of awards and will assist in defining mechanisms to address systemic barriers or policy gaps that may influence or allow unfair practice
- ✦ Indigenous Staff
  - The representations will be responsible for raising issues that have impacted or will impact specific staff support of mandates on admissions, research, scholarship, and granting of awards and will assist in defining mechanisms to address systemic barriers or policy gaps that may influence or allow unfair practice
- ✦ Indigenous students
  - The representatives are responsible to bring forward issues from a student perspective and to help guide the decision making on Indigenous identity
- ✦ Community collaborators
  - The representatives will be responsible to bring forward issues relevant to their organizations, to contribute to the dialogue and decision-making process as relevant to their organizations, to make decisions based on their organizations mandate and to share with their organizations the dialogue and decisions made or pending on Indigenous identity self-declaration in our post-secondary organizations
- ✦ Indigenous Community Leadership representation
  - The representatives will be responsible to bring forward issues relevant to their governance organizations, to make decisions based on their organizations mandate and to share with their organizations the dialogue and decisions made or pending on Indigenous identity self-declaration in our post-secondary organizations.
- ✦ Blueprint signatory institutions
  - The representatives will be responsible for considering how the decisions will be shared with and impact the Blueprint Partners and will share knowledge with the Blueprint Steering Committee
- ✦ Partners:
  - The representatives will be responsible for advocating within their mandated areas and circles of influence to raise awareness of the issues associated with and connected to the need for self-declaration of Indigenous Status

## Protocols of the Working Group

- ✦ Members have a full understanding of the need for confidentiality and respect.
- ✦ Members will respect diversity among Indigenous communities and the rights of self-determination
- ✦ Members will reflect Indigenous values and cultural ways of working together.
- ✦ Members will not raise individual complaints or issues about university services, departments or processes outside the defined scope of the working group

## Scope of the Working Group

- ✦ Members will be invited to share their knowledge and experience in the areas of identity concerns to Indigenous peoples, particularly in education and self-determination.
- ✦ Members will identify specific areas where improvement is needed and, co-operating with IIEWG members to ensure that Indigenous experience makes a difference to the development of an identity process.
- ✦ Members will provide contact information for a variety of key contributors that may be included in the various engagement sessions.
- ✦ Members are invited to attend any facilitated engagement sessions but are not expected to attend them all.

## Meetings

- ✦ The working group seeks to represent the community and to be accessible, inclusive, openly run and courteous.
- ✦ Meetings are a forum for collaborative problem solving, priority setting and innovation
- ✦ Members approach their work with openness to the concerns and perspectives of other members and a resolve to develop consensus-based solutions
- ✦ The meetings will occur on a monthly basis in 2022, and as long as needed to provide feedback into the consultation sessions.
- ✦ Sub-groups may be established to work on the specific deliverables.

## Decision-Making

Decisions are made by consensus of the members in attendance. In the event that the IIEWG cannot arrive at a consensus, the Co-Leads can table a decision, or the decision can be made by a two-thirds majority vote of the entire membership.

## Reporting

The Working Group will be supported by the OVPI and the engagement facilitation team. A report on the consultations with specific recommendations on the establishment of process, policy, practice or guidelines will be provided for review to the IIEWG prior to submission to the President and Executive Team

Within 3 months of the receipt of the report the President and Executive Team will convene a meeting of this WG to outline the process for implementation of the recommendations and identify any ongoing support needs from this or a subsequent WG.

## **Confidentiality**

The IIEWG members will be required to work within the University of Manitoba policies, procedures and guidelines. They may be party to sensitive discussions in particular, information relating to individual staff information, and have access to confidential information that should not be passed on or shared outside the IIEWG meetings.

## **Financial support**

Members will receive reimbursement subject to prior agreement and approval for:

- Travel, childcare, incidental expenses for meetings
- Elder/Knowledge Keeper and student honorariums

## APPENDIX

### Membership

University of Manitoba  
Indigenous Identity Engagement Working Group

---

### Sponsor

Dr. Catherine Cook, Vice-President (Indigenous), University of Manitoba

### Co-Leads

Barbara Bruce, Métis Leader, Educator and Knowledge Keeper  
Marti Ford, Inuit Leader, Educator and Knowledge Keeper  
Ovide Mercredi, First Nation Leader, Citizen and Knowledge Keeper

### Community Elders and Knowledge Keepers

Elder Levinia Brown (TBD)  
Elder Maata Evaluardjuk-Palmer  
Elder Charlotte Nolin

### University of Manitoba, Elders and Knowledge Keepers

Elder Harry Bone, National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation  
Elder Margaret Lavallee, Ongomiizwin, Rady Faculty of Health Sciences  
Elder Norman Meade, Indigenous Student Centre  
Elder Carl Stone, Indigenous Student Centre

### Indigenous Leadership and Faculty, University of Manitoba

Dr. Marcia Anderson, Vice-Dean Indigenous Health, Rady Faculty of Health Sciences  
Katherine Boyer, Assistant Professor, School of Art, University of Manitoba  
Christine Cyr, Assoc. VP (Indigenous) Students, Community, and Cultural Integration, OVPI  
Dr. Michelle Driedger, Director, Graduate Program, Rady Faculty of Health Sciences  
Dr. Annemieke Farenhorst, Assoc. VP Research, Office of the VP (Research and International)  
Dr. Sara Goulet, Assoc. Dean Admissions, Max Rady College of Medicine  
Dr. Cary Miller, Assoc. VP (Indigenous) Curriculum, Scholarship, and Research, OVPI  
Dr. Tracey Peter, Vice-Provost (Academic Affairs)  
Adrienne Carriere, Indigenous Lead, Division of Extended Education  
Ruth Shead, Director, Indigenous Engagement and Communications, Office of the VP (Indigenous)

### Indigenous Staff, University of Manitoba

Kaila Johnston, Education, Outreach, and Public Programming, National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation  
Nicki Ferland, Community Engaged Learning Coordinator, Indigenous - Student Engagement and Success  
Melanie MacKinnon, RN. Executive Director, Indigenous Health Services, Rady Faculty of Health Sciences

### Indigenous Students, University of Manitoba

Kyla Cebula, Student, Faculty of Science; Senator, Faculty of Science Students' Association (SSA)  
Ilordanan Efimoff, Ph.D. Candidate (ABD), Social and Personality Psychology, B.A. Applied Psychology (Hons)  
Laura Forsythe, Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Indigenous Studies; Lecturer, University of Winnipeg  
Amanda Fowler-Woods, Ph.D. Candidate, Doctoral Fellow, Rady Faculty of Health Sciences  
Justin Langan, Student, Faculty of Arts; Editor-in-Chief *The Cart*; 2021 Indspire Award Recipient  
Rachel Charette, Graduate Student

**Community Collaborators**

Albert Beck, Chair, Lii Michif Otipemisiwak 2SLGBTQ+ and Allies Local  
Nikki Komaksiutiksak, Executive Director, Tunngasugit Incorporated  
Leona Star, Director of Research, First Nations Health and Social Secretariat of Manitoba (FNHSSM)  
Doris Young, Co-Chair, First Nations Health and Social Secretariat of Manitoba (FNHSSM)  
Tasha Spillett- Sumner, Author, Educator, Poet

**Manitoba Collaborative Indigenous Education Blueprint Representatives**

Jennefer Nepinak, Associate Vice President, Indigenous Engagement, University of Winnipeg  
James (Jamie) Wilson, Vice President, Indigenous Strategy and Business Development, RRC Polytech

**Partner Groups and Institutions**

Dr. Chantal Fiola, Department of Urban and Inner-City Studies, University of Winnipeg  
Chris Lagimodiere, Indigenous Advisor to the President, Brandon University  
Debra Radi, Secrétaire Générale, Université de Saint-Boniface  
Helen Settee, Director, Indigenous Inclusion Directorate, Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning

**Indigenous Leadership Representatives (TBD)**

The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs  
Manitoba Inuit Association - Wayne Clarke  
Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak - Stewart Hill  
Manitoba Métis Federation - President David Chartrand, Will Goodon, Anita Campbell  
Southern Chiefs Organization - Joy Cramer

**Community Engagement Facilitator:** Jamie Dumont, Blueprint Incorporated

**OVPI Support**

Maria Morrison, Director, Office of the VP (Indigenous)  
Val Parker, Executive Assistant to the Vice-President and Director, Office of the VP (Indigenous)

Updated: March 4, 2022

M. Morrison, Director, Office of the Vice-President Indigenous,  
University of Manitoba

[Maria.Morrison@umanitoba.ca](mailto:Maria.Morrison@umanitoba.ca)