



Listening to First Nations, Métis and Inuit Communities: Engagement on Recognizing and Supporting Indigenous Identity and Kinship

March 2023



**University
of Manitoba**

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Indigenous Identity Report

Introduction



Message from the sponsor

The University of Manitoba (UM) has 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.

As such, we engaged our community in several dialogue sessions in 2022. The community spoke, and what we heard was that an Indigenous identity policy must be developed and implemented. The feedback we received from these community engagement sessions will inform how we move forward on developing a framework for such a policy, and the specific recommendations will serve as a map in writing and implementing the policy.

An Indigenous identity policy would:

- inform and support faculties to guide Indigenous-specific admissions
- support the central and faculty units of the university to guide Indigenous-specific human resources activities, research and scholarly work, and scholarships and awards
- enhance our ability to create and maintain a transparent, trustworthy and safe environment for Indigenous students, staff and faculty that will prevent or minimize the likelihood of identity fraud and the attendant loss of professional and/or financial benefits that result from identity fraud, without increasing barriers to opportunities for Indigenous students, faculty and staff

Respected Knowledge Keepers from First Nations (Ovide Mercredi), Inuit (Marti Ford) and Red River Métis (Barbara Bruce) communities led the engagement process. I am grateful to each of them for grounding us through the process and ensuring we have listened carefully and respectfully.

I also want to acknowledge all of the Elders and other Knowledge Keepers who brought wisdom and guidance to the process. They always remind us to work in a good way.

And thank you to all those who participated in this process: educators, staff and students from many disciplines, Child and Family Services workers, young adults who have experienced marginalization through the child welfare system and community members who guide the education of Indigenous youth. Your knowledge and expertise are invaluable.

I am deeply grateful for the collective wisdom brought forward and for everyone's willingness to continue supporting Indigenous communities, including our academic community.

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

Executive summary

The self-declaration process for faculty, staff and students created many years ago was a step toward institutions acknowledging the need for the inclusion of Indigenous Peoples. Until now, UM has followed a practice of accepting self-declaration as verification for applications for Indigenous-specific positions, scholarships/bursaries/awards, admissions and for investigator or collaborator status on research projects.

More recently, UM, along with other universities and institutions, has been faced with the need to establish new processes to review the ways we approach Indigenous identity given the series of high-profile exposures of Indigenous identity fraud that have occurred in the last few years in the areas of literature, entertainment and most recently, academia.

The Office of the Vice-President (Indigenous), in collaboration with senior leadership at UM, determined the university needed to establish a working group and gather with the Indigenous community, both internally and externally, to engage in dialogue around Indigenous identity.

Several engagement sessions subsequently took place in 2022 and brought forward the consensus that 1) self-declaration alone is no longer an acceptable process in the identity forum and 2) UM needs to establish policies, guidelines and processes that address the affirmation and verification of Indigenous identity and do not create additional barriers to Indigenous Peoples.

Throughout the engagement process, five themes emerged that will now become the framework for mapping out the creation and implementation phase of this work:

- 1. Avoid barriers**
- 2. Self-determination of Indigenous identity by respective nations**
- 3. Supporting those seeking identity/community connection**
- 4. Indigenous representation and relationship-building**
- 5. Ensure a clear, enforceable process for verification and review of claims of Indigenous identity that is grounded in Indigenous ways and includes Indigenous Peoples**

Within each of these themes, there are concrete recommendations to drive the process. Following is a summary of the recommendations; the full explanation is embedded in the report.

- UM must create an Indigenous identity policy that should include formal and alternative mechanisms (and possibly a tiered process) for providing verification of identity. The policy must include a process for situations of possible fraud, appeals and repercussions for fraud.
- Important considerations in the policy are Indigenous sovereignty and a distinction-based approach (acknowledging the nuances and histories of different nations).
- Indigenous Peoples from within the UM community—as well as First Nation, Métis Nation and Inuit governments, communities and Nations—must be involved in the creation, implementation and ongoing evolution of the policy. Further, UM must continue to build and nurture strong partnerships with Indigenous communities and governments.



- UM must create safe spaces that honour Indigenous Peoples' identity journeys and potential need for support in their processes of connecting to verification.
- There must be cultural training for the entire UM community so there is a fulsome understanding of the complex issues surrounding Indigenous identities, histories, languages and cultures, and anti-racism.

As we evolve together on the path of reconciliation, it is everyone's responsibility to work in good ways to protect and uphold the integrity of Indigenous identity, both in academia and at the community level.



Background

Historically, Indigenous identity was expressed through kinship relationships that organized many aspects of Indigenous societies. Clan and community were so foundational to describing who we were that they were, and continue to be, part of how we introduced ourselves to one another in our languages. Kinship networks wove and connected Indigenous communities together. Locating oneself within those networks was a way to inform others of an individual's Indigenous identity, but it also played a key role in governance and reciprocal exchanges. It also assisted individuals meeting for the first time to establish trusted relationships with one another.

Unfortunately, today, Indigenous identity is complex due to centuries of colonialism, racism and legal codes that defined who would be recognized as Indigenous. While those retaining their Indigenous status continue to be able to identify their kinship relationships, laws preventing First Nations peoples from interacting with their non-Indigenous and Métis relatives interfered with supporting one another or collaborating through kinship. Reserve systems that separated and relocated Indigenous communities impacted recognition of family ties and reciprocity between communities. Hostile interference by newcomers in the Arctic created tensions between First Nations and Inuit communities and led to physical and cultural isolation.

Government policies sought to limit kinship connections and gradually end Indigenous identity. Many Indigenous individuals were enfranchised (through the Indian Act) or removed from their homes through systems and practices including: reserves and relocations, residential schools, tuberculosis isolation, Sixties Scoop, Child and Family Services child seizures and birth alerts. This has led to a significant number of non-status First Nations individuals and dissociated Métis and Inuit individuals, particularly in our urban centres, lacking membership/enrolment/recognition of an Indigenous Nation. Many in our communities are still seeking missing family members seized or removed by such programs, creating significant inter-generational trauma.

Defining Indigenous identity continues to be complex as many First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples have different ways of identifying and verifying their Indigeneity. Some have government-assigned identification cards, some have community-researched genealogies, some have documentation showing family connections to Treaties and scribes, some look for blood quantum and some have no formal documentation. Many Indigenous Peoples are working to assert self-determination through community-led processes of identity verification. Knowing how to claim and assert Indigenous identity can be an overwhelming and confusing process, and in this time of fraudulent claims of Indigeneity being identified in the mainstream, it is more important than ever to support Indigenous Peoples through the process and to protect the rights and opportunities that exist specifically for Indigenous people.





Indigenous Identity Report

Community Engagement

The engagement approach

Who was involved

This initiative was sponsored by Dr. Catherine Cook, Vice-President (Indigenous) at UM. Three Indigenous community leaders and Knowledge Keepers—Barbara Bruce (Red River Métis), Marti Ford (Inuit) and Ovide Mercredi (First Nation)—were invited to co-lead the engagement process.

In December 2021, UM established the Indigenous Identity Engagement Working Group (IIEWG) to inform this community-led engagement process that would gather feedback from the Indigenous community to support the mitigation and elimination of Indigenous identity fraud at the university. The IIEWG consisted of broad Indigenous representation from both UM academic and service units alongside representation from Indigenous governments, urban organizations and community partners.

UM engaged Blueprint Strategic Consulting Services Inc. (Blueprint Inc.) to support the work of the IIEWG. Based in Winnipeg, on Treaty 1 Territory and the Homeland of the Red River Métis Nation, Blueprint Inc. are experts in designing stakeholder engagement and facilitation processes to draw out meaningful involvement and input. Blueprint's role was to design an efficient process to facilitate and foster rapport, trust, involvement and mutual respect. Working with the IIEWG, Blueprint developed and delivered the following engagement framework in which all sessions were facilitated by lead facilitator Jamie Dumont, a Métis citizen originally from St. Laurent, Manitoba.

A sub-committee was established to analyze the findings of the engagement sessions, develop the recommendations and edit the overall report.



Ovide Mercredi
First Nation Leader



Barbara Bruce
Red River Métis Leader



Marti Ford
Inuit Leader

Engagement activity

The IIEWG developed an engagement plan to reach out to multiple groups of Indigenous Peoples across Manitoba involved in the education and support of Indigenous students, staff and faculty at UM. The IIEWG met throughout the engagement process to provide insights, advice and feedback on the engagement plan as it was developing.

The engagement process included the following:

- six facilitated in-person and virtual workshops with members from different categories:
 - Elders and Knowledge Keepers
 - Indigenous governments and organizations
 - post-secondary faculty, staff and students
 - community education coordinators
 - social workers who help individuals navigate the education and child welfare systems
 - individuals with barriers to documentation
- a dedicated webpage and online submission form where community members could view engagement opportunities and provide anonymous feedback
- ongoing IIEWG meetings

Meetings with Indigenous governments and organizations will also continue as part of our next steps in this process.

We assured participants that all dialogue in the engagement sessions would be anonymous. We did not record virtual or in-person sessions, although we took notes of emerging general themes. Our approach incorporated smaller-sized groups to encourage conversation over “workshopping” and made space for stories and perspectives.

The IIEWG felt strongly about creating a safe and respectful space for participants and incorporated Elders, traditional medicines and Indigenous guiding principles throughout the engagement process.



Guiding principles

The work involved in Indigenous identity can be challenging. Knowing this, the IIEWG developed, reviewed and accepted the following principles to guide the engagement process:

- 1) Seek input to inform the engagement design concerning:
 - which groups and individuals are most impacted and will have the most influence
 - how to best reach these groups and individuals
 - thoughts on the best use of people's time and what questions to ask
- 2) Reflect Indigenous values and cultural ways of working together.
 - respect the diversity among First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities and their rights to self-determination
 - ensure the inclusion of all Indigenous perspectives
- 3) Offer multiple, flexible ways to engage out of respect for the needs of people's existing time commitments and obligations.
 - A one-size-fits-all approach will not work with this engagement process.
 - Groups and individuals need to feel they can participate in a way that works for them and allows for safe, candid and honest insights.
- 4) Maintain an iterative and aligned process.
 - The Office of the Vice-President (Indigenous) and working group co-leads will have regular check-ins to work through plans and resolve strategic issues.
 - Regular full meetings of the working group will keep community leaders informed and will guide the process.



Participant feedback on the engagement process

Throughout the engagement sessions, we sought feedback on the process. We asked how participants felt about the University's effort to address this issue and how they felt leaving the engagement sessions.

All participant feedback forms rated the engagement sessions as very good or excellent based on the rating scale provided. The majority felt they were heard, valued and understood. Some people expressed hesitancy and suspicion regarding next steps when the University considers and implements recommendations for a process to mitigate Indigenous identity fraud.

Collectively, however, participants identified the importance of these conversations and expressed gratitude for the opportunity to gather in a safe environment where they could share with others. Some people also wished there was more time to talk and share about this important topic.



Facilitator Jamie Dumont prompted IIEWG members to participate in a Mentimeter activity by contributing words to describe the goal, in terms of how they wanted all engagement session participants to feel. This graphic was incorporated into every engagement session as a barometer of how participants were actually feeling.



Indigenous Identity Report

Analysis and Recommendations

Analysis and recommended actions

The Indigenous Identity Engagement Working Group (IIEWG) heard from the Indigenous community that the current system of safeguarding Indigenous opportunities needs to change.

Recommendation #1

The University of Manitoba is responsible for developing and implementing an Indigenous identity policy to uphold opportunities for Indigenous Peoples and to prevent identity fraud. Created in collaboration with Indigenous governments and organizations, this policy must be a living, evolving document.

The IIEWG identified three critical areas for learning from the community:

1. Current and historical practice and implications:

The facilitators asked participants to describe how communities recognize, identify or establish connections to members or citizens. Facilitators further explored possible barriers. The facilitators asked these questions of Elders, Indigenous governance and organizations, and post-secondary students, staff and faculty.

2. Lived experience:

We asked all groups to share their experiences navigating processes around Indigenous identity and identify what barriers they encountered.

3. Important considerations for a process to mitigate against Indigenous identity fraud:

We asked all groups to discuss the elements, principles or considerations important in designing a process to mitigate Indigenous identity fraud.

Throughout engagement with the different stakeholder groups, five key themes emerged:

I. Avoid barriers

Formal documentation can be a challenge for some Indigenous people. Identity questioning can be intrusive and triggering. Providing flexibility for demonstration of Indigenous identity is essential to mitigate Indigenous identity fraud.

Post-secondary institutions have established Indigenous identity declaration opportunities to support equity-based practices in hiring and student admissions processes. These processes are now evolving to mitigate against false claims of Indigenous identity. Participants agreed that Manitoba post-secondary institutions must ensure these processes do not create barriers that negatively impact Indigenous Peoples because “we have faced enough racism and barriers.” However, participants also raised concerns that, generally, when institutions attempt to mitigate Indigenous identity fraud, they can swing too far in the opposite direction and become “gatekeepers.”

Therefore, as these processes evolve, some of the important considerations to note are:

- Reducing barriers for Survivors and families of the Sixties Scoop and residential schools, those removed to sanatoria, those who were involuntarily enfranchised due to military service, those involved in the child welfare system, and those rejected for status due to the second-generation cut-off amendment in Bill C-31 would be imperative.
- In the identity forum, applying for status/citizenship can feel overwhelming to some, especially if there is a sense that one needs to use colonial processes to “prove” they are Indigenous.
- All participants indicated the process needed to change and the continued status quo was unacceptable. Indigenous Peoples could be (re)traumatized and triggered when asked personal questions about their families/identities. These questions can feel intrusive and embarrassing, especially if they do not know the answers.
- Barriers and harms associated with implementing rigid processes for Indigenous students could be more significant than the harms associated with the few cases of Indigenous identity fraud. Post-secondary institutions in Manitoba must establish supports throughout the identification process to reduce potential barriers and harms that may arise in new processes.



Recommendation #2

The UM Indigenous identity policy should include formal documentation and alternative mechanisms for people to provide verification for Indigenous-specific staff and faculty positions, scholarship eligibility and applicable student admissions. The documentation process, to be determined by the Policy Development Committee, could include a tiered process as follows:

- written documentation and identification issued by accepted federal, provincial, and Indigenous governments and organizations
- genealogies, community connections and identity circles
- a signed declaration that demonstrates community connection or involvement with a specific First Nation, Inuit or Métis Nation community

To honour the oral traditions of Indigenous Peoples, UM may consider alternative mechanisms for verification such as oral submissions (e.g., testimonials in collaboration with communities and Nations) and assistance with application processes for those who need it.

II. Self-determination of Indigenous identity by respective Nations

First Nations, Métis Nation, and Inuit communities and Nations define who their members/citizens are. Relying solely on colonial governments' definitions is a discriminatory practice. Ensure Indigenous identity can be recognized in the role of kinship stories and "witnessing, " which involves creating "self-truth statements" that could be made public.

In the forum of Indigenous identity, most Indigenous people agree the federal government has too much control over defining and validating Indigenous identity. Many participants felt strongly that self-determination of identity by Indigenous communities is critical in defining who their members/citizens are because these processes honour relationships, sovereignty and nation-building with a focus on asking "Who are you?" and not "What are you?" When we follow kinship processes, we minimize the risk of legitimizing false declarations of Indigeneity or subscribing to pan-Indigenous assumptions.

As we are moving to a process of requiring verification of Indigeneity, many people are opposed to having formal documentation as the only criterion for First Nations peoples. Some reasons for this include:

- Status cards, widely used as ‘proof’ of Indigenous identity, are not Indigenous documents.
- The two-generation cut-off policy is a barrier for First Nations individuals to access documentation and is an artifact of colonial policy.
- Formal verification cannot address the complex adoption situations, kinship ties, and misunderstandings around “mixedness” and non-status situations.
- ‘Community connections’ and ‘communities claiming an individual’ are powerful aspects of identity. Self-identification is important for an individual, but in the context of access to Indigenous-specific benefits, it is also vital that a community or Nation accepts you. Teillet articulates “Citizenship, relationship, and kinship speak to who claims a person, not who the person claims. Look for the markers of identity a name or clan, responsibilities, the ability to give gifts, and accountability” (Teillet, 2022, p. 75).

Leaders from the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) and numerous other Métis citizens participated in the community engagement sessions. The MMF services all Red River Métis, not just those with citizenship cards. However, participants identified unique issues and nuances related to the need for identity verification and the role of the Manitoba Métis government in determining the authenticity of citizenship.

Participants described some of these unique nuances:

- The MMF states those claiming specific benefits or opportunities as Métis within the UM community should have a citizenship card or demonstrate they are in the process of acquiring one. Red River Métis citizenship includes three key elements: self-identification as Métis, family connection to a historic Red River Métis community with the provision of scrip and acceptance by a Red River Métis Nation Local.
- Individuals from other provinces may hold documentation that does not meet the historical and accepted definition of Red River Métis as set by the MMF.
- Participants acknowledged that for some, obtaining formalized Indigenous identity may not be desired for various reasons. For example, some Métis individuals, who meet all historical and definitional criteria, may choose not to obtain citizenship, just as some First Nations individuals, who meet all the historical and definitional criteria, may refuse to obtain a status card.

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) is the national voice for Inuit peoples and will be referenced as the UM identity policy is created to ensure the rights of Inuit identities are protected. For Inuit, citizenship definitions vary depending on which of the four land claims a person or community belongs to. Inuit follow eight values called Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Principles to govern every part of their life, including relationships, kinships, political procedures, etc., so these must also be considered in the development of policies and procedures related to Inuit identity.

Recommendation #3

The UM Indigenous Identity Policy should base the definitions of identity on Indigenous sovereignty, use a distinction-based approach (recognizing nations are distinct and unique) and highlight these are First Peoples who originate from these lands. Indigenous Peoples are descendants of the original inhabitants of Turtle Island/North America. Preference will be given to all Indigenous Peoples of Canada, which includes First Nations, Inuit and Métis, as well as Indigenous communities whose original boundaries straddle an imposed international border between Canada and the United States. We must work with First Nation, Métis Nation and Inuit governments, communities and Nations to incorporate and understand their preferred processes for determining identity.

III. Supporting those seeking identity/community connection

Participants expressed sensitivity that, in some cases, people may genuinely seek identity and community. However, they felt that recognizing the complexity and diversity of Indigenous communities—and formalizing roles for Elders, Indigenous Peoples, and Indigenous governments and organizations—will be important in supporting people seeking their identity and connection and dealing with cases of uncertainty.

Many students only begin to find connections and reconnect to their identity once they come to a post-secondary institution. Hence, participants wanted to ensure UM is creating safe spaces for them to do this without fear of rejection or feeling fraudulent or inadequate if they do not know the culture, teachings, language, family history and so forth.

Feedback from the sessions included the following considerations:

- Experiences of exclusion, lateral violence and intergenerational trauma can fracture community and individual connections, which means some Indigenous Peoples may define their identity through experiences of racism, exclusion and oppression.
- There must be opportunities for people to learn about their identity and the responsibilities of claiming and reclaiming Indigenous identity.
- Some people may need support to access verification documentation. This support might include finding, completing and paying for applications, genealogies, etc. If formal documentation is unavailable, then an alternative process needs to be transparent (e.g., what elements are required for an acceptable personal narrative of community connection).
- Experiences of colonialism and colonial systems have caused a significant loss of language for Indigenous Peoples. Language is a form of identity that intertwines with culture and it can indicate which community someone comes from.



This mural, by Anishinaabe artist Blake Angeconeb, is located in the Brodie Centre atrium on Bannatyne campus. The Thunderbirds image was inspired by Indigenous youth taking flight to attain their education and employment goals.

Recommendation #4

UM should create safe spaces for Indigenous Peoples to discover who they are, while also providing nation-specific support to Indigenous employees and students on how to access identity documentation.

IV. Indigenous representation and relationship-building

Participants felt it would be essential to have increased Indigenous representation in the admissions, awards and human resource processes, in addition to the concept of committees or councils to help navigate processes around Indigenous identity. They also noted the importance of strengthening and formalizing relationships with Indigenous communities, governments and organizations.

Hiring, admissions and awards committees may be comprised of people who are not familiar with Indigenous identity politics, nuances and issues and, as a result, lack the lived experience that can contribute to the equity and fair assessment of Indigenous identity declarations. Participants identified this as a systemic barrier. Further, several people indicated universities need to have relationships with communities, Indigenous governments and Indigenous leaders to ensure that individuals and nations are protected and that dialogue in this area is evolving in a good way.

Comments from participants included:

- Legal/ethical issues can arise with complex cases of identity. Communities must have a say in these matters and there must be Indigenous spaces on campus to support community building.
- Elders are critical in these conversations. They protect knowledge, tradition and culture. They are wisdom keepers, and what they say matters in these crucial conversations. The involvement of Elders is essential in any process involving kinship.
- Having Indigenous representation on committees is a critical element in creating safe processes. However, we must also acknowledge there is a significant strain on Indigenous staff/faculty when Indigeneity is a part of their job. Some participants identified they felt pressure to carry a heavy load. Others mentioned their inclusion on a committee felt like tokenism, while others indicated burnout is a factor because they are spread too thin. Additionally, we must be cautious about pan-Indigenous representation: one Indigenous person will not be aware of the kinship and membership criteria of all Indigenous communities and therefore cannot represent all nations.

Recommendation #5

The UM community should continue to build and nurture strong partnerships with Indigenous communities and governments. The identity review policy should include a process of how to validate a claim of connection with specific nations' membership registries.



The Indigenous-led engagement process included facilitated sessions for multiple groups of Indigenous Peoples across Manitoba.

Recommendation #6

UM must create Indigenous-led committees to review declarations of Indigeneity for:

- all Indigenous candidates applying for academic, research or administrative positions
- student seats or awards designated as Indigenous where the verification provided is different from accepted “formalized documents” as identified elsewhere in the policy



Elders, Knowledge Keepers and educators participate in an Indigenous identity engagement session in Migizii Agamik – Bald Eagle Lodge.

Recommendation #7

There must be cultural training for the entire UM community so there is a fulsome understanding of the complex issues surrounding Indigenous identities, histories, languages and cultures and anti-racism. There must be training for all departments and faculties on Indigenous identity policies and processes.



Teachings are shared during the annual Elders and Knowledge Keepers gathering. This event is one of the many opportunities for students, staff and faculty to learn about First Nations, Métis and Inuit cultures on campus.

Recommendation #8

The Human Resources (HR) department, in collaboration with the Indigenous community, must play a lead role in identity verification for HR processes. They need to:

- prioritize the hiring of Indigenous Peoples
- include Elders on hiring committees
- ensure an Indigenous liaison within the HR department is experienced in Indigenous identity and connected to community
- work closely with the Office of the Vice-President (Indigenous), Elders and Knowledge Keepers to maintain strong relationships and to ensure policies and processes are constantly evolving

V. Ensure a clear, enforceable process for verification and review of claims of Indigenous identity that is grounded in Indigenous ways and includes Indigenous Peoples

Participants felt that when there is a case or a suspected case of Indigenous identity fraud, there needs to be a transparent process followed and the process needs to be grounded in Indigenous ways of being and knowing, which includes Inuit, Métis and First Nations peoples at the centre of the processes.

All groups discussed how the rate of fraud is low. However, there is a need to implement repercussions for people who falsely claim Indigenous identity and take advantage of opportunities meant for Indigenous Peoples.

These are some of the considerations identified by the participants:

- Processes for mitigating identity theft must include vetting community connection statements.
- Clarity and transparency on identity processes in institutions can be challenging when no explicit policies exist, and privacy protections do not permit open dialogue.
- Anonymous accusations have, and will, create problems within institutions and communities, so some people suggested there should also be consequences for people who make false allegations about someone's identity.
- Some people who have fraudulently identified as Indigenous have styled themselves as spokespeople for Indigenous people (or they become seen as such), impacting mainstream and scholarly knowledge, policy development and case law, misrepresenting Indigenous knowledges and experience. These have profoundly negative impacts, and so there must be repercussions.



Led by the Indigenous campus community, UM is committed to ensuring Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing are embedded into the fabric of our teaching, research, administration and governance.

Recommendation #9

UM should appoint a Policy Development Committee consisting of First Nations, Métis Nation, and Inuit community members and citizens as well as relevant leaders from the UM community. The policy must be transparent and should clearly state the process for verification of identity as well as a process for review of complaints of Indigenous identity fraud. It should not allow for anonymous complaints of fraud. It should clearly outline processes for:

- how to make an accusation of Indigenous identity fraud at UM
- appeals
- repercussions for fraud

Closing

Overall, participants were encouraged that UM is leading these conversations, taking an Indigenous-led approach to solutions and centring Indigenous community voices. However, all groups recognized the complexity of Indigenous identity, and an awareness that solutions will not be 'one-size-fits-all'. This was noted particularly in the context of recent public discourse around incidents of Indigenous identity fraud across Canada and current work undertaken by Indigenous governance organizations. Many felt this complexity meant that mitigating Indigenous identity fraud would continue to be an evolving topic and that ongoing conversation amongst Indigenous Peoples, governance, organizations and institutions would be required.

In one engagement session, an Elder advised that “we need to remember the Seven Sacred Teachings as we do this work: carry love in your heart, show respect in your words, walk with humility, speak in an honest way, tell the truth and have courage to take action.”



Indigenous Identity Report

Next Steps

Next steps/expectations of the UM President upon receipt of this report:

From the IIEWG Terms of Reference dated March 2022:

- 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 UM President and executive team.
- Within three months of the receipt of the report, the President and executive team will convene a meeting of this working group to outline the process for implementation of the recommendations and identify any ongoing support needs from this or a subsequent working group.



UM President and Vice-Chancellor Michael Benarroch speaking at the Annual Traditional Graduation Pow Wow in 2022.



Indigenous Identity Report

Appendices

Appendix A: Recommendations

We recommend:

The University of Manitoba is responsible for developing and implementing an Indigenous identity policy to uphold opportunities for Indigenous Peoples and to prevent identity fraud. Created in collaboration with Indigenous governments and organizations, this policy must be a living, evolving document.

The UM Indigenous identity policy should include formal documentation and alternative mechanisms for people to provide verification for Indigenous-specific staff and faculty positions, scholarship eligibility and applicable student admissions. The documentation process, to be determined by the Policy Development Committee, could include a tiered process as follows:

- written documentation and identification issued by accepted federal, provincial, and Indigenous governments and organizations
- genealogies, community connections and identity circles
- a signed declaration that demonstrates community connection or involvement with a specific First Nation, Inuit, or Métis Nation community

To honour the oral traditions of Indigenous Peoples, UM may consider alternative mechanisms for verification such as oral submissions (e.g., testimonials in collaboration with communities and nations) and assistance with application processes for those who need it.

The UM Indigenous Identity policy should base the definitions of identity on Indigenous sovereignty, use a distinction-based approach (recognizing nations are distinct and unique) and highlight these are First Peoples who originate from these lands. Indigenous Peoples are descendants of the original inhabitants of Turtle Island/North America. Preference will be given to all Indigenous Peoples of Canada, which includes First Nations, Inuit and Métis, as well as Indigenous communities whose original boundaries straddle an imposed international border between Canada and the United States. We must work with First Nation, Métis Nation and Inuit governments, communities and Nations to incorporate and understand their preferred processes for determining identity.

UM should create safe spaces for Indigenous Peoples to discover who they are, while also providing nation-specific support to Indigenous employees and students on how to access identity documentation.

The UM community should continue to build and nurture strong partnerships with Indigenous communities and governments. The identity review policy should include a process of how to validate a claim of connection with specific nations' membership registries.

UM must create Indigenous-led committees to review declarations of Indigeneity for:

- a) all Indigenous candidates applying for academic, research or administrative positions
- b) student seats or awards designated as Indigenous where the verification provided is different from accepted “formalized documents” as identified elsewhere in the policy

There must be cultural training for the entire UM community so there is a fulsome understanding of the complex issues surrounding Indigenous identities, histories, languages and cultures, and anti-racism. There must be training for all departments and faculties on Indigenous identity policies and processes.

The Human Resources (HR) department, in collaboration with the Indigenous community, must play a lead role in identity verification for HR processes. They need to:

- prioritize the hiring of Indigenous Peoples
- include Elders on hiring committees
- ensure an Indigenous liaison within the HR department is experienced in Indigenous identity and connected to community
- work closely with the Office of the Vice-President (Indigenous), Elders and Knowledge Keepers to maintain strong relationships and to ensure policies and processes are constantly evolving

UM should appoint a Policy Development Committee consisting of First Nations, Métis Nation and Inuit community members and citizens, as well as relevant leaders from the UM community. The policy must be transparent and should clearly state the process for verification of identity as well as a process for review of complaints of Indigenous identity fraud. It should not allow for anonymous complaints of fraud. It should clearly outline processes for:

- how to make an accusation of Indigenous identity fraud at UM
- appeals
- repercussions for fraud



APPENDIX B: 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 Indigenous people who have been overlooked 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 Indigenous communities, the University of Manitoba Indigenous Identity Engagement Working Group (IIEWG) will engage Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers, faculty, staff, students and community collaborators in establishing a process at UM 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 IIEWG, and the roles and responsibilities of the working group members.

Introduction

A briefing note to the UM President outlined the background of the Indigenous identity fraud issue, and highlighted the need to establish a process to support the self-declaration of Indigenous identity.

Dr. Catherine Cook, Vice-President (Indigenous) at UM, established the IIEWG in December 2021 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 general recruitment efforts. 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 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 UM. 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 Vice-President (Indigenous) and will be used to steer continuous improvement.

The engagement and consultation process will provide guidance to UM 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 six to 12 months and completed within 2022. Following the receipt of the recommendations from this working group, the President and executive team will convene a meeting of this working group to discuss the planned implementation of the recommendation and identify any ongoing implementation support needs.



Membership

The IIEWG will engage 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 (First Nation, Inuit and Métis).

- Sponsored by the Vice-President (Indigenous): Dr. Catherine Cook
- Co-leads:
 - Ovide Mercredi, First Nation leader, citizen and Knowledge Keeper
 - Barbara Bruce, Métis leader 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.
- Elders and Knowledge Keepers at UM
 - 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' mandates 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' mandates 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, 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 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 IIEWG will be supported by the Office of the Vice-President (Indigenous) 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 UM President and executive team.

Within three months of the receipt of the report, the President and executive team will convene a meeting of this working group to outline the process for implementation of the recommendations and identify any ongoing support needs from this or a subsequent working group.

Confidentiality

The IIEWG members will be required to work within UM 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, child care, incidental expenses for meetings
- Elder/Knowledge Keeper and student honorariums



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 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

Elder Maata Evaluardjuk-Palmer

Elder Charlotte Nolin

Elders and Knowledge Keepers at UM

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, UM

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, Communications & EleV Partnership, OVPI

Indigenous staff, UM

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, Head of Ongomiizwin Indigenous Institute of Health and Healing

Indigenous Students, University of Manitoba

Kyra Cebula, student, Faculty of Science; Senator; Faculty of Science Students' Association (SSA)

Ilordanan Efimoff, PhD candidate (ABD), Social and Personality Psychology, B.A. Applied Psychology (Hons.)

Laura Forsythe, PhD candidate, Department of Indigenous Studies; Lecturer, University of Winnipeg

Amanda Fowler-Woods, PhD 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

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, OVPI
Val Parker, Executive Assistant to the Vice-President and Director, OVPI

Updated: March 4, 2022
M. Morrison, Director, Office of the Vice-President (Indigenous),
University of Manitoba
Maria.Morrison@umanitoba.ca



APPENDIX C: IIEWG Report Sub-Committee Terms of Reference

University of Manitoba Indigenous Identity Engagement Working Group Final Analysis Sub-Committee Terms of Reference

Term: November 3, 2022 – January 3, 2022

Purpose:

- To collectively analyze the findings from the draft Indigenous identity engagement report
- To have Métis, First Nation and Inuit working group representatives engage directly with the recommendations from the report that will be put forward to the larger Indigenous Identity Engagement Working Group (IIEWG)

Volunteer IIEWG members:

1. Manitoba Métis Federation – Minister Will Goodon
2. Manitoba Inuit Association – Wayne Clark
3. Indigenous Inclusion Directorate – Alexandria Ireland, Senior Policy Analyst (re: Helen Robinson-Settee)
4. University of Manitoba – Dr. Cary Miller
5. University of Manitoba – Dr. Michelle Driedger
6. Universitaire St.Boniface – Deb Radi

OVPI support – roles and responsibilities:

1. Dr. Catherine Cook, VPI – Chair
 - chair discussions
 - final approval of content to put forward based on IIEWG Terms of Reference
2. Maria Morrison, Director – Project Coordinator
 - sub-committee administration and communication coordination

3. Christine Cyr, AVPI – Substantive Development Editor

- analysis of current report with specific emphasis on restructuring, rewriting and rearranging to develop:
 - i. Section 6. Analysis of feedback and dialogue
 - ii. Section 7. Recommendations and next steps
- clear, logical development of how ideas are expressed
- sentence complexity and use of active or passive verbs, conciseness

4. Ruth Shead, Director – Final Copyeditor (or designate)

- final review of report for spelling, grammar, language used, style and consistency, and formatting
- support internal design and publication of the report

The OVPI will submit draft revised sections to the sub-committee members:

What	Sent from OVPI	Feedback to be received	Discussion
Analysis	November 10	November 15	November 17
Recommendations	November 22	November 25	November 29
Final content	December 5		

Reporting:

The sub-committee will support the analysis and recommendations that will go into the final draft of the report content.

The final draft will be sent to the IIEWG group by the end of December 2022.

The intention is the collective advice from the IIEWG will provide direction and guidance to the Vice-President (Indigenous) at UM on how to develop a process and guidelines that support Indigenous faculty, staff and students through an identification process and to prevent Indigenous identity fraud.

Created: November 4, 2022

OVPI

APPENDIX D: Glossary of Terms

First Nation – Although there is no legal definition for “First Nation”, it refers to individuals who have Indian status under Canadian law as part of a recognized community. While “First Nations” refers to the ethnicity of First Nations peoples, the singular “First Nation” can refer to a band or reserve-based community in Canada.

Indian – refers to the legal identity of a First Nations person who is registered under the *Indian Act*.

Status Indian – Status Indians are entitled to have their names included on the Indian Register, an official list maintained by the federal government. Only Status Indians are recognized as Indians under the Indian Act and are entitled to certain rights and benefits under the law.

Treaty Indian – A Status Indian who belongs to a First Nation that signed a treaty with the Crown.

Non-Status Indians – Non-Status Indians are people who consider themselves Indians or members of a First Nation but who are not recognized by the federal government as Indians under the Indian Act. Non-Status Indians are not entitled to the same rights and benefits available to Status Indians. Historically, status could be “lost” to a person for a variety of reasons including marriage, divorce, certain occupations and military service.

Inuit – Inuit are the original people of Arctic Canada. This region is referred to by Inuit as “Inuit Nunagnat.” It includes the Inuvialuit Region of the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Nunavik (Northern Quebec), Nunatsiavut (Northern Labrador), and the ice, land and water within these regions. The word “Inuit” means “the people” in the Inuit language and is used when Inuit are referring to themselves as a culture. Inuit is also the plural form of “Inuk.”

Métis (as defined by Article III of the Manitoba Métis Federation Constitution) "Métis" means a person who self-identifies as Métis, is of historic Métis Nation Ancestry, is distinct from other Aboriginal Peoples and is accepted by the Métis Nation; "Historic Métis Nation" means the Aboriginal people then known as Métis or Half-Breeds who resided in the Historic Métis Nation Homeland; "Historic Métis Nation Homeland" means the area of land in west central North America used and occupied as the traditional territory of the Métis or Half-Breeds as they were then known; "Métis Nation" means the Aboriginal people descended from the Historic Métis Nation, which is now comprised of all Métis Nation Citizens and is one of the "aboriginal peoples of Canada" within s.35 of the Constitution Act of 1982; "Distinct from other Aboriginal Peoples" means distinct for cultural and nationhood purposes.

APPENDIX E: What was said and what we heard

Based on the identified three key areas for learning from community, each participating group was asked to share their knowledge, skills and experiences supporting Indigenous identity development with the facilitator and co-leads. In addition to the verbal dialogue and feedback received in the engagement sessions, online submissions were also encouraged and documented. A combined brief analysis is included in the documentation.

A. DIALOGUE SESSIONS

1. Lived experience: What are the experiences with navigating processes around Indigenous Identity? What barriers are encountered?

Elders stated:

- There are students who claim Indigenous identity falsely to take advantage of opportunities.
- We do not want to create too many barriers for real Indigenous folks because we already face enough racism. Those who have lived through systems (residential school, Sixties Scoop and CFS) have challenges accessing identification and recognizing who they are and who their families are. There is and will be a tidal wave of children who need to be thought of when developing this process. They are not just cut off from their lineage documents, but also their communities. They often build or find a community on campus.
- Want to make sure that people who are not Métis cannot claim they are, while at the same time making space for those who are re-claiming and allow them to do so without fear.
- There is a need for resources that will assist with the work of getting documentation. Important to acknowledge/know the land where they were raised and how they were connected to it. Be respectful of where people are at, especially for those who are just discovering their identities.
- The government still has too much say on deciding our identities and policies that prevent asking interviewees to discuss their Indigenous identity/community.

Post-secondary (faculty, staff, students) stated:

- Identity is a complex, individual process that presents itself in different ways. Some find identity through practicing culture, language and traditions more than through documentation or titles. Others fear practicing culture, language and traditions due to feeling fraudulent if they did not grow up with them despite having the lineage. Some self-exclude from accessing opportunities for Indigenous people if their education is being funded from the band, or choose to not pursue them (i.e., pay their own way) to prove they are not getting “hand-outs.”
- There is a history of Métis people hiding their Indigenous identity. Can be a barrier if someone cannot give themselves permission to learn about themselves. Challenges for people who have lost their culture – have the lineage but can feel like a fraud because they do not know culture or teachings. When parents are disconnected from community and culture. Some seeking Métis identity may not know they are Métis until they are much older. Their parents would have been punished for speaking their language. Misrecognition as mixedness being the most important/common part of Métis identity.

- Difficulty with getting status, lots of paperwork, politics, gatekeeping, backlog of applications, when official government documents say “parents unknown.” It is challenging when connections are known but people can’t “prove” it based on colonial requirements. Sixties Scoop Survivors face greater challenges. Being in foster care presents barriers. The impact of the Indian Act definition of status and how status can be lost over generations. Rather than having cards, could have more of a conversation. Navigating through the admissions process is hard.
- Some are told they are Indigenous and may have documentation, but do not understand the associated relationships and responsibilities.
- People can make assumptions based on appearance, which can impact how much someone’s identity is challenged. There is a degree of privilege that may come with being “white-passing”; on the other hand, others may make racist comments around them without knowing they are Indigenous. Those who are more Indigenous in appearance express instances of being followed around in a store and frustration about racism and profiling.
- Institutions want diversity and are happy to have people “check the box.” Indigenous is a colonial term that causes grouping and creates a flattening of diversity.
- The strain that Indigenous staff/faculty experience when Indigeneity is a part of their job. Tokenism. Burnout.
- Hiring committees and retention committees
 - Need training in Indigenous identity and place-based culture
 - Include Indigenous people on committees
 - Guidelines, written package
 - Need training on the issues that Indigenous staff experience

Individuals with barriers to identification stated:

- Child welfare system is a barrier—[people] cannot access own documentation and children in the system are not taught how these documents are important and necessary. Sometimes, there is pressure not to interact with original families. Helpers are not filling out the forms or applications.
- Being adopted and have status and not knowing—only learning about culture and community later in life. Wanting to avoid racism. Scared of being rejected by the Indigenous community. Closed adoption forms can make it hard to find birth parents and families. Sixties Scoop Survivors face greater challenges of belonging. Often feel like an outsider looking in. Challenges of getting support from the reserve when the reserve does not know someone because they are a Sixties Scoop Survivor.
- It is such a process to get a status card. The biggest barriers are the forms themselves—forms give CFS Survivors anxiety or panic attacks. Consider oral submissions, where someone else fills out the form.
- Challenges getting funding from the reserve and when there is no follow-through from the nation involved, it forces students out.
- Need to watch for “flags” when asking what nation they are from and when they cannot connect the teachings.

Social workers stated:

- Identification can be the hardest part for kids growing up in care. The process can be intimidating and frustrating, especially when one parent is not identified on the birth certificate.
- For some Indigenous children, they are rejected from getting status because of the second generation cut-off rule and only one parent is listed. Creates challenges for access to benefits and services.
- Not all agencies assist with applying for status cards and passports.
- If there are post-secondary applications, we can help, but they will not get funding because they are not able to get their status card.

Education/guidance counsellors stated:

- Some students find identity questions to be intrusive. They have been through trauma, and personal questions can re-traumatize them and make them more afraid of the idea of university. For some, it is triggering when they cannot complete a family tree. Universities need to provide clarity and transparency about why they are asking for this information.
- Instead of asking questions, can there be a link with communities? Universities could come to the communities while they are in high school and then they are not telling their life story to a stranger.
- A lot of the “identity” work needs to come in relationship with community resources. We are sending out our most precious resources to universities. Come to the communities.

2. Current and historical practice and implications: What are some ways that communities recognize, identify or establish connection to members or citizens? What are some barriers to this?

Elders stated

- Elders are here to protect the knowledge, tradition and culture, and to make sure they are not stolen.
- For First Nations, there is a distinction between urban and non-urban (on- and off-reserve) communities. For Métis, the MMF has well-known criteria, but they can still cause barriers for Métis people.
- For people of mixed ancestry, there are internal and external voices saying that you are not white enough or brown/Indigenous enough. We are often asked “What are you?” instead of “Who are you?”
- Language changes how we perceive identity, and many have lost their Indigenous languages because of colonialism and colonial systems and with that, the ability to articulate who they are properly. The way you think and the way you talk is all connected. To protect this culture would mean considering this. When Indigenous individuals talk, you can recognize what tribe or community the person is in and where you are from. Language is a form of identity for Indigenous people.

- Where someone is from is important to Indigenous identity; therefore, a community claiming an individual is important to consider. Asking others in the community who their family is a distinguishing factor of who a person is and where they come from. It also helps determine how a person is connected to them or the community. To name your family is also telling of your own culture.
- Your community is not just a blood community or geographical community – there are spiritual communities, friend/work communities and often people do not find their community until they get to campus.
- Will need to work through how to deal with non-Indigenous people who are adopted by Indigenous families.
- Need to consider inter-racial marriages where they are weeding out the kids from Treaty status because of who their parents are.
- There are individuals who have lived in the community their entire life, hold the culture and traditions, and speak the language, but do not have status, restricting opportunities for them. Meanwhile, there are others who have attained status through marriage long ago and now have more opportunities.
- Traditional teachings guide an individual throughout their lifetime. Culture and tradition are relevant in everyday life. Their identity is presented through the way they talk, the way they act, the things they know.

Post-secondary (faculty, staff, students) stated:

- There are responsibilities that come with claiming and reclaiming Indigenous identity.
- Responsibility of hiring committee to check on community connections. Vetting community connection statements as part of hiring process, filter out, lets people work through this.
- Positioning self with place and community. More than the sum of ancestry.
- Going to ceremonies and demonstrating how they give back to communities can show community connection. Access to community can be complicated. Being shy, hesitant or not having someone to go with can be barriers. There could also be financial barriers to this. Lost status can create barriers when communities do not accept [people] due to being non-status. A person's appearance can present issues in community due to people not believing. Some Indigenous people who can demonstrate ancestry and lineage may self-exclude if they also must show community connection. Sometimes communities are complicated and family relationships with leadership can be complicated as well.
- The MMF has a process to show connection to Red River families. Some do not bother getting a card because their community knows who they are.
- For First Nations, previously, the father must have status or be identified, under the Indian Act, to get full status.
- Need to consider relationships in community, and with other communities. Sometimes, through marriage, children are not part of the same band as one of the parents.

3. Important considerations for a process to mitigate against Indigenous identity fraud: What elements, principles or considerations are important in designing a process to mitigate against Indigenous identity fraud?

Elders stated:

- Need to remember the Seven Sacred Teachings – carry love in your heart, show respect in your words, be humble with those words, have the courage to take action, speak in an honest way, tell the truth... need to come from a good place and value the heritage of all peoples.
- Self-identification has allowed people to come forward when they are falsely claiming because they want/need to be accepted. However, keeping self-declaration will create the least number of barriers for those wanting to declare their identity. Don't cause harm or publicly shame people who are falsely claiming Indigenous identity. Need to ask why they are doing this. Is it for financial gain? Or is it because they desperately want to feel like they belong? Can we deal with identity questions by creating Circles of Care and honouring all nations? Need to find ways such as identity circles, where community members have an opportunity to be engaged in the conversations and move away from an INAC leadership style to engage more voices. Create spaces for people to discover who they are—do not take away from the flexibility of self-identification.
- Need to demonstrate that there will be repercussions.
- Anonymous accusations have and will create problems.
- Need to have regular and ongoing conversations that involves a policy that is a living document. This process is a first step and engaging community to be in the process is critical.

Post-secondary (faculty, students, staff) stated:

- Need to consider alternate ways to get to know someone by how they interact to help move away from typical HR/identity documentations. Submitting identification not enough. Allow space for sharing stories. Avoid discriminatory and colonial ways of proving. Consider sovereignty and nation-building. Require specificity—stop allowing people to identify as simply “Indigenous.”
- The importance of language—knowing language is knowing culture—though must consider the barriers to learning language.
- There is a big difference between adoption through legal process and ceremonial adoptions. Risk of setting a process or precedent for legitimizing groups of people who are not actually Indigenous. Self-declaration making Indigenous identity popular, and while the intention of encouraging self-declaration may have been good, it may not anticipate the outcomes.
- Concern with the degree of verification—“Who contacts your family or community?”—can feel very invasive. How different is this from usual reference checks? Don't want to do blood quantum. Some are declaring that those with a white parent are “less Indigenous”, which can also be harmful.

- It cannot just fall on Indigenous people to do this work. Creating awareness for non-Indigenous people to also do the work will play a role in creating more space for Indigenous people. HR will play a key role, need more Indigenous people in HR. Ask the AMC, MMF, etc., what their processes are. Asking questions in a way that is kind to those who are learning their identity. Consider each person in context of their life and impacts of colonialism on them and their community connections. Use multiple points of inquiry that include documentation and community connections. Community connection can include calling the band office, contacting family, dinner with Indigenous faculty, asking about connection multiple times during the interview process.
- Whoever is assessing needs to be well-versed in the challenges and have representation from Indigenous communities on hiring committees, etc. Having Elders on committees. Vetting community connection statements. A council to review people's connections.

Evidence of community engagement instead of just documentation. See how much one knows about their culture and provide community references in addition to academic references. However, for scholarships, accessing cultural connections can be difficult for students—it may be for a good reason but can be difficult for students. Suggest cultural vetting at the beginning before accessing scholarships.

Individuals with barriers to identification stated:

- Require documentation when available but understand that many are still reconnecting. Recognize that there are challenges with documentation, particularly if parents have passed on; but if families have handwritten documents, they are not accepted. Need to consider alternate ways to get to know the “essence” of someone by how they interact in a “deep conversation” to help move away from typical HR/identity documentation. Can have great oral lineage but then not have anything written to contribute. Important to connect where you get your info/knowledge from even if you are (are not) Indigenous.
- Consider using storytelling as verification. Our stories are what makes us. Sometimes not knowing is your story. There can be lateral violence when you do not have the papers to show who you are. Every Indigenous person should be subject to an investigation of their “story” in lieu of documentation. Have a conversation with social workers/legal guardians, while being mindful of privacy laws.
- Important for the University to provide resources for people to reconnect with their communities. People need to be supported. Presumption should not be made that they are not Indigenous. Should provide resources to support the accused and accusations should not be anonymous. Don't end up with a policy where everyone must prove themselves and don't punish all Indigenous people because of one fraud. Indigenous people not close to their community may be hesitant to reach out. Support for dispossessed individuals—there are the ones who need it most. Sympathy for youth who do not know their history. Need to consider that for some, their parents wanted them to “pass” as white.
- Process should be clear on who to make the complaint to. Need transparency in the process but there are too many privacy protections. Can be used to falsify identity as Indigenous. There needs to be a way for amends to be made in instances of fraud.
- Need more Indigenous people in admissions and human resources. University must value Indigenous knowledges.

- Need something that might include self-declaration but also have a mechanism for someone to talk to that person to hear how they talk because it is easy enough to hear if someone is legitimate. Suggest a tiered process:
 - documentation
 - demonstrate through genealogy or community connection/“identity circles”
 - the greater the benefits, the greater the scrutiny
 - committee of people to sit down with the individual

Social workers stated:

- There is a difference between Indigenous identity and federal identity documents. The right of nations to self-identify and create own citizenship.
- The impact of changing laws that will transfer mandate to Indigenous communities. As a result, Indigenous child welfare organizations will be receiving many transfers.
- There needs to be a right of appeal if Indigenous identity is challenged.
- Can produce a rejection letter from the federal government or the Manitoba Métis Federation if required. Agencies may have additional documentation that can be provided as proof in records. A rejection letter can show that one parent is registered.
- Indian status cards can take up to nine months, and Métis cards can take up to a year to receive.

Education/guidance counsellors stated:

- Give communities a space to go and meet with their students. At the beginning of the school year, we try to get all our students together.
- Foundational piece is relationships. Building relationships will help with knowing ‘who is who’ in the communities. Different than a colonial relationship, a holistic relationship beyond payment for services. Students do not know what a university community means.
- There needs to be representation at all levels, a group of people that make them feel welcome. Invest in Indigenous relationships. Sometimes those on reserve still do not feel like they fit. AMC post-secondary roundtable might be a good way to start building relationships.
- Even students who are grown up are still exploring identity.
- Educate and message in a positive way—let students see themselves reflected throughout the university, not just in the Indigenous Student Centre. Have a committee that meets to have those discussions about how they reach out to their Indigenous students.
- Consider the difference between being a band member and a community member, what citizenship means to us.

Indigenous governments and organizations stated:

The University remains committed to ongoing engagement with Indigenous governments and organizations throughout the policy development process. This initial phase of engagement included representation of Indigenous governments and organizations on the IIEWG and invitations to have further individual focused conversation. During this time, UM held an initial session with the Manitoba Métis Federation:

- Self-determination is important. The Red River Métis already know who we are but need to refine how we tell people who we are. Can't just take people's word for it; self-identification is important, but when a community and nation accepts you, that holds greater significance. Testimony from the community is especially important.
- The requirement to produce citizenship is not more onerous than other common record checks that take place through hiring processes. Every Métis governance has citizen cards, and it is not an onerous process, but it can take a while. If students are in the process of getting their card, the MMF can provide a letter stating such. There are concerns with citizenship cards from B.C. and from Ontario.
- The MMF feels that those claiming Métis citizenship should have a citizenship card or demonstrate that they are in the process of acquiring one.
- The process for the MMF includes:
 - self-identification as Métis
 - connection to an historic Métis community
 - acceptance by the current Métis community
- Noted that the MMF services all Manitoba Métis, not just those with citizenship cards.
- Recommendation to create a committee or group that can deal with this, including support people.
- There is concern about people who are claiming Métis but are not Métis. Need to learn from what has happened at other institutions. Work together on a protocol and a relationship between the University and the MMF. Build an ongoing relationship that does not have to be a committee but liaisons.
- Recognition that fraud does not happen often and that there could be an appeal process.
- Need to continue meeting and build on the discussion.

B. ONLINE SUBMISSIONS

Online submissions were received from self-identified students, staff members, faculty members, Knowledge Holders and organizational representatives. Most respondents were Indigenous (First Nation and/or Métis). Most respondents had formal documentation to Indigenous identity, and most had experience with multiple ways of establishing identity (formal documentation, demonstrating community connections, self-declaration). The following is a compilation and summary of their responses.

1. Lived experience: What are the experiences with navigating processes around Indigenous identity? What barriers are encountered?

- Indigenous identity comes from a variety of means but there is historical, spiritual and communal connection to land and living things. Culture, shared history, ongoing relationships and service to the community are identifiers of Indigenous identity. It is about relationality. It is a complex and evolving issue, and it is important that communities themselves define who their members are.
- Métis identity was sometimes hidden by parents to avoid discrimination. When this happens, it makes it harder to find the required documentation to get “proof.” Métis people from other provinces may hold documentation that does not meet the MMF definition. This may make some feel like they are an “imposter” if they meet the University’s criteria but not the MMF’s. Some feel that the University should work with the MMF to confirm Métis citizenship, and not accept Indigenous people that cannot provide that documentation.
- Strong sense of identity and community connection through the University. The Indigenous community on campus is very welcoming and engaging.
- Demonstrating community connection by naming community and example of Indigenous cultural events, programs etc. they have participated in. Discussing work experiences, knowledge of Indigenous worldviews, practices, history. References from Indigenous employers, Elders and volunteer experience at Indigenous events. Volunteering, working within the Indigenous community, being seen at community events, family and/or community ties. Community connection can also come from relationships with other Indigenous Peoples, but concern that this may not be enough.
- Lateral violence and intergenerational trauma can fracture community connections. Many have been forcibly removed from their communities. Be mindful of the challenges related to reconnecting with community. Urban youth may struggle with connection, and may not access resources, teachers, Elders and services designed to help them. Many define their identity through experiences of racism, exclusion and oppression.
- Uncertainty about demonstrating community connection. Sometimes feel insecure, especially if grew up outside of the community. Seeking Knowledge Keepers and Elders who have traditional connections can help but takes time. Those growing up in urban areas may be well-known in the Indigenous community but may not be well-known in their home community.
- Two-generation cut-off is a barrier to formal documentation/membership.
- Choosing not to obtain formal documentation due to the perception that it is only for financial gain.
- The impact of appearance, and how “white” or how “Indigenous” one looks can result in privileges and challenges.

- It would be great to have someone from the Office of the VP (Indigenous) to meet with candidates as part of the interview process or be involved in the hiring process of Indigenous-specific positions in some way.

2. Current and historical practice and implications: What are some ways that communities recognize, identify or establish connection to members or citizens? What are some barriers to this?

- When visiting home community, people usually just ask informally who relatives are.
- Historically, one must be claimed by community to be Indigenous, but for those adopted or in CFS, being claimed may be difficult.
- Historically, it has always been about knowing people.
- If one was accepted, raised and participated in community and Indigenous ways of being, one may be brought into a community and accepted.
- Need to keep in mind that Indigenous people have been displaced, relocated and severed from their ties to their traditional homelands. The government and its policies treated people in ways to deliberately sever ties to culture, land, languages and ways of living. As a result, one can belong to many communities.

3. Important considerations for a process to mitigate against Indigenous identity fraud: What elements, principles or considerations are important in designing a process to mitigate against Indigenous identity fraud?

- Most were very opposed to formal documentation as the only criteria. Noting that in the case of status cards, these are not Indigenous documents. There is fear that in attempting to mitigate Indigenous identity fraud, we swing too far in the opposite direction and become “gatekeepers.” Some students may not apply for awards for Indigenous students because they do not feel “Indigenous enough” if they do not have a card. Noted that this is a policy that will most impact Indigenous students, while students of other ethnicities will not have such a process to go through.
- Some supported that formal documentation should be required, but that there should be resources to help people with the journey of getting that documentation and help facilitating the application process so not to privilege those that have easier access to documents. Formal documentation allows for exploration of identity, but there can be challenges obtaining this documentation, especially if connections are lost and families are broken. Barriers in connecting with relatives, getting birth certificates, application processes, etc. There was note that “formal documentation” should be defined (i.e., status/citizenship cards, genealogy, scrip).
- Others noted that if formal documentation is not available, then a transparent personal narrative of community connection should be required and could explain why. This must be done in a culturally sensitive and respectful manner where appropriate assistance is available. There should also be enhanced supports for those who want to connect to their Indigenous identity through language, teachings and community engagement. Individuals have a responsibility to make those connections to their community, even if difficult. Create a position that will support those who are claiming Indigenous identity and need/want to find documentation.



- There was also a suggestion to continue with self-declaration but develop a process to deal with fraud when it happens by having a discussion, which may eventually lead to documentation provisions or a process that is based on Indigenous interpretations of identity. Identify where identity fraud is most prevalent and develop tailored approaches to addressing this issue with key stakeholders. Start to customize/be more specific when earmarking positions, awards, etc. for Indigenous people.
- Vetting will need to be done by a committee, led by Indigenous people, with members who are sufficiently trained and sensitive to the various colonial contexts and factors that have estranged some Indigenous Peoples from their communities. There will need to be an investment of time, energy and substantial resources in the process of training those involved in the process.
- Education on the harms caused by falsely claiming identity may go a long way in preventing fraud. Can also ask to sign a declaration. Education and awareness, with a focus on barriers.
- The harms associated with putting additional barriers for Indigenous students will be greater than the harms associated with the few cases of Indigenous identity fraud.
- There should be swift penalties in cases of fraud for taking opportunities that should be for Indigenous people. Holding a circle with the individual who falsely claims Indigeneity could be a first step in understanding why they falsely claimed. Other restorative circles could be held as well. It should be done in a good way so as not to diminish the individual. Provide an opportunity to learn about and apologies for the harms of their actions. There needs to be some form of restitution.
- What happens if someone self-declares as Indigenous, but is found to not be, even if their position did not require them to be Indigenous?
- Need to do it in a way that follows Indigenous practices, teachings, beliefs. Keeping in mind the adoption practices of many Indigenous people. Don't use restricted western systems and views. Need to connect with Indigenous governments and/or institutions that are responsible for confirming community members.
- If needed, the process could be more involved for faculty/scholars but simplified for students. Perhaps the Indigenous community on campus could set up a process to assist students who wish to obtain proof of status/citizenship. Work with First Nation, Métis and Inuit organizations for their preferred processes for determining identity.
- Give potential candidates an opportunity to identify themselves and ground their identity through multiple ways of providing proof.
- Also requires a process for managing against malicious claims of fraud (i.e., a refundable fee) and repercussions for those who make false accusations that damage someone's reputation.



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