



UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA GUIDANCE DOCUMENT FOR THE RESPECTFUL REMATRIATION AND REPATRIATION CEREMONY POLICY & WISE PRACTICES

This Guidance Document is intended to provide further context and background to the University's Respectful Rematriation and Repatriation Ceremony Policy and Wise Practices/Procedure.

Background

In the Fall of 2019, the Department of Anthropology reached out to Indigenous faculty, staff, and Elders at the University of Manitoba to discuss its housing of Indigenous Ancestors.

In January 2021, the head of the Department of Anthropology apologized to Elders, Grandmothers, Grandfathers and Knowledge Keepers employed at the University and asked for their assistance in making things right.

A group of 5 Elders, Grandmothers, Grandfathers and Knowledge Keepers formed a Council, and they have met monthly since to guide the Department and the University and advocated for 1) immediate care and Ceremony for the Ancestors, 2) that the Ancestors be reburied as soon as possible, 3) that the University write a policy that addresses Ancestors and Belongings that were taken without consent, and 4) that the story and truth of this repatriation work be told.

Over the course of its history, the University of Manitoba has acquired and accepted stewardship of Indigenous Ancestors and Belongings that were brought to various departments (including but not limited to the former College of Medicine and the Department of Anthropology) by anatomists, archaeologists, researchers, private individuals, and by public organizations (like the RCMP and the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner) without Proper Consent of individuals or their Descendant Indigenous Communities.

Many of these Ancestors came from 'salvage' operations relating to public work projects since the 1960s, and Indigenous Ancestors were held in other faculties, with some Ancestors being transferred to Anthropology after its founding in 1962. In 2022, additional Ancestors were identified at the University.

Additionally, the archives of the University have accepted papers, recordings, photographs and other material pertaining to the research of scholars, and other materials

of significant cultural, historical, and familial importance to Indigenous peoples without their consent.

It was, however, the group of Ancestors long housed in the Anthropology Labs that first brought people into Ceremony to learn how to walk together in a good way toward peace and healing.

Context of Policy and Wise Practices/Procedure

The Policy and Wise Practices/Procedure documents the commitment of the University of Manitoba to respectfully engage in and honour the sacred Ceremony of the Rematriation and Repatriation of Indigenous Ancestors and their Belongings obtained by the University without Proper Consent, throughout the University's history.

The Policy and Wise Practices/Procedure are intended to acknowledge this history of the University's acquisition and stewardship of Indigenous Ancestors and Belongings taken and/or held without Proper Consent, to ensure that Respectful Rematriation and Repatriation of Indigenous Ancestors and Belongings are completed, and to prevent against future acquisition, stewardship, or use of Indigenous Ancestors and Belongings at the University without Proper Consent.

The Respectful Rematriation and Repatriation Ceremony Policy concerns all Indigenous Ancestors and their Belongings (including Indigenous human biological materials, and other Indigenous tangible and intangible cultural heritage across the University) that have been acquired and/or stewarded by the University without Proper Consent.

The Respectful Rematriation and Repatriation Ceremony Policy is Indigenous Elder, Grandmother, Grandfather and Knowledge Keeper guided, and was developed by a joint committee of University scholars and representatives of First Nations, Métis and Inuit Nations and organizations.

As the Respectful Rematriation and Repatriation Ceremony moved forward, Elder Norman Meade (2022) emphasized that we should consider the concept of Rematriation, in addition to Repatriation, to emphasize a return to Mother Earth, and the importance of spirituality, and to counter patriarchal and paternalistic colonial legal policies, practices, and thinking.

The work (and policy) was named the Respectful Rematriation and Repatriation Ceremony in 2022.

Respectful Rematriation and Repatriation *is* Ceremony (Elder Wanda Joy Murdock 2021). To be in this Ceremony, Grandfather Wanbdi Wakita (2022) teaches that the University must act in balance with human law, natural law, and spiritual law, and we thus commit here to honour the Respectful Rematriation and Repatriation Ceremony with our hearts, minds, body, and spirits. This includes recognition of unjust and disrespectful past research practices whereby knowledge became property – where intellectual property

rights, ownership, control, stewardship, access, and possession of Indigenous knowledge, objects and persons deriving from research with Descendant Communities rested with the researcher and/or the University (Elder Carl Stone 2021, Elder Maata Evaluardjuk-Palmer 2022, Elder Florence Paynter 2023).

The ownership, stewardship, control, access and possession of the Ancestors and Belongings pertaining to any and all Respectful Rematriations and Repatriations shall remain with the Descendant Indigenous individuals, families, Nations, or Communities (Elder Florence Paynter 2023).

Rematriation and Repatriation Ceremonies for returning Indigenous Ancestors and Belongings to Descendant Communities shall occur according to the ways, practices, legal orders, wishes, and instructions of Descendant Communities on a case-by-case basis through outreach, engagement and Collaboration with Indigenous families, Nations, local governing authorities, or Communities, without cost to them.

The process for the development of this Policy and Wise Practices/Procedure models what reparative policy development at the University level could look like for policies that directly impact First Nations, Métis and Inuit Nations and Communities.

A Working Circle was established to assist in the drafting process and consisted of 38 participants (26 Indigenous and 12 non-Indigenous, including representatives from 8 Indigenous organizations, and the University) who met monthly over the course of 2 years.

The development of this Policy and Wise Practices/Procedure used processes of ongoing engagement and collaborative decision making, rooted in respect, responsibility, equal and ongoing relationship, and valuing different ways of knowing. It respects the ongoing self-determination and sovereignty of First Nations, Métis and Inuit Nations and Communities and acknowledges that they will follow their own human, natural, and sacred laws, ways, practices, and processes regarding this work and the obtaining proper consent.

The Policy is in compliance with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action 43, 44, 67, 69, 70 and *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* Articles 11, 12, 13, 18, 19, 31.

Acknowledgment, Acceptance of Responsibility & Action

The University acknowledges that it has acquired and accepted stewardship of Indigenous Ancestors and Belongings without Proper Consent of individuals or their Descendant Indigenous Communities and apologizes for the disrespect and hurt caused by this assumption of stewardship without Proper Consent that violated Indigenous Peoples' authority and ways of life.

The inappropriate care of Indigenous Ancestors by institutions, such as the University of Manitoba, is physical and spiritual proof of a broader past relationship of exploitation, hurt, and violence (Grandmother Pahan PteSanWin 2022) and did not respect Indigenous principles of ownership, control, access, and possession (OCAP®, OCAS, Qaujimajatuqangit).

The University accepts responsibility for its complicity in violent colonial relations that led to this assumption of stewardship of Indigenous Ancestors and Belongings without Proper Consent that violates and disrespects First Nations, Inuit and Métis Nations– and their descendants – of what is generally referred to as Manitoba and North America.

This accountability and acceptance of responsibility by the University is very important to this Ceremony (Elder Carl Stone 2021).

This Policy and Wise Practices/Procedure documents an important step on the University's path toward the advancement of reconciliation, fostering and upholding of human rights and dignity, and dedication to decolonization.