



University of Alberta Students' Union
**ABORIGINAL RELATIONS
AND RECONCILIATION
COMMITTEE**

Monday, May 28, 2018

4:00pm

SUB 0-55

We would like to respectfully acknowledge that our University and our Students' Union are located on Treaty 6 Territory.

We are grateful to be on Cree, Dene, Sauleaux, Métis, Blackfoot, and Nakota Sioux territory; specifically the ancestral space of the Papaschase Cree. These Nations are our family, friends, faculty, staff, students, and peers. As members of the University of Alberta Students' Union we honour the nation-to-nation treaty relationship. We aspire for our learning, research, teaching, and governance to acknowledge and work towards the decolonization of Indigenous knowledges and traditions.

ATTENDANCE

NAME	PROXY	PRESENT	SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN FEEDBACK (IF ABSENT)
Jonathan Barraclough (Interim Chair)		Y	
Deirdra Cutarm		Y	
Katherine Belcourt		Y	
Akanksha Bhatnagar		Y	
Andre Bourgeois		Y	
Mpoe Mogale		Y	
Ariyanna Callihoo		Y	
Nathan Sunday		Y	

AGENDA (ARRC-2018-01)

2018-01/1 INTRODUCTION

2018-01/1a **Call to Order**

Meeting called to order at 4.12pm by Chair Sunday.

2018-01/1b **Approval of Agenda**

SUNDAY:

I have an amendment to the agenda. In between Approval of Minutes and Chair's Business there should be a section for smudging/prayer ceremony which we had since last year in Ad Hoc. Would anyone like to move to include that item into the amended agenda?

VP BHATNAGAR/ASC PRESIDENT BELCOURT MOVE to include smudging ceremony into the agenda.

7/0/0

CARRIED

BHATNAGAR:

Why don't we put this in the Standing Order so it's always a part of the agenda.

SUNDAY:

Yes, I think it was already added but it must have not been included to this specific agenda but we should.

ASC PRESIDENT BELCOURT/ASC VP CALLIHOO MOVE to approve the amended agenda.

7/0/0

CARRIED

2018-01/1c **Approval of Minutes**

VP BOURGEOIS/CUTARM MOVE to approve the minutes.

7/0/0

CARRIED

2018-01/1d **Chair's Business**

SUNDAY:

I have no business. If you have any events involving Aboriginal students you can bring it here to keep everybody in the loop.

2018-01/1e

Smudging Ceremony

ASC President Belcourt explains the ceremony.

BELCOURT:

What is Smudging?

Smudging is a tradition, common to many First Nations, which involves the burning of one or more medicines gathered from the earth. The four sacred medicines used in First Nations' ceremonies are tobacco, sage, cedar and sweetgrass. The most common medicines used in a smudge are sweetgrass, sage and cedar. Smudging has been passed down from generation to generation. There are many ways and variations on how a smudge is done. Historically, Métis and Inuit people did not smudge; however, today many Métis and Inuit people have incorporated smudging into their lives.

A community Grandmother presented the following as the steps and rationale for this cleansing process we

call smudge to Niji Mahkwa School in Winnipeg:

- We smudge to clear the air around us.
- We smudge to clean our minds so that we will have good thoughts of others.
- We smudge our eyes so that we will only see the good in others.
- We smudge our ears so that we will only listen to positive things about others.
- We smudge our mouths so that we will only speak of well of others.
- We smudge our whole being so we will portray only the good part of our self through our actions. Smudging allows people to stop, slow down, become mindful and centred. This allows people to remember, connect and be grounded in the event, task or purpose at hand. Smudging also allows people to let go of something negative. Letting go of things that inhibit a person from being balanced and focused comes from the feeling of being calm and safe while smudging. The forms of smudging will vary from nation to nation but are considered by all to be a way of cleansing oneself. Smudging is part of "the way things are done" and is part of living a good life.

Smudging is always voluntary. People should never be forced or pressured to smudge. It is completely acceptable for a person to indicate that he/she does not want to smudge and that person may choose to stay in the room and refrain or leave the room during a smudge. Respect for all is the guiding principle in any Aboriginal tradition.

How Do We Smudge?

The act of clearing the air, mind, spirit and emotions may be accomplished in a variety of ways but according to First Nations' practice, a smudge is led by a person who has an understanding of what a smudge is and why it is done. That person may be an Elder or cultural teacher who has been invited into the school; it can be a staff person who is knowledgeable about the tradition of smudging; it can be a parent/guardian; and/or it can be a student. The medicine is placed in a

smudge container. The container may be a shell, a ceramic or stone bowl, a copper, brass or cast iron pan. The medicine is lit with a match. Once the medicine is lit, the smoke may be pushed forward with a feather or a fan. The person who lights the smudge is first. The commonly used medicine in schools is sage. A “smudge ball” is created mainly from the leaf of the plant, which is rolled into a ball for burning. It is important to understand that this particular medicine can create a significant billow of smoke, which emerges from the smudge ball. It is not necessary to create enough smoke to fill the entire space where a group is smudging. Only a small stream of smoke for the person who is smudging is required. Therefore, it is important for the helpers who create the smudge ball to keep it relatively small. When we smudge, we first cleanse our hands with the smoke as if we were washing our hands. We then draw the smoke over our heads, eyes, ears, mouths and our bodies. These actions remind us to think good thoughts, see good actions, hear good sounds, speak good words and show the good of who we are.

2018-01/2 **QUESTION/DISCUSSION PERIOD**

2018-0/2a ARRC Recommendations

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION.

SUNDAY:

If everyone is okay, we can go through these ARRC recommendations one by one and discuss each point to see if we approve. One of the things I wanted to run by everyone, is that when we bring the report to the Students’ Council, instead of one giant list of recommendations, we can break them up into four categories: Education, Operational, Advocacy and Students’ Council. We will now go over the recommendations.

(Note: The recommendations not listed below were unanimously approved and didn’t need further discussion.)

Summary discussion regarding recommendation one (Exec training on Aboriginal Peoples of Canada):

Committee members discussed particularly the wording around “enroll in the Faculty of Native Studies MOOC NS 201”, to clarify it is an option and also to broaden the scope of the recommendation such that the training is not limited to MOOC and can encompass equivalent options. Committee members also agreed to broaden the scope of the trainees as the whole of Students’ Council instead of just the Executive Committee. Chair Sunday categorized this recommendation under Education.

BELCOURT:

One thing to keep in mind when we are going through these recommendations is

to make sure that the wording isn't too aggressive which can make people a little apprehensive.

SUNDAY:

Yes, it's definitely something to think about but we also want to ensure that the wording doesn't sound passive. So we need to be in that fine line.

Summary discussion regarding recommendation three (Child Care services):

SUNDAY:

For those of you who may not be aware, last year ARRC committed consultations with Aboriginal Student groups to get feedback. One big point that was consistently touched upon was access to childcare. I will be sending out a couple more reports regarding this. One Aboriginal Student Success survey in 2011 showed that Aboriginal students more than non-Aboriginal students typically are single parents which can be a big barrier to education, specially with the long wait-list for the child-care on campus.

VP BOURGEOIS:

For this one I would advocate for child care to be placed under the 25\$/ day Alberta Child Care government program.

VP BHATNAGAR:

What if we include child care services and smudging spaces as sub points under a more broader scope of Indigenous oriented spaces?

SUNDAY:

We could amalgamate them but the reason they are each its on point is to stress the importance of each point. But it's up to the Committee, what do you think?

MOGALE:

I think it will have more power to it if its specific, specially since you mention child care was a consistent issue brought up.

BELCOURT:

There is a Student Parent Project Committee which is having their first meeting soon and they will discuss issues on housing as well as on child care. We can perhaps reach out to them and see if we can form some sort of a partnership? Everyone agreed.

Summary discussion regarding recommendation four (Indigenous-based expert):

SUNDAY:

Regarding the hiring of an Indigenous-based expert, this would be under Operational. We need someone in an advisory role to help conduct an internal organizational review of the Students' Union, and to provide recommendations for future reconciliation efforts. As a background, we wanted a higher level staff

member as we didn't want them to be three chains down but perhaps nearer to the level of the General Manager.

Summary discussion regarding recommendation five (Task Force):

BELCOURT:

We should also make the Students' Council more accessible to all students, such as giving the opportunity to speak at Council meetings. This comes from Bill 5 when Indigenous students weren't given the opportunity to speak.

Summary discussion regarding recommendation six (Inclusion of Elder):

SUNDAY:

The Elder will be for the whole of Students' Council and not just ARRC. We haven't chosen an elder yet but we will look into it after we publish this.

Summary discussion regarding recommendation nine (Internal department for SU of Indigenous relations and reconciliation..):

Committee members discussed broadening the Internal department to encompass aspects of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. Members also discussed a position that focuses specifically to provide cultural supports and training to staff and councillors of its organization. Members also discussed the possibility of appointing an external consulting group to evaluate the Operational structure of the SU with goals to effectively integrate this recommendation into SU. Members discussed the two possible options: The SU hiring a higher-level staff member (see recommendation four discussion) VS. having an external consultation group. The Committee agreed on the former to keep it broad.

Summary discussion regarding recommendation ten (Increase external advocacy...):

Committee members discussed the need for specificity as there is a difference between mandatory Native Studies course implemented by Faculty of Native Studies vs the adoption of Indigenous knowledge implemented by individual Faculties. The debate primarily focussed on the issue that the Faculty of Native Studies may not have the resources to implement such a wide program but also keeping in mind that some Faculties, like Engineering, may not readily be able to incorporate Indigenous knowledge into their coursework. The members agreed to keep the recommendation broad.

Summary discussion regarding recommendation twelve (Increase transparency...):

SUNDAY:

This will fall under advocacy because a lot of the actions being taken by the SU to advocate for us are not known to the students at large. So this is aimed at

increasing that awareness.

BELCOURT:

Would that mean the Council publishing some sort of report to increase transparency?

SUNDAY:

In our Standing Orders, ARRC can request reports from the two executive members here on the board on their advocacy.

Summary discussion regarding recommendation thirteen (WOW/Orientation):

VP Bourgeois suggested taking this item home as he is familiar with the details of WOW/Orientation and would come back with a recommendation in the next ARRC meeting.

The fourteenth recommendation that “The Students’ Union should increase awareness of Aboriginal People in order to overcome the stereotypes and misconceptions present...” was removed because it was similar to a previous recommendation.

Summary discussion regarding recommendation fifteen (Target measures of Aboriginal staff hiring):

Committee members discussed some concerns over SU staff resisting the idea of SU Councillor input over SU Operational/hiring practices. Committee members also discussed the issue surrounding Residence Aboriginal Programming Leads being non-Indigenous, and therefore a separate recommendation was created “To advocate to the Students’ Union to hire Indigenous students for the Aboriginal programming (such as residence.)”

Summary discussion regarding recommendation sixteen (Relationship building with surrounding First Nations communities):

Committee members discussed in particular who specifically would be in charge of this relationship building. Committee members discussed possibilities of the VP External of both SU and ASC working together in the matter. Committee members agreed that the primary task was submitting the recommendation to Council and then work with them to see what this relationship building would look like.

Summary discussion regarding recommendation eighteen (SU engaging in education events in Aboriginal communities with a focus on SU education):

Committee members discussed in particular what the partnership between the University and the SU look like to execute this recommendation. Would the

University cover the costs for taking SU to the education fairs in Aboriginal communities or would the SU use their own dime or would it be split, including transport. Committee members also discussed the need to be specific in the case this recommendation shifts from a collaborative effort between SU and the University to the SU alone due to misinterpretation in the future. Committee members also discussed the type of service, an SU booth could offer given that interested applicants might want to know more about the University first rather than the SU services. Committee members also debated on the issue of SU directing its resources to the recruitment of potential students VS providing the best possible service for current students. Committee members decided to revisit this recommendation in the next meeting.

2018-01/3 **COMMITTEE BUSINESS**

BHATNAGAR:

I just wanted to run an idea by everyone here. What if ARRC does a day long retreat, which includes some learning workshops with ARRC members. This could be nearer to when we are done with these recommendations and use the opportunity to look at them one last time together.

BELCOURT:

Yes and we can open it up to other Councillors and Execs.

SUNDAY:

I agree. VP Bhatnagar, can I send you an email and we can expand on this more?

BHATNAGAR:

Yes.

SUNDAY:

I am considering holding an additional meeting for ARRC sometime next week. I will send a doodle poll out and see if we can find a time for us to meet.

2018-01/4 **INFORMATION ITEMS**

2018-01/4a *ARRC-2018-00, Meeting Minutes - May 14, 2018*

See ARRC-2018-01.01.

2018-01/5 **ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 6.03pm by Chair Sunday.

2018-01/5a **Next Meeting:** Monday, June 11, 2018 @ 5:00PM in SUB 0-55.

SUMMARY OF MOTIONS

MOTION	VOTES
VP BHATNAGAR/ASC PRESIDENT BELCOURT MOVE to include smudging ceremony into the agenda.	7/0/0 CARRIED
ASC PRESIDENT BELCOURT/ASC VP CALLIHOO MOVE to approve the amended agenda.	7/0/0 CARRIED
VP BOURGEOIS/CUTARM MOVE to approve the minutes	7/0/0 CARRIED