

January 26, 2026 Ogimaawin Committee-Internal (OC-I)

Meeting Summary

Members in Attendance: Denise Baxter; Dr. Glenda Bonifacio; Dr. Kristin Burnett; Tami Chamberlain; Joe Duncan (Vice-Chair/Acting Chair); Carlotta Ellison; Lisa Harris; Dr. Rhonda Koster; Dr. Sharla Mskokii Peltier; Lisa Primavesi; Elder Grant Robbins; Dr. Chander Shahi; Robin Sutherland; Dr. Aamir Raiyeb; Yolanda Twance; Cynthia Wesley-Esquimaux;

Members Not in Attendance: Dr. Paul Cormier; Fionna Farquhar; Christopher Glover; Dr. Brigitte Leblon; Dr. Juan Sanchez Martinez; Dr. Wayne Melville; Dr. Christopher Mushquash; Stacey Pawluk; Rachelle Pelletier; Dr. Todd Randall; Larissa Speak; Dr. Mirella Stroink; Andrea Tarsitano; Dr. Anita Vaillancourt (Chair)

Administrative Resource in Attendance: Marcie Morrison - Secretary

Invited Guests in Attendance: Rachel Portinga - Sustainability Coordinator (Lakehead University)

Internal Updates

- Update from OC-I Acting Chair (Joseph Duncan)
 - Lakehead University Etuaptmumk Two Eyed Seeing Tour - An overview of the new land-based learning experience, developed and led by Joe Duncan (Indigenous Content Curriculum Specialist, Teaching Commons) and Rachel Portinga (Acting Sustainability Coordinator, Office of Sustainability), was shared. It was reported that to date, more than 70 participants have taken part in the walk, which has received positive feedback for its impactful approach. There are plans to expand the tour and offer it to external organizations, building on the enthusiasm and support expressed by participants. Interested individuals were encouraged to get involved.

- Update from the Vice-Provost, Indigenous Initiatives (Denise Baxter)
 - Upcoming events hosted by Indigenous Initiatives were highlighted. Full details can be found at www.lakeheadu.ca/indigenous/events
 - Indigenous Student Association 36th Annual Powwow
 - Lakehead Orillia/Georgian College Drumming Ceremony
 - Lakehead University Research & Innovation Week
 - Indigenous Graduate Speakers Series

Round Table Discussion

- **Kairos Blanket Exercise Facilitator Training Dates** (Denise Baxter) - The Kairos Blanket Exercise Facilitator Training is a no cost, two-day, hybrid interactive session designed for university faculty and staff. The training is voluntary and part of the Truth and Reconciliation mandate. The group discussed ideal spring dates, suggesting May to mid-June, following exams may be optimal. Recommendations included avoiding June 16-17 and summer

institute weeks, with suggestions for March weekends or early summer. The importance of scheduling back-to-back sessions and providing mental health support during this potentially triggering exercise was emphasized, based on shared experiences of the trainers and facilitators. A Doodle poll will be sent out to finalize dates.

Policy Review Engagement - Contribution to Teaching Award Policy

Aligned with the University's Policy Governance Framework and our commitment to decolonization and reconciliation, the OIEC and OC-I will be invited to review university policies through an Indigenous lens, centering Indigenous knowledge and perspectives. Members are encouraged to reflect on these guiding questions throughout the process:

1. Can you identify any barriers that exist in the current policy for Indigenous students, faculty and/or staff?
2. Does the current policy appropriately support Indigenous students, faculty and/or staff in ways that are aligned with traditional and cultural practices?
3. Does the current policy conflict with Lakehead's commitment to truth and reconciliation in any way?

The *Contribution to Teaching Award* policy was brought forward for review during the meeting.

The Committee agreed to establish a working group to further review and revise the policy, specifically focusing on decolonizing its western-centric and archaic language. The working group will comprise four committee members, including both Indigenous and non-Indigenous representation, to ensure the incorporation of diverse perspectives. A recommended timeline of March 2027 was set to meet award nomination deadlines and ensure Senate approval for implementation.

The *Students at Risk* policy and the *Sexual and Gender-based Violence Response* policy were added to the list of policies that the Committee will be reviewing this term.

It was suggested that the policy review process be reconsidered to incorporate a "report back" step, which would provide an overview and the rationale for the inclusion and/or exclusion of feedback provided by the group.

Indigenous Cultural Ceremonies Policy

It was noted that amendments to the policy are coming forward to accommodate the request for additional smudging areas on campus.

Sharing Circle

Some members shared information about projects, work, accomplishments, concerns, upcoming events, etc., happening within their departments and the University community.

Reports Received

- Report from the Office of Indigenous Initiatives
- Report from the Chair on Truth and Reconciliation
- Report from the OIEC
- SAC-OIEC Joint Subcommittee Report

The next OC-I meeting is scheduled to take place on March 17, 2026, from 9:00am to 11:00am (ET).