

**REPORT TO THE OGIMAAWIN ABORIGINAL GOVERNANCE COUNCIL,
LAKEHEAD UNIVERSITY
FROM
LAKEHEAD UNIVERSITY SENATE**

Reporting on Senate meeting held Friday, February 15, 2013.

Senate conducted routine business including calendar changes, appointment of adjunct professors, and acceptance of reports to Senate. Three discussions that took place at the 10:00 AM meeting may be of interest to Ogimaawin

- **Changes in curriculum for Faculty of Law:**

The Dean of the Law school had proposed changes to the first year law program, moving one of the required classes from Indigenous Learning to the Faculty of Law. The proposed changes also had the effect of scaling back the number of hours spent on Aboriginal content during the first year of the law program. Several Aboriginal professors spoke against the changes. The Dean defended the changes on the basis of a need for “integrity” in the law program curriculum and secondary effects of accreditation. The Dean was reminded that approval of a new law program in Ontario was predicated on the presence of an Aboriginal focus in the program. Reducing the Aboriginal focus of the law program could, in fact, jeopardize accreditation of the program.

When asked, the Dean reminded Senate that Ms. Karen Drake has been hired to teach in the law program. She has expressed interest in teaching the revised course and will do so. She is a Métis scholar and is well-regarded in the community.

Also, when asked, the Dean replied that the law program will have an Advisory Council. He did not directly respond to the question of Aboriginal representation on the Advisory Council,

A friendly amendment to the course description for the revised course was introduced. In addition, Dr. Stevenson had suggested that establishing a work group to approach the Ontario College of Law regarding curriculum content appropriate both for accreditation and to maintain the spirit of the curriculum as “Aboriginal focused.” However, at that point, a member of Senate called the question without further debate so “on the floor” resolution of the multiple issues regarding the change in the law program curriculum was no longer possible.

A vote was taken and the change in the law program curriculum passed, but narrowly. It was necessary to physically count hands in order to determine the outcome of the vote.

Ogimaawin may wish to take a pro-active stance going forward. Specific actions may be discussed at the February 25th Ogimaawin meeting. I would think that a cordial discussion with Dean Stuesser about Aboriginal representation on a law school advisory

council might be in order. A generalized conversation with the Dean about how Ogimaawin can support the mission of the law program, at a minimum, would be in order.

- **Strategic Plan Approval/Endorsement**

Extensive discussion of the relationship between Senate and the Board of Governors took place when a motion reached the floor of the Senate “endorsing” the recently completed draft of the Strategic Plan. Much of that discussion focused on the past relationship of the two bodies as part of a bi-cameral house. In the past, Senate has approved the Strategic Plan drafted by the Board of Governors.

Additional discussion focused on whether the plan, as drafted, constituted a Lakehead University plan or a plan only for the Board of Governors. A brief survey of sites on which the plan has made public situates the plan as a Lakehead University Strategic Plan. A friendly amendment was introduced to change of the wording of the original motion requesting Senate endorsement of the plan. With that, a vote was taken and the amended motion approving the strategic plan by Senate and endorsing its approval by the Board of Governors passed.

- **Need to Revise Schedule of Senate Meetings**

Senate has been asked to change the time of day during which Senate meetings are scheduled in order to accommodate the needs of Senate members, including students, for whom meeting after sundown on a Friday evening is problematic. A member of Senate asked for identification of Senate members involved and which religious practices were involved. President Stevenson declined to disclose that information. He informed the members of Senate that the request to change the timing of Senate meetings was a human rights issue. Whether or not to change the timing of the meetings was not open for debate. The change will be made, as requested. What was open for debate was the revised time of day for scheduled Senate meetings.

Since neither Senate membership nor the schedule of classes for the 2013-2014 academic year is currently known, this discussion and decisions arising from the discussion will be held later, at a time when more specific information about Senate membership and course scheduling is known.

Submitted Tuesday, February 19, 2013

For Ogimaawin Aboriginal Governance Council Monday, February 25, 2013.

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