

Final Draft

Indigenous Knowledge Centre Steering Committee

Terms of Reference April 2010

Recognizing that we are the guardians of the Indigenous knowledge passed down from our ancestors from generation to generation and we reaffirm our responsibility to protect and perpetuate this knowledge for the benefit of our peoples and our future generations.

(“Declaration on Indigenous Peoples’ Rights to Genetic Resources and Indigenous Knowledge,” Sixth Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, 2007)

The IKC Overview

An Indigenous Knowledge Centre (IKC) will be operated at Six Nations Polytechnic, Grand River Territory. The IKC will incorporate the following statement of philosophy (as expressed in the Mohawk Language) in all of its operations, programs, and services:

Yawerenhatyen oh nahio:ten teyottennyonhatye kato:ken ne yonkwanikonhrayen:tas

“It does not matter of what continually changes, our understanding remains certain”

By this statement the IKC recognizes that change is inevitable. We firmly believe that the underlying philosophies, values, beliefs, ethics and traditions that have remained generally strong within the Indigenous communities can be a springboard to a productive future. We also firmly believe that by sharing and nurturing this ancient wisdom, we can build stronger relationships with academic, governmental and professional partners.

The IKC is dedicated to bringing together two streams of consciousness – the ancestral Indigenous knowledge with the best of modern academic knowledge - in order to advance the overall well being of all peoples. To accomplish this, the IKC will have two main goals:

- a) Preservation and Nurturing of Indigenous Knowledge
- b) Nurture and foster research in Indigenous Knowledge in all fields

To assure that these underlying assets continue to inform the decision-making of Indigenous communities we now need to better document and reinforce those traditions, and find new ways to apply the ancestral knowledge.

To assure that these practices have a wider application we now need to collaborate with a wide variety of partners to better address the cultural, social, educational, and ecological issues faced by the coming generations.

ICK Priority Concerns

The IKC will focus its development on the following areas of concern:

- 1) Indigenous Language Retention
- 2) Culture, History and Language Archives
- 3) Research and Collaboration
- 4) Cultural Expression

ICK Governance

The IKC will be governed by an IKC Steering Committee, in conjunction with a Circle of Community Program Advisors and a Circle of Programmatic Specialists.

The Six Nations Indigenous Knowledge Guardians are an essential part of the IKC Steering Committee, providing special service on any cultural and ethical issues that come before the Steering Committee.

Purpose of the IKC Steering Committee

The IKC Steering Committee is comprised of the principle visionaries who conceived of the idea of the IKC and will steer its development in the way they intended. The purpose of the Steering Committee is to provide the overall vision for the IKC. The Steering committee also sets policies; provides guidance, support, advice; and assesses program effectiveness. The Steering Committee also acts as a structure for networking, outreach and consultation to Aboriginal organizations and communities throughout Ontario, as well as other regions of Canada.

Specifically, the responsibilities of the IKC Steering Committee members are as follows:

- a) Attend at least four meetings per year to direct IKC staff and consultants.
- b) Approve all policy statement.
- c) Carry out overall goals and objectives for the IKC.
- d) Approve annual budget and any fundraising plans.
- e) Monitor achievement of goals and objectives.
- f) Ensure that the IKC demonstrates accountability and transparency.
- g) Be a community advocate for the IKC.

Steering Committee Structure

The Steering Committee will be comprised of representatives appointed from Six Nations Polytechnic and University specialists with a majority appointed through Six Nations Polytechnic. Committee members are volunteers and serve without honorarium, but can be remunerated for all appropriate expenses and/or professional services as required.

The Chair of the IKC Steering Committee

Members may take turns in Chairing meetings of the Committee, but will choose a Chair who will act as a representative of the Committee between meetings. The Chair is the voice of the Committee in all public representations of the IKC. The Chair may act as a representative of the IKC in correspondence with other organizations and the media. The Chair will establish an agenda for IKC Steering Committee meetings.

At meetings, the acting Chair is responsible for ensuring all committee members have the opportunity to voice their opinions, and will strive to obtain consensus in decision making.

The Associate Chair of the IKC Steering Committee

The Associate Chair will come from the University specialists. The Associate Chair will provide input from the academic sector and provide service when the Chair is not available.

IKC Steering Committee Membership

The Steering Committee shall be comprised of the following members:

- a) Four Six Nations Community Representatives
- b) Five Guardians (Other Guardians may be added)
- c) Institutional Partners:
 - a. Two McMaster University Representatives
 - b. One University of Waterloo Representative
 - c. Other Institutional partners may be added

Committee Member Term, Vacancies

Members of the Steering Committee are appointed for an initial term of three years. As vacancies arise, new members are appointed by the Committee, who will make suggestions concerning nominations to the Committee. Committee members are encouraged to reach consensus regarding the appointment of new committee members ensuring representation from different areas of expertise of Indigenous Knowledge.

If a member misses more than two consecutive meetings, they will be approached by the Chair (or designate) to clarify the reasons for non-attendance and the member's intentions with respect to future meetings. It will be the responsibility of the Chair to decide whether the member should continue to sit on the Steering Committee.

Circle of Community Program Advisors

The IKC Community Advisory Committee is comprised of up to 20 representatives of various culture, art, language and history interests with the community at Six Nations. They will provide the following:

- A. Attend up to four meeting per year to review the progress of the IKC.
- B. Provide advice and consultation on the specific goals and objectives of the various programmatic elements of the IKC.
- C. Provide community information on specific needs to be addressed.
- D. Provide networking with community agencies.
- E. Be a community advocate for the IKC.

Circle of Programmatic Specialists

There will be a number of Programmatic Specialists who will serve the IKC through a number of focus groups called as needed to provide professional advice on the overall development of the IKC. These groups will be convened by the IKC Director and serve until the task at hand is accomplished. The members will attend meetings, provide written commentary and provide technical advice on the programmatic objectives and help to clarify the work plan for each program. It is envisioned that the following focus groups will be necessary:

- A) Archival Focus Group
- B) Professional Archaeology Services Focus Group
- C) Indigenous Languages Focus Group
- D) Indigenous Studies Focus Group
- E) Resource Centre Focus Group

Decision Making

The quorum at committee meetings is a minimum of 4 (four) voting members in attendance (in person or by teleconference). If seats are vacant at the time of a meeting, then a quorum will be one half of current members. When quorum has been established, it will be assumed to be in place during the meeting, even when members temporarily leave the meeting through the course of the day.

Decision-making will normally be by consensus. A vote will be taken only when additional discussion cannot be postponed and/or time-lines require a decision. When a vote is taken, a simple majority of those in attendance (assuming a quorum) is required to make a decision. As necessary, the committee can also make decisions by e-mail or conference call.

Conflict of Interest Requirement

The IKC will make every effort to ensure that its decisions are fair, objective, and transparent. The IKC will be bound by the code of conduct established for SNP, which are as follows:

The Board expects of itself and its members ethical and businesslike conduct. This commitment includes proper use of authority and appropriate decorum in-group and individual behaviour when acting as Board members.

Board members must bring forward to the Chairperson's attention the interests of the people of the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory without prejudging the value or validity of those interests. This obligation supersedes any conflicting loyalty such as that to advocacy or interest groups and membership on other Boards or Staff. This obligation supersedes the personal interest of any Board member acting as an individual consumer of the organization's services.

Board members must avoid any conflict of interest with respect to their trust obligation to the people of the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory. Upon declaration of conflict of interest, a board member shall remove themselves from Board deliberations.

- a. There must be no self-dealing or any conduct of private business or personal services between any Board member and the organization except as procedurally controlled to assure openness, competitive opportunity and equal access to "inside" information; and,
- b. Board members must not use their positions to obtain employment in the organization for themselves, family members or close associates. More specifically, Board members are required to declare a Conflict of Interest in any matter dealing with an immediate family member. (Immediate family is defined as: spouse, children, parents, mother-in-law, father-in-law and siblings); and,0
- c. Should a Board member be hired as an employee of Six Nations Polytechnic, he/she must resign from a seat with the Board of Directors.

Board members may not attempt to exercise individual authority over the organization except as explicitly set forth in Board Policies.

- a. Board members interaction with the President/CEO or with Staff must recognize the lack of authority in any individual Board member or group of Board members except as noted above; and,
- b. Board members interaction with the public, press or other entities must recognize the same limitations and the similar inability of any Board member or Board members to speak for the Board, unless otherwise delegated by board minutes and policy.
- c. Board members will make no judgments of the President/CEO/Staff performance except as that performance is assessed against explicit Board Policies by the official process, as defined by Board-Staff Relations Policy (official process).

Board members, who are in violation of clause 2A, shall have their conduct reviewed by an Ad Hoc Committee of the Board.

Failure to Comply

Any Board member, staff, advisor or consultant of the IKC who does not comply with the provisions of this policy may be subject to appropriate disciplinary actions.