

Indigenous Reference Group

Approval Authority: Executive Group

Reports To: President, Vice-Chancellor, Dean and CEO

Established: 2004 09 02

Amendments: 2016 10 12, 2021 05 04, 2022 11 17

1.0 Purpose

The Northern Ontario School of Medicine University's (NOSM U) Indigenous¹ Reference Group (IRG) is created to advise the University on policy and strategic development, establishing priorities aimed at supporting Indigenous development within NOSM U, with its partners.

The IRG contributes to the strategic planning process and provides advice and recommendations in strategy implementation, to assure success that provides guidance, direction and advice as it relates to Indigenous issues, concerns and interpretation.

2.0 Scope

The IRG through the Associate Dean Equity and Inclusion reports to the Executive Group and President regarding:

- Current or future Indigenous initiatives.
- Strategies for implementing Indigenous initiatives that address the needs of Northern Ontario Indigenous communities.
- NOSM U activities that may have an impact on First Nations and Métis peoples.
- The NOSM U Strategic Plan

The IRG works closely with the Associate Dean Equity and Inclusion, the Director of Indigenous Affairs, the Chair of the Academic Indigenous Health Education Committee of Senate and other committees, units and programs as required.

3.0 Membership & Terms

3.1 Composition

The IRG shall be composed Indigenous members nominated as follows:

a) External nominated voting members:

¹ Indigenous is a collective name for the Original Peoples of North America and their descendants. The Canadian Constitution, Constitution Act 1982, recognizes three groups of Aboriginal peoples - Indians (First Nation), Métis and Inuit. These are three separate Peoples with unique heritages, languages, cultural practices and spiritual beliefs

- One member from Anishinabek Nation
- One member from Nishnawbe Aski Nation
- One member from Grand Council Treaty 3
- One member from Independent First Nations Alliance
- One member from Métis Nation of Ontario
- One member from Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres
- One member from Ontario Native Women's Association

b) Internal nominated voting members:

- At least three Indigenous NOSM U Learners, two of which must be Medical Students
- One NOSM U Indigenous Alumni appointed by the Director of Indigenous Affairs.

c) Ex-officio (non-voting) members:

- President, Vice-Chancellor, Dean and CEO of NOSM U or designate
- Associate Dean, Equity & Inclusion
- Director, Indigenous Affairs Unit, NOSM U
- Laurentian University Associate Vice President, Academic and Indigenous Programs or delegate
- Lakehead University Vice-Provost, Indigenous Initiatives or delegate

d) Council of Elders and Knowledge Keepers

Acknowledging the importance of the Elder or Knowledge Keeper's role in decision making there shall be one Elder or Knowledge Keeper appointed as a non-voting Member by the Elder and Knowledge Keepers whose wisdom, advice and knowledge shall be integral to the IRG.

e) Other

The IRG may also invite participants who bring knowledge and expertise in relevant areas to the meetings. This invitation may also be extended to NOSM U Senior Leadership, such as Executive Group, Assistant Deans, or others as necessary, to contribute and/or participate or are required for presentation of items.

The appropriate administrative support will be assigned to the group from the Indigenous Affairs Unit.

3.2 Terms and Criteria

Membership shall be for a three-year term and may be renewed as needed. Learners' membership shall be for a one-year renewable term.

In the event a member is absent from three consecutive meetings; the Chair will request clarification of the member's intent to remain on IRG. In the absence of a response, IRG reserves the right to remove the individual from IRG in order to maintain quorum. The Chair will then contact the member's appointing authority and request a new representative be appointed to fill the resulting vacancy.

The Indigenous Reference Group will call upon expertise from various groups in the school and the community at large as required.

*In exceptional circumstances, the IRG may accept to renew a term at the member's request.

3.3 Process and Criteria for Selection:

The representative of the designated Indigenous organizations shall be selected by each organization according to the process most appropriate to their organizational structure.

Criteria for the representatives should include experience, knowledge, interest and a strong commitment to the education, health, and well-being of the people in the Indigenous communities in Northern Ontario. NOSM U welcomes the expertise and lived experience of physicians, allied health professionals and community health representatives.

3.4 Chair and Vice Chair Appointment and Responsibility

The Chair and Vice Chair will alternate between the Director of the Indigenous Affairs Unit or the Associate Dean Equity and Inclusion as needed.

The Chair and Vice Chair will develop a work plan consistent with the terms of reference and input from the President, Vice-Chancellor, Dean and CEO. The Chair is responsible for reviewing the agenda prior to the meeting and facilitating the meetings. The Vice Chair shall assist the Chair with the preparation of the agenda and supporting materials and shall ensure the appropriate disposition of agenda items. The Vice Chair shall carry out the duties of the Chair when the Chair is absent.

The Director Indigenous Affairs Unit is responsible for the orientation and welcome of new members to the group.

4.0 Responsibilities:

The Indigenous Reference Group is tasked with:

- Make recommendations to the Executive Group through the Associate Dean Equity and Inclusion on matters affecting Indigenous learners and the Indigenous communities served by NOSM U.
- Guide and monitor the implementation of the University's strategic plan related to Indigenous affairs and relationships.
- Examining policies and procedures that may affect and/or impact Indigenous learners, staff, faculty, and Elders/Knowledge Keepers noting that admissions falls under the Indigenous Admissions Subcommittee and Academic programs and policies fall under the Academic Health Education Indigenous Committee of Senate (AHEIC) under the authority of the Senate.
- Collaborating with Indigenous Affairs Unit Director on reports such as the Expert Panel Report, Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the Report on Missing Indigenous Women and Girls, and any other future reports or recommendations.
- Bring forward Indigenous communities' interests, opportunities, goals, and concerns and motivate the Indigenous community to participate in NOSM U.
- Promote and encourage access, support, outreach, and success within a welcoming environment for all Indigenous learners.

- Showing leadership in enhancing the visibility of NOSM U within the Indigenous communities of Northern Ontario.
- Bring forward discussions on Indigenous Worldview.

5.0 Reporting

In collaboration with the Director Indigenous Affairs Unit receiving input from the Chair or Vice Chair of the IRG an annual report shall be submitted to the President, Vice-Chancellor, Dean and CEO.

6.0 Meetings and Quorum

The IRG shall meet on a quarterly basis, with additional meetings as required.

Requests for items to be placed on the agenda should be directed to the Chair who will act as the administrative lead and resource.

Meeting packages will be distributed one week prior to the meeting.

Quorum shall be a simple majority of voting members.

Decisions will be made by consensus. If a consensus is not possible, a decision will be made by a majority vote by those present at the meeting.

All members are expected to act professionally during meetings.

6.1 Electronic Voting

At the discretion of the Chair, a committee may be asked to consider a matter outside of a committee meeting and to determine the matter by means of an electronic vote. Such matters would, in the judgment of the Chair, be time sensitive or require little, if any, discussion prior to voting.

7.0 Review

The terms of reference will be reviewed every three years at the end of the academic year for updates or revisions as required.

Review Period: Every 3 years or as required

Next Review: 2025 06 01