



## **Ryerson University Aboriginal Education Council Terms of Reference**

**Revised November 7, 2014**

### ***Background:***

Ryerson University established a University Advisory Council on Aboriginal Issues and Education in 2010, as part of the Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education Training (PSET) Action Plan 2009 – 2012 funded by the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. This Council is now referred to as Ryerson University's Aboriginal Education Council (AEC).

For the purposes of this document, Aboriginal people includes First Nations (status and non-status), Métis and Inuit.

As an Advisory Council, the AEC has input into, and impact on, Aboriginal programming and education at Ryerson. While grounded in existing structures, the Council represents a departure from standard models at Ryerson, so that it can include Aboriginal worldviews and values in its operations. The University recognizes the unique status and concerns of Aboriginal peoples and acknowledges that a unique response is necessary if Aboriginal peoples' post-secondary education, training and employment outcomes are to be improved.

### ***Vision:***

The vision of the Aboriginal Education Council is to ensure that the next seven generations of Aboriginal people including students, faculty and staff have greater opportunities and success in education at Ryerson University.

### ***Purpose and Goal:***

The purpose and overall goal of the Council are to participate in the process of developing a continued relationship of truth and reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people based on knowledge, respect and collaboration.

Objectives:  
The Council will:

- (1) oversee each three-year Action Plan to ensure initiatives are driven by Aboriginal needs and values,
- (2) provide Aboriginal leadership and engagement in decision-making that involves all areas of Aboriginal education throughout Ryerson,
- (3) provide leadership to embed Aboriginal content within the curricula of all Ryerson faculties and schools to enable Ryerson to deliver such content to *all* of its students,
- (4) offer guidance and direction on areas such as student recruitment and retention, and supports for faculty and staff including faculty research,
- (5) coordinate implementation of the Action Plan by enabling the University to take a comprehensive view of Aboriginal education, access, recruitment, services, research, and community partnerships,
- (6) enhance and expand current activities and partnerships within the University and the Toronto Aboriginal community while developing further connections between the two,
- (7) gather and maintain information on its activities to facilitate an effective evaluation on such activities,
- (8) create a model that other universities can adapt in their endeavours to support Aboriginal people within their institutions, and,
- (9) create its own website as a method of conveying information about the Aboriginal Education Council and related topics to the public

***Model:***

The Council is modeled on Ryerson’s existing Program Advisory Councils. Ryerson’s Senate Policy 158 indicates the role of a Program Advisory Council is to provide advice on a range of issues affecting a Ryerson program. Such issues include curriculum, program review, linking with the external community and meeting societal needs. The Council is a University-wide version of a Program Advisory Council and reports to the Provost Academic (rather than to a Faculty Dean).

In addition to submitting minutes of meetings to the Provost Academic, the Chair of the Council will meet with the Provost Academic quarterly (twice per semester) to provide updates and receive feedback.

The Provost Academic will ensure that a report from the Council is made to the Ryerson University Board of Governors at least once a year (typically in the fall). The Provost Academic will also ensure that reports from the Council are made to the Academic Planning Group (APG) as initiatives and issues arise.

***Membership:***

To ensure adequate and robust representation of this diverse community, the Council is made up of but is not limited to:

- (1) Aboriginal faculty, students and staff,
- (2) Representatives from Ryerson's partnerships with First Nations Technical Institute (FNTI),
- (3) Persons at Ryerson with an interest in Aboriginal education (e.g., individuals from admissions, the library and various program areas), depending on the particular needs of the Council from time to time,
- (4) External Aboriginal community representatives such as Elders, Senators, Grandmothers, Grandfathers, Aunties, Uncles, Traditional Teachers, and
- (5) External members of Aboriginal agencies and groups with whom the University works/collaborates with in the area of education.
- (6) Voting members of the Council will be made up of 75% Aboriginal representatives.

***Composition of the Council:***

The Council comprises:

- (1) at least two Aboriginal students (ideally at least one undergraduate and one graduate student) with no maximum number;
- (2) possibly an Aboriginal alumnus/a;
- (3) one FNTI representative;
- (4) at least one and up to three from each of the following:  
Aboriginal faculty and Aboriginal sessional instructors and Aboriginal agencies connected to Ryerson;
- (5) one Elder, Senator, Grandmother, Grandfather, Auntie, Uncle or Traditional Teacher; and
- (6) at least one and up to two persons from across the University with an interest in Aboriginal education.
- (7) at least one representative from Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), one representative from the Office of the Vice-Provost, Students (OVPS) and one representative from University Advancement (UA).

All current members of Council who wish to remain until their terms expire may remain on Council. Additional members are chosen by the Council and approved by the Provost. As seats become vacant, the Council will choose new members and seek the Provost's approval. As new members are needed, Council will do outreach and have an open call to ensure that interested people are aware of the opportunity.

***Running meetings and speaking on behalf of the Council:***

The Council follows the rules of order which Ryerson's Senate follows which is the Bourinot's Rules of Order.

The Council chooses (in consultation with and subject to approval from the Provost) who represents the Council to the University and external community, i.e., who is the "voice/narrator" of the Council. The person in this role is the "Chair."

The Chair supervises the Council Co-ordinator who supports the work of the Chair and the Council.

The Council chooses who facilitates the meetings. This can be done by one person or be a revolving function. The facilitator(s) are supported by the Council Co-ordinator.

***Terms:***

Term limit of Members of the Council is for three consecutive years, with the possibility of one renewal term.

***Meetings:***

The Council meets on a regular basis about once per month during the academic year.

***Attendance and Participation:***

All members of the Council are expected to attend meetings and participate regularly.

If a member does not attend two regularly scheduled meetings in a row without regrets, the Council will designate a Council member to contact the person to determine if the person wants to remain a member of the Council. If the person does not want to remain a member of Council, then Council will seek a new representative to fill this seat.

***Quorum:***

A quorum is 60% of the membership.

***Decision-Making:***

Decisions are made by consensus of those members who are in attendance, meaning that everyone present agrees with the decision or, if not in full agreement, can accept the decision.

***Involvement of the Provost Academic:***

The Council can ask the Provost to meet with the Council.

***Working Groups:***

The Council establishes working groups as needed. The Council can invite non-Council members from both the Ryerson and Aboriginal communities to participate in the working groups.

***Work of the Council:***

The work of the Council includes:

- Implementation of the PSET plan,
- Student recruitment, retention and engagement,
- Embedding Aboriginal knowledges and other content across the University through creating opportunities for educational departments on curriculum development, and
- Staff and faculty recruitment, retention and engagement/support, including research support for faculty.

***Review and Amendment:***

The Council may review and amend these Terms of Reference from time to time by a consensus of existing members. In the event the Council cannot arrive at a consensus, the Council may make amendments on the basis of a two-thirds majority vote of the Council's entire membership.

Date approved:           October 17, 2014

Signature:

Title:                       Chair, Aboriginal Education Council