Task Force on Aboriginal Affairs
Wednesday November 2, 2011
12:00-3:30pm
Room 202 Prescott House

Present: P. Ricketts, Provost and Vice-President (Academic); A. Tenasco, Director, Education, Kitigan Zibi Education Sector; J. Albert, Elder; C. Boucher, Manager, Staff Relations for L. Labine, Assistant Vice-President (Human Resources); S. Brascoupe, Community Member; L. Capperauld, Director, Equity Services; D. Diamond, Student Affairs Technician, Cree School Board for M. Matoush, Counsellor in Academic Training, Cree School Board; B. Gorham, Manager, Public Affairs; K. Graham; Associate Vice-President (academic); J. Kelly, co-Director, CIRCLE; B. Montour, Director of Education, Akwesasne Mohawk Board of Education; J. Osborne, Dean, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences; M. Whiteduck, Aboriginal Cultural Liaison Officer; J. Riggs, Catalyst Research and Communications (Facilitator); J. DeVries, Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic) (recording).

Regrets: S. Blanchard, Associate Vice-President (Students and Enrolment) and University Registrar; I. Hill, Aboriginal Cultural Liaison Officer; E. Kane, Assistant Vice-President (University Services); K. Matheson, Vice-President (Research and International); C. Mearns, Student; R. Nelson, Student; A. Plourde, Dean, Faculty of Public Affairs; D. Serkoak, Instructor, Nunavut Sivuniksavut; H. Tenute, Student.

Welcome and Introductions
P. Ricketts began the meeting at 12:10pm. S. Brascoupe offered an opening prayer. P. Ricketts welcomed the Task Force and introduced J. Riggs as the meeting facilitator. He noted the importance of thinking about the transition from Task Force to a more sustainable structure moving forward that will help Carleton expand and develop its activities to be a better place for Aboriginal students, faculty, and staff. He noted President Runte’s support of this process. A. Tenasco welcomed C. Boucher and D. Diamond to the Task Force and invited members to introduce themselves. J. Riggs provided a brief introduction and thanked the Task Force members for completing the survey that was circulated by email.

Reflecting on the Past
J. Riggs explained the “waterline” chart as the first exercise. She asked the Task Force members to write down highlights and accomplishments above the waterline and things to work on and challenges below the waterline. The timeline for the exercise was June 2009 to November 2011. With reference to the highlights and challenges indicated on the waterline, the need for achievable objectives, a strategic designation, and additional resources were noted. With reference to a comment on educating the institution as a whole, a discussion of the issues at Senate regarding the Aboriginal Vision Statement arose and the difficulty in moving initiatives from the report forward was noted. P. Ricketts noted that, as the Task Force becomes educated on Aboriginal issues as a group, it will need to educate the broader Carleton community and think about its role in helping to increase discussion and respect within the academic community to become a more regular and integral part of the university. J. Kelly commented on the role of the Task Force as a “persuasive instrument” to advance and provide a better education and experience for Aboriginal students.

J. Riggs noted that the Task Force is engaged in organizational change and the “messiness” involved in such change within the larger university. She noted the need to communicate with
leaders and reach out strategically to stakeholders to engage every student and faculty in sharing knowledge held by Aboriginal peoples, in addition to ensuring that Aboriginal students receive a first class education that meets their needs. She further noted that within the organizational life cycle, money is often the impetus for change. With reference to the life cycle chart, she noted that the experience with Senate could have been the creative destruction phase of the cycle.

**The work to be done**

J. Riggs referenced the summary of actions needed provided in the meeting kit. With reference to the various themes, she asked for specific outcomes that Carleton wants to see in each of these areas.

1) *Aboriginal Space*: M. Whiteduck noted that she would like space for the Aboriginal Cultural Liaison Officers to be close to students on a daily basis, so that they can develop kinship with the people using the space. A. Tenasco noted that she envisions a multifunctional space that reflects all Aboriginal peoples. L. Capperauld noted the importance of the inclusion of services such as Visiting Elders, counseling support, and academic resources in a gathering place for people to socialize and pursue knowledge. J. Osborne commented on having safe space for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students to interact. K. Graham noted the importance of spaces for Aboriginal students to engage in a safe environment and the potential for different spaces of engagement to develop, such as in the library, where faculty, staff, and students could engage more broadly on Aboriginal issues and ways of knowing. A comment was made on the need to make the whole university a place for Aboriginal peoples, rather than simply indigenizing specific areas of campus. D. Diamond commented building partnerships with Aboriginal community services in the Ottawa area, such as Wabano. J. Riggs noted that the discussion on Aboriginal Space on campus moved from physical space to greater Aboriginal presence at Carleton.

2) *Enhanced Visibility*: It was noted that visibility refers to interaction and connection rather than visual presence. L. Capperauld noted the need for increased knowledge and understanding on the part of Carleton on all matters related to Aboriginal knowledge, history, and current issues. With reference to new Aboriginal students coming to Carleton, it was noted that they bring their own culture and experience and that faculty members should be encouraged to be more flexible to integrate Aboriginal culture into the classroom. The creation of an Aboriginal Alumni group was suggested. D. Diamond noted the importance of using social media to showcase Aboriginal peoples in school. L. Capperauld noted the need to communicate to everyone on campus that Carleton is on traditional Algonquin territory.

3) *Academic and Research Priorities*: As Chair of the Academic and Research Priorities working group, J. Osborne noted the need for greater engagement on the part of Research to move initiatives forward. K. Graham noted the desire to develop dialogue on the relationship between tradition and scientific ways of knowing to engage people from different intellectual traditions. CIF funding was raised as a possible way to create a research and academic group to structure that discussion. There was discussion on the engagement of Aboriginal Elders and community members with other universities to show parallels between scientific and traditional world views. J. Albert also noted the desire to establish a series of workshops on campus for faculty members interested in Aboriginal styles of learning. A. Tenasco commented on the importance of Carleton reaching out to the communities to determine their needs in terms of research and to have research driven by these community needs. L. Capperauld noted the need for faculty to develop the necessary knowledge and skills to ensure that Aboriginal students have a positive classroom experience. With reference to a roadmap, J. Riggs explained that the short term outcome is knowledge transfer and how to
make people want to engage. In the midterm, she noted that there would be a shift in attitudes, but that a buy-in to start conversations in order to start the knowledge transfer is necessary.

4) **Coordinated Strategy:** The importance of moving from an aspirational document to concrete activities was noted. K. Graham commented that a communique had been drafted for release on behalf of the President and Vice-Presidents. P. Ricketts commented on the cultural shift that will have to occur at Carleton, noting that its current traditions are non-Aboriginal and that to be a progressive, 21st Century university in Canada, it will need to make this shift. J. Riggs commented on the need to showcase the activities that are happening at Carleton.

5) **Investment in People:** J. Albert commented on the need to expand the Visiting Elders and Elders in Residence programs. L. Capperauld noted that workshops should be available to faculty and staff so that they become aware of the Aboriginal Coordinated Strategy and are able to invest in it and become involved. With regards to a comment on inviting Aboriginal children to Carleton Camps to increase their exposure to university at a young age, M. Whiteduck noted that bursaries had been provided through Virtual Ventures. With regards to a comment regarding using Carleton’s location in Ottawa, it was noted that the annual Assembly of First Nations in December would provide an opportunity to invite Aboriginal peoples to Carleton and showcase the activities and initiatives at Carleton and to bridge the university and the community together. J. Kelly suggested hosting brown bag lunch training sessions to increase sensitivity on what Aboriginal students experience in the classroom and how to respond effectively.

6) **Strong Relationships and Partnerships:** Suggestions for increasing relationships and partnerships included increasing the number of events in the community co-hosted by the post-secondary institutions in Ottawa; strengthening institutional relationships with local organizations to support students while they’re at Carleton; and maximizing student engagement and consultation for the Task Force’s continued work. M. Whiteduck noted that the capacity of local Aboriginal community groups is stretched beyond limits and suggested finding ways to support capacity growth. P. Ricketts commented on seeking more partnerships with Algonquin College to help Aboriginal students who go to college transition to university. A. Tenasco noted the need to formalize linkages with Aboriginal Councils at other post-secondary institutions in the region.

**The Boundary Partners**

J. Riggs explained that boundary partners are the people who facilitate the realization of the bigger vision. It was noted that Aboriginal students, non-Aboriginal students, faculty, staff, and community members are boundary partners for the Task Force. It was further noted that all boundary partners have needs and will need to be considered.

**Next Steps**

J. Riggs confirmed that she would prepare an outcomes table and road map, as well as prepare a report outlining options moving forward and circulate in to the Task Force for comments in two weeks. J. Albert noted the need for an Aboriginal Council that is fundamentally representative of Aboriginal communities to advise the President of Carleton on Aboriginal issues, learning, and research in the context of community needs. J. Kelly added that the Aboriginal Council should have a mandate and sphere of influence, authority, and decision making power. Based on the discussion from the meeting, J. Riggs asked each Task Force member to express what they each believe to be the most important things for the Task Force moving forward. It was noted that a “brag book” should be created to highlight the various
initiatives that Carleton is undertaking for Aboriginal students on- and off-campus and in research.

A. Tenasco thanked J. Riggs and the Task Force. J. Albert gave a closing prayer. The meeting ended at 3:40pm.