Proposal

From the Addressing Reconciliation Committee, School of Social Work

Chair: Dr. Patricia McGuire

Members: Brenda Morris, Susan Braedley, Beth Martin, Sarah Todd, Nimo Bokore, Deborah Young, Melissa Redmond, Roy Hanes

To

Hugh Shewell, Chair, School of Social Work and Dean Andre Plourde, Faculty of Public Affairs

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**Background:**

This committee was formed by the School of Social Work in August, 2018 to plan, organize, lead and evaluate initiatives that will address relevant Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, with attention to those pertaining to social work and to post- secondary education.

These Calls to Action include:

1. Call to Action 1, iii and iv, that require social workers to be trained in the history of residential schools and in the potential of Aboriginal communities to provide appropriate solutions to family healing.
2. Call to Action 52 to provide education to public servants on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.
3. Call to Action 62, ii, to ensure funding that can support post-secondary teachers to integrate indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms
4. Call to Action 63 ii, to share information and best practices on teaching curriculum related to residential schools and Aboriginal history; I ii. Building student capacity for intercultural

understanding, empathy, and mutual respect; and iv. Identifying teacher-training needs relating to the above.

1. Calls to Action throughout the report that aim to advance educational attainment for indigenous peoples in Canada, including Call to Action 7,10i and 11.

This Committee is aware of the work of the Carleton University Indigenous Strategic Initiatives Committee (CUISIC), and our Chair is a member of that committee. We look forward to working with the recommendations emanating from this group and will take advantage of resources for reconciliation offered across the university community. We do not want to duplicate efforts unnecessarily. However, we are also not willing to wait to see what will emerge from these efforts. The time is now.

The Committee would like to acknowledge that the faculty of the School of Social Work has been engaged in a dialogue that has resulted in moves to integrate Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing into both teaching and research. These shifts predate the formation of this committee. We have a base from which to do our work. We are also cognizant of reconciliation efforts at other Schools of Social Work, and other universities across Canada and are learning from them.

**Philosophy:**

Our approach to our work is rooted in our combined critical knowledge bases. We proceed with a shared understanding that reconciliation requires change at the structural and systemic level, including addressing white privilege, racial discrimination, overt and covert racism and white fragility. We take into consideration that First Nations, Métis, and Inuit in Canada share challenges that affect colonized Indigenous peoples from around the world, including those who have settled in Canada. We thus complicate simple dichotomies of “settler” and “Indigenous” in our reconciliation approach.

**Priorities:**

The Committee has established key priorities for its work.

1. To engage students, faculty, contract instructors, administrators and community partners to develop a common understanding of the need to address reconciliation with Indigenous peoples at the School of Social Work, and to work toward involving as many of these groups as possible in doing the work of reconciliation;
2. To support the integration of Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing into the curriculum of the School’s programs. This means that course content, pedagogies, methods for instruction and methods for assessment will shift, over time;
3. Decolonize existing curricula by ensuring that educational materials are presented critically and with their histories and context, that pedagogies are carefully selected and implemented with consideration for cultural relevance and political implications, and both methods for instruction and methods for assessment are selected with reference to understandings of excellence that assess academic learning and professional qualifications in ways that include Indigenous ways of knowing, learning, and practice, in a Good way.
4. Shape an environment within the School’s learning spaces that is truly welcoming and affirming to all students. This will be achieved through meaningful incorporation of representations that honour and acknowledge the land and the peoples of this territory. It includes ensuring that our School environment reflects the peoples living in Canada and their histories, cultures and traditions in affirming ways.
5. Building on university level policies, we will develop protocols that guide the School’s relationships and activities with Indigenous peoples, Indigenous knowledges and Indigenous ways of knowing to ensure respect and dignity and to guard against appropriation and/or other harms;
6. Contribute to knowledge that can support post-secondary reconciliation efforts at the departmental, faculty and university-wide level.

**Activities:**

The Committee has mapped out a plan of work to advance these priorities, including

1. Work on explicit governance for our committee, membership and its accountability structure to the School and to the broader communities with whom we work.
2. Hosting two feasts – Fall and Spring - with Elders who will bless and teach about the importance of food and its connection to community. The two feasts will bring together faculty, staff, and students in the opening and closing of each school year. It will be a time for reflection and celebration as we walk this path together.
3. Organize six Indigenous speaker series, including Indigenous knowledge keepers. These sessions will include a variety of activities, such as a community bead-in to educate attendees about intergenerational trauma, land-based activities that teach the worldview and perspectives of Indigenous peoples, and reconciliation sharing circles to share ideas, best practices, and models.
4. Develop and host a series of internal and external engagement sessions with social work students (undergraduate and graduate), faculty, contract instructors, and administrators, as well as as field instructors, community organizations/agencies, accreditors and members of the community to seek their views on reconciliation and how we can implement relevant Calls to Action within the School of Social Work and to allow us to develop a model for addressing reconciliation at the department level.
5. Integrating input from stakeholder consultations, develop a work plan with specific goals, deliverables, evaluative measures and metrics for all stakeholder groups (as above), in order to demonstrate progress toward achieving key priorities and to suggest where adjustments may be needed along the way. Progress on the work plan will be tracked and documented by the lead faculty, and reviewed at all committee meetings as the primary means of accountability to the School and any potential funders of Committee activities.

**Resources Needed:**

In building this plan of work, the Committee has determined the need for a co-chair model, similar to The Two Row Wampum, with one Indigenous faculty and one settler faculty collaborative leadership.

In order to take on this extensive work in a small School, **we are requesting a .5 course release each for two co-Chairs who will assume responsibility** for submitting budgetary requirements for committee activities, coordinating regular committee meetings of the committee, prepare written updates and other reports that may be required from time to time, and work with committee members to coordinate and participate in engagement sessions and Indigenous speaker series.