Indigenous Education Council

June 10, 2026, | 9:30 – 11:30am
Guild Room – Welcome Centre

MINUTES

Members: Luane Roberts (co-chair), Nicole Robinson, Roxane Shawana, Rajveer Singh, Zandra Bear-Lowen, Raven Morand, Jacob Hill, Trish Weigel Green, Norma McDonald Ewing

Invited Guests: Adam Miller, Crystal Bennett, Dwayne Taylor

Regrets: Trish Weigel Green, Adam Miller, Dwayne Taylor

Minutes: Stephanie Care

1. **Welcome and Opening Prayer – Jacob Hill**
   - Luane Roberts called the meeting to order.
   - Jacob Hill welcomed members and facilitated an opening smudging ceremony, followed by an opening song.

2. **Additions to the Agenda – Luane Roberts**
   - Luane invited additions to the agenda.
   - Zandra Bear-Lowen requested the addition of a resolution regarding the preservation of full-time Indigenous faculty and support staff positions at the College.

3. **Approval of Minutes – Luane Roberts**
   - The minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed and approved by consensus, with no objections raised.

4. **IEC Terms of Reference Update – TOR Subcommittee**
   - An update on the status of the IEC Terms of Reference (TOR) was provided by the TOR Subcommittee, which currently consists of Luane Roberts, Raven Morand, and Roxane Shawana. The group has not met in several months, since the departure of Conestoga's Director, Indigenous Services, who also previously sat on the subcommittee.
   - Raven shared that just one additional round of revisions is likely required before the TOR can be brought forward for Council approval. Revisions will need to reflect recent structural changes within the College, including the removal of some positions referenced in earlier drafts.
   - It was agreed that the subcommittee should reconvene for one or two meetings to complete the remaining work and prepare a final version for consideration at the next quarterly IEC meeting.

- Luane invited additional participation on the subcommittee from Council members. Jacob volunteered to join the group.
- Norma McDonald Ewing asked whether Trish Weigel Green should be involved in the subcommittee's work. Luane noted that Trish has not historically been a member, and Raven added that the remaining revisions are limited in scope and time sensitive. Norma confirmed that administrative support can be provided if needed.
- **DECISION:** Jacob will join the TOR Subcommittee.
- **ACTION: Raven** will coordinate the reconvening of the TOR Subcommittee for final revisions to the TOR.

5. College Structure and Staffing Updates – Norma McDonald Ewing / ALL

Institutional Context and Governance

- Norma provided an update on recent institutional restructuring, including the appointment of a Provincial Administrator and the process underway to re-establish a Board of Governors.
- Members sought clarification on the Board appointment process, including application procedures and how Indigenous representation may be supported on the future Board.
- Norma confirmed that Board recruitment information is posted publicly on the College's website, and committed to sharing further details – including the application deadline once finalized – with IEC members to support broader Indigenous community awareness.
- **ACTION: Norma** will provide further information on the Board of Governors application process and deadline for applying to IEC members, as soon as this information is available.

Recent Structural and Staffing Changes

- Norma shared an overview of current organizational conditions, including enrolment trends and projections, financial pressures, and ongoing workforce adjustments within the College.
- Members expressed significant concern regarding the recent elimination of Indigenous leadership positions and the impact of changes to remaining Indigenous-focused roles, noting potential impacts on Indigenous student supports, community engagement, and the College's ability to advance its commitments to Indigenous education.
- Concerns were also raised regarding changes to the Indigenous Services Coordinator and Indigenous Student Wellness Advisor roles following the recent elimination of the Manager of Indigenous Services position, particularly in relation to workload, clarity of responsibilities, and alignment with formal job descriptions. Norma acknowledged the importance of ensuring responsibilities remain aligned with established job descriptions.
- In response to questions about hiring plans, Norma confirmed the College is currently operating under a hiring freeze as part of broader financial and workforce planning. She shared that shorter-term contract arrangements are being considered in some areas where operational needs continue despite ongoing financial uncertainty.
- Members raised concerns about communication and transparency related to recent staffing and organizational changes, noting that the IEC had not been informed of several changes in advance of or following implementation. They emphasized the importance of maintaining

sufficient Indigenous staffing capacity and ensuring that Indigenous student support functions remain adequately resourced and aligned with student and community needs.

- Norma thanked members for their candid feedback and acknowledged the need for greater transparency regarding staffing changes and decision-making behind them. She committed to collecting additional information and reporting back to the IEC.
- **ACTION: Norma** will gather the following information for reporting back to the IEC:
  - Recent staffing and organizational changes affecting Indigenous-focused roles, including rationale for the decisions made, where appropriate.
  - An updated inventory of Indigenous-focused positions (historical and current), including vacancies and classifications across administrative, support staff and faculty employee groups.
  - Contract-based staffing arrangements currently under consideration for Indigenous education and support functions.
- **ACTION: Norma** will follow up with College leadership, including Trish Weigel Green, regarding the Indigenous Services Coordinator and Indigenous Student Wellness Advisor roles, including job description alignment and labour-relations considerations, and report back to the IEC.

Indigenous Education Council Mandate and Terms of Reference

- Discussion turned to the role and mandate of the IEC, including the extent of its advisory function and level of responsibility in holding the college accountable for Indigenous education. They emphasized the need for greater clarity regarding the Council's role in relation to Ministry expectations and institutional decision-making processes.
- It was agreed that the Terms of Reference, once finalized, will help clarify the IEC's mandate moving forward. Norma acknowledged the importance of strengthening this clarity, and committed to a discussion with Trish about how the Terms of Reference will be implemented once completed.
- **ACTION**: **Norma** will follow up with Trish on how the Terms of Reference will be implemented once finalized by the TOR subcommittee, and will report back on this to this IEC.

Indigenous Student Support Fund (ISSF) Reporting and Compliance

- Concerns were also expressed about the draft ISSF year-end report, which was recently prepared by Trish – with input from various individuals across the College – and circulated to IEC members in advance of the meeting. Members noted that the IEC had not been consulted as a group in the development of the report prior to being asked for endorsement.
- Luane shared that she had been asked to sign the ISSF report on behalf of the IEC, but was reluctant to do so given the Council's limited involvement in the report's development and review. In response to a question from Norma, it was confirmed that Conestoga has received an extension to the original submission deadline of May 31, following a request from Trish to allow time for IEC discussion and review. The revised deadline for submission to the Ministry is June 30.

- Members agreed that the IEC would require an opportunity to collectively review and discuss the draft ISSF report prior to endorsement, and that an additional meeting before June 30 to complete this review would be ideal.
- Questions then emerged about ISSF eligibility requirements, including whether funding is contingent on maintaining specific Indigenous roles, such as Indigenous Counsellor. It was agreed that clarity is needed on whether recent staffing changes may have implications for ISSF funding eligibility or compliance.
- Members also expressed a desire for increased transparency and visibility into the full scope of Indigenous education-related funding received by the College, including how the funding is allocated across roles, programs, and student supports.
- **ACTION: Norma** will seek information on ISSF funding requirements, including any staffing-related eligibility criteria, as well as how Indigenous education funding is allocated across the college, and report back to the IEC.

Resolution: Indigenous Staffing Capacity

- Zandra introduced a statement and accompanying resolution regarding the protection of Indigenous staffing roles within the College. She read both documents aloud for the Council's consideration and agreed to circulate the full text to Council members by email. The resolution addressed concerns about the potential elimination of remaining full-time Indigenous positions at the College, and called for specific protective measures to be implemented by the College and the Provincial Administrator.
- The resolution was moved by Nicole Robinson and seconded by Luane Roberts. It was carried unanimously by voting members, with an amendment to include Indigenous administrative roles in addition to faculty and support staff positions.
- **ACTION: Zandra** will amend the resolution to include Indigenous administrative roles, and circulate the updated version to Council members.

6. Indigenous Peoples Education Circle (IPEC) Update – Raven Morand

- Raven provided an update from the most recent Indigenous Peoples Education Circle (IPEC) meeting, which she attended as Conestoga's representative. The following key items were shared:
  - The Ministry has introduced a revised ISSF funding formula consisting of a 30% base increase, 55% enrolment-based allocation, and 15% for small, northern, and rural institutions. Raven shared that she has been advised by Trish that Conestoga may see an Indigenous funding reduction under this model, but details have not yet been provided.
  - IPEC is compiling ISSF allocations and college contributions to build a sector-wide case regarding insufficiency of current funding to present to the Ministry. Colleges have been asked to provide specific information to IPEC, and Raven is hopeful that Conestoga leadership will be willing to share the requested data.
  - IPEC has asked the Ministry whether all three 'special envelopes' of funding – of which ISSF is one – have been audited, or whether only the Indigenous envelope has undergone review. A response from the Ministry is pending.

    - A new bursary/grant for Indigenous learners in mining-related trades has been introduced by the Ministry. IPEC has been advised that unused funds will be subject to recovery (i.e., colleges must 'use it or lose it').
    - ISSF reporting will shift to an annual cycle, and updated funding calculations will be issued by the Ministry following submission of this year's report. IPEC has requested that the 10% administration fee retained by colleges be removed, and the Ministry has advised it will consider this request.
    - IPEC has requested improved visibility through the College Employer Council or Colleges Ontario platform(s).
- In addition to the above, Raven shared that a presentation delivered by a representative from Academica at the IPEC meeting may be of interest to Conestoga's IEC, and expressed interest in inviting the presenter to a future Council meeting.
- Raven further noted that discussion at the IPEC meeting indicated that several concerns raised by Conestoga's IEC – including reductions in Indigenous positions, lack of transparency in funding allocations, and the loss of senior Indigenous leadership – are shared across Ontario colleges. She requested Council support to share the resolution presented by Zandra at today's IEC meeting with IPEC, given its broader relevance. Members agreed.
- Discussion transitioned to Conestoga's representation on IPEC. Raven confirmed she is willing to continue serving in the role on an interim basis; however, members expressed concerns about the significant time commitment associated with participation and agreed that IPEC representation should ultimately sit with a manager or other more senior leadership role in the longer term.
- A letter of support from the IEC is required for Raven to serve as Conestoga's representative to IPEC. Members agreed that the letter should specify her interim status and stress that the permanent representative should be someone at a managerial level.
- **DECISION:** The IEC supports Raven continuing as interim IPEC representative.
- **ACTION: Raven** will provide Stephanie Care with the materials and information referenced in her update for circulation to IEC members.
- **ACTION: Raven** will send Zandra's IEC-endorsed resolution regarding the protection of full-time Indigenous faculty, support staff, and administrative roles to IPEC.
- **ACTION: Raven** will draft the letter of support for her interim participation on IPEC and bring this forward for approval at the next regularly-scheduled (i.e., quarterly) IEC meeting.

7. ISSF Year-End Reporting (Additional Discussion) – ALL

- Members reiterated concerns regarding a lack of IEC consultation on the draft ISSF year-end report prior to being asked for endorsement. They emphasized that sign-off should be based on collective IEC review and support, rather than being requested solely from the Co-Chair.
- A desire to better understand ISSF reporting and sign-off practices at other Ontario colleges was raised, and Raven noted this as a potential item for discussion at IPEC.
- **ACTION: Raven** will seek information through IPEC regarding ISSF reporting and sign-off practices, and report back on this to the IEC.

- Agreement was reached to schedule an additional IEC meeting before the end of June to review the draft ISSF report and address outstanding agenda items. A three-hour timeframe was requested.
- **ACTION: Norma and Stephanie** will identify and circulate potential dates for an additional IEC meeting prior to June 30. **Stephanie** will finalize booking once confirmed.

8. Unfinished Business / Items Deferred – Luane Roberts

- Due to time constraints, remaining agenda items were deferred and will be included on the agenda of the follow-up IEC meeting scheduled before the end of June.

9. Next Meeting – TBD