CONESTOGA Connect Life and Learning | STUDENT SUCCESS

BE-DAH-BIN GAMIK

Indigenous Education Council

June 23, 2026, | 4:45 – 7:45pm
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:	Crystal Bennett, Hayden Stewart
Regrets:	Trish Weigel Green, Rajveer Singh, Crystal Bennett
Minutes:	Stephanie Care

1. Welcome and Opening Prayer – Jacob Hill

- Luane Roberts called the meeting to order and introduced Hayden Stewart (Associate Vice President, Conestoga Students Inc.), attending on behalf of Rajveer Singh.
- 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. No additional items were proposed.

3. Approval of Minutes – Luane Roberts

- Luane invited members to approve the previous meeting minutes. It was agreed that members would review the minutes and advise the group by email of any questions, concerns, or requested revisions.

4. Indigenous Student Recruitment – Roxane Shawana

- Roxane Shawana provided an overview of Indigenous student recruitment at Conestoga College, including the Indigenous student recruitment cycle, key outreach and engagement activities, the Network, and supports available to Indigenous learners throughout their post-secondary journey.
- Members asked how Indigenous student recruitment territories are determined, noting that the Kitchener-Waterloo region did not appear to be included. Roxane explained that the presentation reflected only her assigned recruitment territory, and that recruitment responsibilities are shared among four Liaison Officers. She shared that territories are assigned based on institutional need.
- A question was raised about recruitment activities at high schools located within Indigenous communities. Roxane confirmed that high schools are included in recruitment efforts and that outreach is targeted to Indigenous student populations.

- Raven Morand emphasized the value of the Northern Youth Abroad program, noting that early engagement is particularly important in supporting Indigenous youth as they consider post-secondary education.
- Members discussed opportunities to strengthen Indigenous recruitment and engagement in the Kitchener-Waterloo region. Nicole Robinson asked whether Roxane could resume responsibility for the region. Roxane explained that the region is too large to be added to her existing territory, but noted that other Liaison Officers regularly consult with her on Indigenous recruitment and that she would be pleased to support local Indigenous councils, community groups, or future outreach initiatives in collaboration with Nicole.

5. ISSF – Draft Year-End Report Review

- Norma McDonald Ewing introduced the draft ISSF year-end report and shared that she had had the opportunity to discuss its development with Trish Weigel Green. She reminded members that the report is a Ministry template covering the period of April 1, 2025 – March 31, 2026, and is compiled using institutional data sources.
- Members then undertook a detailed review of the draft report, providing feedback and requested revisions across tabs.

<u>Tab 1 – Enrolment by Campus</u>

- Norma shared that the data used on this tab was supplied by John Li, Manager, Enterprise Solutions. The report provided by John is based on institutional enrolment datasets that have been refined over time, including with input from the former Director of Indigenous Services. The data is primarily drawn from student self-identification at application or registration, with some OCAS linkage.
- Members queried the source of enrolment data and how self-identification is captured. Norma confirmed that the majority of the data is self-reported.
- ***Agreed Revisions to ISSF Report***
  - No revisions to Tab 1 required.

<u>Tab 2 – Proportion of Total Enrolment</u>

- Norma confirmed that the data on this tab was drawn from the same institutional dataset and report used in Tab 1, and that it applies across all campuses.
- ***Agreed Revisions to ISSF Report***
  - No revisions to Tab 2 required.

<u>Tab 3 – Graduates</u>

- Norma acknowledged a significant increase in the graduate numbers compared to last year's report. She shared that the graduate report provided to Trish by John was newly developed this year, and noted that earlier data may have been drawn from a different self-identification-based source.

- Members agreed that additional demographic breakdowns, including such things as age, gender, and students' place of origin, would be helpful to support both recruitment and retention efforts.
- Norma informed members that she would be meeting with Joerg Dallmeier (Vice President, IT and Systems) in the coming weeks, and could raise graduate reporting and broader data needs in relation to planning for the new ERP system.
- Members discussed whether external support could assist with aggregate Indigenous student data reporting. Raven referenced a recent Academica Group presentation to the Indigenous Peoples Education Circle (IPEC) on national Indigenous student data, and shared that Academica could assist with aggregate Indigenous student data reporting for Conestoga for approximately $5,000. She suggested it may be useful to invite the presenter to a future IEC meeting.
- Norma noted that Connie Phelps (Associate Vice President, Academic Administration) would be able to advise whether Conestoga's existing arrangements or memberships could support access to Academica tools for Indigenous data reporting before additional costs are considered.
- Norma further shared that Colleges Ontario is increasingly centralizing data-related work and suggested this would be an appropriate item to raise at an upcoming Committee of Presidents (COP) meeting.
- **ACTION: Norma and Stephanie** will follow up with Trish and John to review current data-pull parameters for Indigenous student reporting and explore options for including additional demographic information.
- **ACTION: Norma** will raise Indigenous student data and reporting needs with Joerg as part of ongoing ERP planning discussions.
- **ACTION: Norma** will follow up with Connie Phelps to determine whether existing institutional arrangements with Academica might support aggregate Indigenous student reporting for Conestoga.
- **ACTION: Norma** will raise the question of standardization and potential centralization of Indigenous student data reporting across the sector at an upcoming COP meeting.
- ***Agreed Revisions to ISSF Report***
  - No revisions to Tab 3 required.

<u>Tab 4 – Data Collection</u>

- Discussion focused on the distinction between voluntary self-identification and verified/ substantiated Indigenous identity data, and how each is captured by the College and reflected in the ISSF report. Norma confirmed that the enrolment figures reported elsewhere in the template are based on self-identification collected through application and enrolment processes. Verified/substantiated identity is only required where students are accessing Indigenous-specific programs, services, awards, or opportunities.
- Members discussed the current status of the College's Indigenous identity substantiation process. It was noted that the Facilitated Admissions and Awards for Indigenous Students Procedure has been approved, but the substantiation process has not yet been fully implemented.

- Jacob Hill advised that the Substantiation Sub-committee has not yet begun its work. He noted that he is currently the only trained member and raised the question of whether the Sub-committee will require insurance coverage once operational.
- Nicole shared that she had not yet completed the OCAP training required to participate on the Sub-committee, and that she was uncomfortable with the requirement that participants pay the cost upfront and seek reimbursement afterward. Members agreed that a different approach should be explored.
- Raven asked whether support staff are eligible to participate on the Sub-committee, sharing her understanding that membership may be limited to faculty and administrative employees.
- Discussion also took place regarding the development of the Facilitated Admissions and Awards for Indigenous Students Procedure. Members recalled that the former Director of Indigenous Services had consulted with the IEC while drafting earlier versions, and Norma confirmed that the procedure was approved through the Academic Coordinating Committee earlier this year. Members requested that the procedure be brought back to the IEC at a future meeting to review its development, implementation, and any revisions that may be required.
- **ACTION: Norma and Stephanie** will determine whether the Substantiation Sub-committee requires insurance coverage once it becomes operational.
- **ACTION: Norma and Stephanie** will confirm membership requirements for the Sub-committee, including whether support staff are eligible to participate.
- **ACTION: Stephanie** will explore options for allowing external Sub-committee members to have OCAP training costs paid directly by the College rather than through reimbursement.
- **ACTION: Norma and Stephanie** will review the development and approval history of the Facilitated Admissions and Awards for Indigenous Students Procedure and include the Procedure on an upcoming IEC agenda to inform members and provide an opportunity for review, feedback, and consideration of any necessary revisions.
- ***Agreed Revisions to ISSF Report***
  - Update the response on verified/substantiated Indigenous identity data from ‘Yes’ to ‘No’, noting that relevant procedures are in place and implementation is ongoing.
  - Confirm that the College collects voluntary Indigenous self-identification data by updating the response to ‘Yes’.
  - Expand the accompanying comments to note ongoing challenges related to unsubstantiated or potentially inaccurate self-identification, as well as the impact of recent Indigenous staffing reductions on implementation of substantiation processes.

<u>Tab 5 – Indigenous Education Council</u>

- Members noted that the College’s IEC webpage is out of date. Specifically, the membership list and the Terms of Reference require updating.
- **ACTION: Stephanie** will work with the Web Services team to have the IEC website updated. The current draft of the Terms of Reference will be uploaded with a ‘DRAFT’ watermark, and the membership list will include both current members and vacant positions.
- Raven asked whether the IEC would be consulted in development of the College’s Strategic Plan in future. Norma confirmed that the current plan runs to 2028, and that the incoming

President will have the opportunity to lead future consultation processes beginning in 2027. This will include engagement with the IEC.

- The status of the Indigenous Student Success Strategy was also queried. Norma advised that a contract Special Advisor position is being considered to support implementation of the strategy and provide recommendations on long-term structure for Indigenous-focused roles at the College.
- Nicole reiterated the need for greater clarity regarding the IEC's advisory role and its relationship to institutional decision-making. Norma agreed and proposed that this topic be included on the agenda for the fall meeting.
- **ACTION: Stephanie** will ensure discussion of the IEC's advisory role and responsibilities is included on the fall IEC meeting agenda.
- ***Agreed Revisions to ISSF Report***
  - No revisions to Tab 5 required.

Tab 6 – Student Representation

- Members discussed Indigenous student representation on the IEC and noted that formal student participation has been inconsistent. It was noted that student representation was present during the ISSF reporting period and confirmed that there is an Indigenous student currently serving on the CSI Board of Directors.
- Discussion broadened to Indigenous student representation and positions within the College more generally. Members reflected on the former Indigenous Student Relations Coordinator role and the importance of ensuring Indigenous-focused student positions are appropriately supported and integrated.
- **ACTION: Hayden** will provide an update regarding discussions with CSI about Indigenous student representation and the former Indigenous Student Relations Coordinator position at the fall IEC meeting.
- The importance of maintaining momentum on the Indigenous Student Success Strategy and ensuring continuity of Indigenous student supports despite ongoing organizational change was also discussed. Roxane noted that frequent structural changes present an increasing challenge for communicating consistently with prospective Indigenous students about available supports and services. Members agreed that these issues should be examined further at an upcoming IEC meeting.
- **ACTION: Stephanie** will note the above items, including Indigenous-focused student positions, organizational structure, and the Indigenous Student Success Strategy, for future IEC agenda planning.
- ***Agreed Revisions to ISSF Report***
  - No revisions to Tab 6 required.

Tab 7 – Elders and Counsellors

- Members discussed distinctions between Elders supported through honoraria versus other staffing arrangements. Raven confirmed that Elders are compensated on a per diem/honoraria basis rather than through formal contracts.

- Discussion ensued regarding Indigenous wellness and counselling supports, and concerns about proposed changes to the Indigenous Student Wellness Advisor role and responsibilities. The importance of maintaining dedicated Indigenous counselling capacity was emphasized.
- Members asked whether IEC could have input into future ISSF funding allocations and requested further clarity regarding Indigenous funding streams beyond ISSF. An extended meeting time (3 hours) for the fall Council meeting was requested to allow for fuller discussion of funding-related items.
- **ACTION: Norma and Stephanie** will follow up with Trish on the proposed changes to the Indigenous Student Wellness Advisor role, including the extent to which counselling supports should and will be retained in this position.
- **ACTION: Norma and Stephanie** will explore whether other Indigenous funding streams exist beyond ISSF and provide updates to the IEC as part of future funding-related discussions.
- ***Agreed Revisions to ISSF Report***
  - Clarify that Elders are compensated through honoraria/per diem (and parking), rather than contracts.

Tab 8 – Other Positions

- Members requested clarification regarding staffing positions included in the ISSF report – both those funded and not funded through ISSF.
- **ACTION: Norma and Stephanie** will follow up with Finance to clarify the positions included in the ISSF report and ensure this information is included in future updates and discussions with the IEC regarding ISSF funding.
- ***Agreed Revisions to ISSF Report***
  - No revisions to Tab 8 required.

Tab 9 – Indigenous Student Services

- Raven confirmed the accuracy of information included in this section of the draft report, suggesting minor modifications to clarify and better capture progress on some initiatives.
- ***Agreed Revisions to ISSF Report***
  - Revise title ‘Cultural Programming’ to ‘Cultural Programming and Culturally Relevant Support Services’.
  - Note that the provision of dedicated Indigenous seats was not implemented during the reporting period and is currently in process.
  - Add reference to development of the Indigenous Student Success Strategy (currently in draft).

Tab 10 – Accomplishments

- Members confirmed accuracy of the draft content on this tab.
- ***Agreed Revisions to ISSF Report***
  - No revisions to Tab 10 required.

Tab 11 – Financial Report

- Members discussed the financial information presented, and requested greater clarity on funding sources, allocations of ISSF and non-ISSF funds to various roles, and how Indigenous-related positions are reflected in the reporting. Norma confirmed that the figures had been provided by the Finance department, based on audited year-end financial data. A more detailed breakdown of ISSF funding at a future meeting was requested.
- Members agreed that future reports should include a portion of the salary costs associated with the Liaison Officer(s) responsible for Indigenous student recruitment.
- A question was raised about the rationale for the recent elimination of the Manager, Indigenous Services role given unreduced ISSF funding, and Norma indicated she would follow up with Trish for clarification.
- Members emphasized the importance of ensuring future funding is directed toward new and emerging needs, rather than replacing existing allocations.
- **ACTION: Norma and Stephanie** will work with Finance to prepare a detailed ISSF funding breakdown for a future IEC meeting.
- **ACTION: Norma** will follow up with Trish regarding rationale for staffing changes and funding allocation decisions, for discussion at a future meeting.
- **ACTION: Stephanie** will note for future reporting cycles that the Indigenous recruitment component of the Liaison Officer role(s) should be reflected in the ISSF staffing breakdown, as appropriate.
- ***Agreed Revisions to ISSF Report***
  - No revisions to Tab 11 required.

Report Finalization/Next Steps

- Upon completion of the report review, members confirmed their support for the proposed revisions to the ISSF report, subject to the agreed changes being incorporated.
- **ACTION: Stephanie** will incorporate the agreed revisions to the ISSF report, circulate the revised report to members for any final input and approval by email, and obtain Luane's sign-off prior to submission.

6. Other Business

- No other business was raised.

7. Next Meeting – TBD