



SENATE ACADEMIC POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Monday 13 December 2021 3:31-4:59 pm via Zoom

Attendees

Senators

J. Burnham
J. Gilbert
S. Gopalakrishnan
P. Harrison
C. Krebs
K. Lo (Chair)
C.W. Marshall
S. Matsui
J. Schumacher

A. Pratap Singh
R. Spencer (Vice-Chair)

Ex Officio

J. Fox
K. Ross

Regrets

M. Aronson
E. Bhangu

M. Quayle
K. Smith
H. Zerriffi

Guests

J. Kasperski

Senate Staff

C. Eaton
J. Iverson

Call to Order and Territorial Acknowledgement

The meeting of the Senate Academic Policy Committee (the “Committee”) was called to order at 3:31 pm on 13 December 2021 by K. Lo, Chair.

J. Schumacher offered a territorial acknowledgement.

Agenda

The 13 December 2021 agenda was adopted by general consent.

Meeting Minutes

THAT THE Senate Academic Policy Committee approve the 22 November 2021 meeting minutes as presented.

Moved: P. Harrison
Seconded: J. Schumacher
Carried.

Indigenous Strategic Plan | Self-Assessment Tool Survey Results

J. Kasperski (Specialist, Strategic Indigenous Enrolment Initiatives) introduced herself to the Committee, noting in a previous role as an Indigenous Education Advisor at McGill University she had shared UBC’s Indigenous Strategic Plan (ISP) with that institution.

J. Kasperski echoed the territorial acknowledgement provided by J. Schumacher WRT the care, detailed information and instruction put into the ISP. She emphasized there is no rush; it will take time to work through the self-assessment and understand how the ISP can inform the Committee’s work and how the plan can be implemented. She added she is grateful for the Committee’s approach to the ISP, specifically the survey responses. She noted

alignment and varying perspectives and added the responses and summaries are helpful in finding ways forward.

Turning to Q1 (*Our unit is able to formally acknowledge the territories in which UBC's campuses are situated.*), J. Kasperski noted members felt strongly about being competent in this area, and there was good context in the text responses, including clear and thoughtful articulation of territories, adding personal perspectives and contextualization.

Before proceeding further, a round of Committee introductions took place.

Returning to Q1, J. Kasperski asked: what do we know about these territories? C.W. Marshall said he struggles with the redevelopment of UBC lands. He has tried for many years to get rescue archeology underway. He said it seems the university has not committed to these efforts and that the unceded element is not taken seriously.

- J. Kasperski asked: what can we do about this? The example made her recall experiences at other universities and efforts made to educate people about the history of the land. WRT archeology, there are difficult histories, and people may forget how unmarked graves can happen. We may not have the benefit of that background information, but knowing more about the history of lands will help us be more sincere and less performative when we give land acknowledgements.

WRT incorporating personal reflections into land acknowledgements, J. Kasperski asked: what does this mean?

- J. Burnham said she has seen it done well and not so well, and it depends on the intention behind it. It requires preparation to do an authentic reflection. It is a good exercise to do the research.
- J. Kasperski said there are important things to consider when adding personal reflections; her own approach is such that acknowledgements inform her work. She then asked: how do we put action into our acknowledgements? One example is properly pronouncing a nation, which creates awareness and knowledge about the local community. Other examples include buying/ordering from Indigenous vendors and considering how Indigenous voices can be incorporated. Today's acknowledgment provided by J. Schumacher was good, but it is nonetheless important to talk about this point because we are never done learning; without this constant learning, acknowledgements can become performative. J. Kasperski said she has resources she can share with the Committee. **Action item: J. Kasperski to provide resources.**

Turning to Q2 (*Our unit demonstrates a desire to learn about Indigenous cultures and Indigenous ways of knowing and being, including the distinctness of Indigenous Peoples in BC and Canada.*), J. Kasperski said survey responses indicate there is such a desire among the Committee. One area to explore is the Committee's terms of reference. Doing business through the lens of the ISP is

good, but what does it mean in practice when we say we accept and should approach work with an ISP lens? How do we apply that lens?

- C. Krebs said for her it means always asking whether the ISP was considered when drafting or updating a policy. We never want to sit back and consider a policy complete. She pointed to Policy V-135: *Academic Concession*, as one such example, noting it was amended to include Indigenous protocols. She said it is a dynamic process, the work is never really done and we want to keep that door open. Policies should be improved and made more inclusive.
- J. Kasperski echoed the continuous learning aspect. She asked: how often are policies revisited? How often are we asking if a policy works in practice? Are Indigenous students consulted in these conversations? J. Kasperski provided an example of Indigenous students not meeting eligibility requirements for bereavement leave; these interactions have impacts on students and how they identify with their programs and institutions. She had reviewed Policy V-135 and noted there are areas where things can be expanded. She said acknowledging something is a living document is powerful; it demonstrates that the Senate and its committees understand there isn't a one size fits all, thereby allowing room for difference.

Turning to Q3 (*We understand that the university has complex, formalized, and evolving relationships with local Indigenous Nations and we are continuously seeking clarity about these relationships before we take action.*), J. Kasperski noted the responses varied. She invited members to share their thoughts.

- J. Fox said this question relates to an earlier point about applying in practice a lens of decolonization. An important part of developing policy is the consultation process. She asked: how can we rethink our consultation processes? This is an opportunity to reconsider how those communities are engaged.
 - J. Schumacher asked how consultation currently works, to which C. Eaton explained it is ad hoc for each policy depending on subject matter. Sometimes the calls are broad, sometimes more targeted, and other times small groups are specifically contacted, all of which has benefits and detriments. In recent years the Committee has tried to be more specific in its consultation requests.
- P. Harrison said one challenge has been receiving input from Indigenous communities, and the Committee has not tended to seek that input from outside of UBC. But inside UBC, a small number of people receive a large number of requests, so how can the Committee engage otherwise? The recent revisions to Policy V-135 were made with little input from Indigenous stakeholders. He said it would be helpful to understand how to reach other voices/people. The Committee has struggled with engaging outside voices without sidetracking its work and could benefit from guidance on this point.
- K. Lo noted academic policies guide interactions between students and advisors/instructors. Interpersonal interactions are at the core, where

as the physical structure/location is secondary. In that sense, the relationship with Musqueam, etc. land does not tend to come to the forefront of conversations, and therefore it is not systematic to consult with nations because the core of the policy is not specific to the location.

J. Kasperski said this feedback WRT voices/contacts outside the Office of Indigenous Strategic Initiatives relates to responses later in the self-assessment. She said to show people their value and indicate you are specifically seeking their input. One idea is inviting people to a meal to sit down and talk, which demonstrates the value we hold for peoples' perspectives in the process. Sometimes it means coming at things from a different angle. As another example, incentives or communication of payment demonstrates people are knowledge-holders; you are essentially hiring someone to bring their voice into the conversation. The continuous messaging related to the ISP is to slow down, especially when missing a large part of the conversation. She said there is a big difference between engagement and consultation and what those words mean. The latter often has negative connotations, while engagement is more relational, connected and conversational, all of which keeps the door open afterward for continuous engagement.

A. Pratap-Singh said he came to UBC in 2017 and since then has learned about the culture and local perspective. His Faculty is trying to set up a food and beverage centre at UBC and have been engaging with Indigenous elders. It is a sensitive area, and the Faculty has been cautioned as much. He asked where should the engagement take place? At the university level? Faculty level? Instructor level? How does one approach communities and develop a policy around this?

- J. Kasperski said it is important to acknowledge what we are scared of; not knowing how to proceed can quell engagement. If a unit is continually running into these questions, perhaps there is a need to hire a specific person to do that work. If the knowledge is required, we need to find a way to bring it in, and sometimes that means we need someone on the team. J. Kasperski noted this idea also came up in the responses: an Indigenous representative seat on the Committee. She advised being clear and concise, and answering the questions before they are even asked. Let folks know the details around what you are requesting, what part of the process you are in, why you want to engage, why you want to hear their voice, what resources you have available, etc. Put the entire ask upfront. Receiving a request without knowing how input will be valued is why some folks do not engage. She said to show people their time and input are respected.

WRT engaging over a community meal, P. Harrison said pre-COVID, as an Associate Dean, Academic, he took advantage of lunches at the First Nations Longhouse to engage with students across programs to discuss issues he was dealing with in Senate (ex. the Academic Concession policy). He said those are valuable places and suggested it might be something the Committee or

Enrolment Services could collaborate with as a way to capture the essence of the kind of engagement J. Kasperski recommends.

- J. Kasperski said the lunches are back on and suggested connecting with a Student Engagement Coordinator. The most important messaging is highlighting the importance of their voices. She advised holding space and honouring the generosity of people sharing their experiences. There are both presentation and social aspects to the lunches. She said it is showing up on Indigenous students' turf. The Longhouse is a safe space for those students; they trust the staff and the visitors who are presenting. J. Kasperski noted you do not need a specific policy to discuss; it could be a way to gather voices. These discussions tend to highlight areas of need.

J. Kasperski asked: why are we doing this ISP work? Why does it make sense in this context to be engaging with the ISP? There are some questions in the self-assessment that speak to professional development and opportunities for building knowledge and awareness; education is an impactful arena for this work. The history of the relationship between education and Indigenous communities is not healed; we are not there yet and the work is continuous. It took a long time to make the relationship what it is, and it will take a long time to undo it. J. Kasperski added this is not purely historical: the last residential school closed in the late-1990s. The reason we are doing this work is it is applicable to everyone. Nobody can say they learned this history growing up because Indigenous peoples are absent from that telling of the story. In trying to guide and help people with the self-assessment, not all questions will apply, but the first four questions are meant for everyone. She suggested revisiting the questions and considering how many are about knowledge- and internal-capacity-building. Learning informs the way we do our work, and there is the opportunity to educate each other.

J. Kasperski welcomed comments from the Committee WRT internal-capacity-building.

- K. Lo suggested it would be helpful if this work was done at the Senate level as opposed to the Committee level to avoid redundancies.
- K. Ross said J. Kasperski has given the Committee a lot to think about, and now they need time to digest. There are both commonalities and specifics across Senate. Having foundational knowledge will help.
- J. Kasperski said the point of these discussions is to create a vision for the unit where things can be improved, where there are gaps and where conversations need to happen at higher levels. Leadership examples are important. She said change is most effective when you have leadership support, but start with gaining that support, do not try to coerce it. If there are things folks wish they said today there is still time. The conversation continues, and today was a successful first step. She thanked the Committee for sharing.

K. Lo said the discussion will continue at a later date. He noted there were two late responses to the survey not included in the meeting materials.

Policy V-1 The Committee did not have time to discuss this item.

Next Meeting The next meeting of the Committee will be held on 31 January 2022 3:30-5 pm.

Adjournment ***THAT THE Senate Academic Policy Committee meeting be adjourned.***

Moved: R. Spencer
Seconded: J. Schumacher
Carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:59 pm.