To: Queen’s University Senate
From: Teri Shearer, Deputy Provost (Academic Operations and Inclusion)
Date: January 16, 2018
Subject: Truth and Reconciliation Commission Task Force Progress Update

I’m pleased to provide Senators with examples of new activities underway, and updates to previously announced initiatives, which support the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Task Force recommendations.

New Director for Four Directions

The Four Directions Aboriginal Student Centre will welcome a new Director on Feb 5, 2018.

Kandice Baptiste, who is originally from Tyendinaga, is looking forward to “returning home” after years in the post-secondary education sector in the Toronto and Kitchener-Waterloo regions. Ms. Baptiste succeeds Kanonhsyonne Janice Hill, the university’s inaugural Director of Indigenous Initiatives. Ms. Baptiste most recently worked as Manager, Indigenous Initiatives at Wilfrid Laurier University, where her responsibilities included managing the Indigenous Student Centre and its staff at the Brantford campus. She was previously senior project coordinator at the Council of Ontario Universities in Toronto where she guided the development of the “Future Further” campaign.

Ms. Baptiste completed a Bachelor of Arts degree at Wilfrid Laurier, during which time she founded the Indigenous Students’ Association, played varsity basketball, served as the university’s first Indigenous Student Intern, and was the driving student force as Laurier developed and launched its Office of Indigenous Initiatives. Ms. Baptiste began her professional career at Laurier as the institution’s first Indigenous student recruiter and retention officer.
Pre-Doctoral Fellowships for Indigenous Students

In 2018-19, the Faculty of Arts and Science will offer four Pre-Doctoral Fellowships. Applications will be invited from Indigenous doctoral students enrolled in a PhD program and working on doctoral research in the creative arts, humanities, social sciences, or natural and physical sciences at an accredited university other than Queen’s.

The intention in undertaking this pilot project is to support new-generation Indigenous scholars at a formative moment in the completion of their PhDs. The fellowships will provide mentorship and access to Queen’s resources; bring new scholars and Indigenous ways of knowing into undergraduate classrooms; and foster conversations at Queen’s that advance the university’s aspirations for and commitment to Indigenization, diversity, and inclusion. The pilot project is the first of what is envisioned as a program of Pre-Doctoral Fellowships in support of scholars in equity-seeking groups.

Indigenous Initiatives Implementation Roundtable

An Indigenous Initiatives Implementation Roundtable is being established to provide high-level guidance and oversight to the work of implementing the recommendations from the TRC Task Force. The roundtable will be an important resource for the Deputy Provost (Academic Operations and Inclusion) in coordinating Queen’s ongoing efforts to address the TRC’s calls to action, and encourage collaboration across Faculties, Schools, and shared service units.

The Terms of Reference and membership for the group are expected to be finalized in the coming weeks.

Faculty of Education, Elder in Residence

The Faculty of Education recently welcomed Bezhig Waabshke Ma’iingan Gewetiigaabo (Deborah St Amant) as Elder-in-Residence.

In this role, Ms. St Amant (Ed’82) will support Indigenous students in Queen’s Aboriginal Education programs. Students will benefit from Ms. St Amant’s culture-based counselling, as well as guidance and support in reaching their academic goals. Ms. St Amant previously worked as a teacher for three decades and is active in the education community and Kingston area community.
Indigenous Language Certificates

As previously announced, two Indigenous language certificate programs are in development: a Certificate in Indigenous Languages and Cultures and a Certificate in Mohawk Language and Culture, offered in partnership with Tsi Tyónnheht Onkwawén:na Language and Cultural Centre in Tyendinaga.

The Certificate in Indigenous Languages and Cultures has been approved by the Senate Committee on Academic Development and will come forward to Senate in January, while the Mohawk Language & Culture Certificate will go to the Curriculum Committee this term.

The development of these certificates is especially significant given the recommendation in the national Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report that post-secondary institutions create university and college programs in Aboriginal languages and highlights the importance of Indigenous languages revitalization as part of the reconciliation process.

Intercultural Competency Training

The number of students who have participated in intercultural awareness training on campus so far this year is almost double the 2016-17 total. About 1,520 students, most in student leadership positions, have attended tailored sessions offered by the Queen’s University International Centre (QUIC).

This number includes 152 students who have completed the newly expanded five-session Intercultural Awareness Certificate program delivered by staff at QUIC and the Four Directions Aboriginal Student Centre. The certificate covers topics including concepts of intercultural learning, the cultural self, dimensions of culture, the Intercultural Development Continuum, and Indigenous histories through the KAIROS Blanket Exercise and Cultural Safety training, which explores the diversity of Indigenous communities and people, self-identification, terminology, stereotypes, and the creation of empathic relationships. The certificate has received high satisfaction scores among participants: 4.2 to 4.7 out of 5, and the open sessions were all fully subscribed.

Community Service Learning Initiative Collaborates with Local Indigenous Organization

Queen’s Cares Alternative Reading Week program continues to expand. This community service learning initiative, run by the Student Experience Office in Student Affairs, offers students the opportunity to work in teams to complete a project in partnership with a local community organization. This year, the community partners include Focus Forward for
Indigenous Youth.

Through the four-day program students engage in experiential learning, make meaningful contributions, build relationships, engage in a process of action and reflection, and explore their identity and perspectives as they relate to the Kingston community.

Ad Hoc Research Collaboration with Indigenous Communities Working Group

The Ad Hoc Research Collaboration with Indigenous Communities Working Group is planning a follow up event to the hugely successful research collaboration workshop held in October that attracted more than 80 student, community, and faculty participants.

The aim of the working group is to provide guidance in the development of research collaborations between the School of Graduate Studies and Indigenous communities engaged in the Aboriginal Council of Queen’s University. The immediate objective of the initiative is to prepare a research outreach plan for consideration of ACQU, however, the results of this initiative may have applications of interest more broadly in the Queen’s research community.

Expansion of Advancement Strategies for Indigenous Initiatives

The Office of Advancement is working closely with the Director of Indigenous Initiatives and the Deputy Provost (Academic Operations and Inclusion) to identify priority areas in need of philanthropic support. The expansion of advancement strategies to increase philanthropic funding for Indigenous initiatives was a key recommendation from the TRC Task Force.

In fall 2017, the Deputy Provost (Academic Operations and Inclusion) requested that the Faculties, Schools, and the Division of Student Affairs identify initiatives related to the TRC recommendations where philanthropic support would be required. A preliminary planning meeting was held in December with representatives from the advancement team, senior administrators, Indigenous students, and Indigenous community members to provide input.

Agnes Etherington Art Centre Indigenous Programming

In winter 2018, the Agnes Etherington Art Centre will host the acclaimed exhibition *Shame and Prejudice: A Story of Resilience* by Kent Monkman, a contemporary artist of Cree descent. To date, thirteen Queen's courses are taking advantage of the powerful exhibition, incorporating guided tours and/or assignments based on the exhibition.
Along with the exhibit, the Agnes is offering a range of outreach programs, including a curatorial tour and talk with Kent Monkman and a roundtable discussion involving artists, curators, critics and administrators, entitled “Can Artists Really Save the World?: Exhibitions, Exchanges and Other Moments in Trojan-horse Diplomacy.” The roundtable, which is organized by the North American Cultural Diplomacy Initiative, the Agnes Etherington Art Centre and the Cultural Studies Program, will explore Canada’s use of art and culture in diplomacy and international relations.

The Agnes has also partnered with Four Directions Aboriginal Student Centre to offer the Storying Resilience with the Aboriginal Youth Leadership Program which provides arts experiences and skills building for regional Indigenous youth. The program consists of a series of after-school, hands-on sessions for Indigenous youth to tell their stories, and explore many facets of artmaking. Further information about upcoming events can be found on the AEAC website.

In addition, the Agnes has created a new expendable fund to support senior undergraduate research in Indigenous art, the Research Studentship in Indigenous Art.