



INDIGENOUS ELDER AND COMMUNITY PROTOCOLS

Guidelines for Acknowledging Territory
Protocols for Working with Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and Community Members

Indigenous Directions Leadership Group
Concordia University

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INTRODUCTION

Collaborating with Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and community members helps to build and support lasting relationships with local Indigenous peoples and communities. It also brings Indigenous ways of knowing and cultural teachings into the university through oral tradition and personal interaction. After centuries of colonial practices of dispossession, assimilation, and oppression of Indigenous peoples and their ways of life, it is essential to help create a space for Indigenous knowledge and presence at Concordia. Indigenous engagement facilitates memorable learning experiences for Concordia students, faculty, and staff that go beyond typical Western educational models based on written forms of knowledge transmission.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to assist Concordia University faculty, staff, and students through the process of respectfully and ethically inviting, interacting, and/or collaborating with Indigenous peoples and communities. These guidelines and protocols may also aid in the development of policies and procedures concerning teaching, research, employment, and strategies for Indigenous community outreach and engagement.

GOAL

The goal of this document is to foster meaningful long-term relationships and collaborations between Concordia University and First Peoples based on mutual respect. These guidelines are designed to create awareness and promote accountability for ideas, words, and actions that may directly or indirectly do harm to Indigenous peoples whom we wish to invite, honour, and collaborate with.

SCOPE

These protocols and guidelines are to be followed by Concordia University faculty, staff, and students who wish to engage with Indigenous peoples and communities on campus or in the Tiohtià:ke (Montréal) area and beyond. It is not possible to cover all Indigenous knowledges, cultures, or perspectives in a single document or set of protocols. This document is not comprehensive in its representation of Indigenous cultures and communities nor the roles of Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and community members. Members of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities have collaborated to co-compose these protocols. Collectively, Indigenous peoples are considered the primary cultural resources and experts on these matters and as such their needs, opinions, and views take precedence over the content of this document.

LAND AND TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT PROTOCOLS

The content in the following section was adapted from the Territorial Acknowledgement resource document available on the [Indigenous hub](#).

We begin this document with guidelines that acknowledge territory as location is the most significant determining factor in the traditional and territorial protocols to follow to respect the local Indigenous peoples. The island of Montréal is known in local Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk) oral tradition as "Tiohtià:ke," which loosely translates as "where the group divided/parted ways." (Please visit the [hub](#) for Kanien'kéha pronunciation of Tiohtià:ke.)

Indigenous peoples and communities have diverse ways of knowing and cultural protocols that guide how they acknowledge each other based on relationships with a specific community, Nation, or territory to recognize people that have ancestral roots and connections to a particular place (land and waters). A welcoming or opening may happen in a variety of ways but in this territory, the Kanien'kehá:ka (people of the flint) welcoming or opening is the Ohèn:ton Karihwatéhkwen (words that stand before all else).

A territorial acknowledgement is a way for people who are not Indigenous to the area (a specific Indigenous territory or homeland) to situate themselves and show respect to local Indigenous peoples. When deciding how to proceed at a gathering, ask the Elder or community member that has agreed to open or speak what they prefer. If the event includes Indigenous peoples from many territories, the representative from the *local Indigenous territory* has precedence. The full guidelines and **Concordia's official territorial acknowledgement**, history, rationale, and FAQ are included in Appendix A (page 12).

LOCAL INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

The rationale and FAQ in Appendix A (page 12) provide the history and some information on Kanien'kehá:ka roles in this territory. The Indigenous territory that you are in dictates the protocol to follow. Note that there are two Kanien'kehá:ka communities in close proximity to Tiohtià:ke: Kahnawà:ke and Kanehsatà:ke. This section outlines a few additional Kanien'kehá:ka cultural protocols followed by a section on tobacco protocols.

A BRIEF BACKGROUND OF THE KAN IEN'KEHÁ:KA NATION

It is respectful to use the term that *Indigenous people use when self-identifying*, particularly if they use a word in their own language. For example, "Kanien'kehá:ka" translates to, "the people of the place of flint/spark." A name that is also often used is "Mohawk," (a term that has complex origins and is considered pejorative by some). "Kanien'kéha" or "Onkwehonwenéha" is the name for the Kanien'kehá:ka language and culture. Kanien'kéha is currently a threatened "Iroquoian" language.

The Kanien'kehá:ka are one of the original Nations that formed the Five Nations Confederacy (commonly known today as the Six Nations) bound together by the "Great Law of Peace." The Kanien'kehá:ka are the easternmost Nation, called "Keepers of the Eastern Door." Tiohtià:ke is the northeastern tip of Confederacy territory (primarily hunting and fishing grounds) with waterways that give access to the heart of the homelands. For this reason, the Kanien'kehá:ka have had a long-standing pre-colonial presence and diplomatic interest in this region.

The people of the Confederacy Nations or territories in the Eastern Woodlands are called Rotinonhsión:ni (Haudenosaunee), meaning "people of the Longhouse." This name is more appropriate than "Iroquois," another controversial term. The Rotinonhsión:ni are matrilineal, meaning birthrights and identity are passed intergenerationally by the mother's line through Clans. The Kanien'kehá:ka have three Clans: Turtle, Wolf, and Bear.

The term "Onkwehón:we" (the the real, true, or continuous people) is preferred over "Indigenous" in Kanien'kéha when referring to the peoples who originated from the lands and waters of Turtle Island

(a term of reference generally used for the American continents). “Onkwehonwehnéha” is the broad word for the language(s) and culture(s) of Indigenous peoples here.

See the *Kanien'kéha Owenna'shon:'a* in Appendix B (page 18) for translations and additional greetings in Kanien'kéha.

KANIEN'KEHÁ:KA CULTURAL PROTOCOLS

In this section, we have provided examples of a few Kanien'kehá:ka cultural protocols to consider when inviting or working with local Kanien'kehá:ka Elders, Knowledge Holders, or community members at Concordia University. Note that not all Kanien'kehá:ka follow traditional protocols.

- Kanien'kehá:ka Elders or Knowledge Keepers who follow Longhouse traditions may refuse money as a gift or for compensation (especially if their teaching is related to medicines).
Discuss this ahead of time.
- The Kanien'kehá:ka often self-identify by providing their name, Clan, Nation, and community.
- All gatherings and events begin with Ohèn:ton Karihwatéhkwen (see FAQ number 6 and 7, Appendix A, page 16).
- Typically, a speaker stands while everyone else sits and listens (during Ohèn:ton Karihwatéhkwen, a story, or any speech). When a speaker has concluded, they say “tho” or “tho niiowén:nake,” meaning “these are my words.” At that point, the event or gathering may commence or someone else may stand and speak.
- Activities (openings, introductions, discussions, dancing, etc.) are conducted in a counter-clockwise direction. This is known as the “direction of life” in this territory.

TOBACCO PROTOCOLS

The information in this section is meant to educate the general public and resolve many of the questions and confusion surrounding tobacco protocols. The Kanien'kehá:ka as well as many Indigenous peoples on Turtle Island use tobacco for various purposes including ceremony, trade, payment, medicine, as a special gift, or to make requests for cultural teachings. Anyone that does not have access to traditional tobacco can purchase loose (common store-bought) tobacco and pipe tobacco for ceremonial and cultural purposes when necessary.

In the Rotinonhsión:ni Creation Story, tobacco is a sacred gift for the people originating from the mind of Mother Earth. The word for tobacco in Kanien'kéha is “Oienkwa'ón:we” meaning “the real, true, or continuous smoke.” Traditionally, the Ohèn:ton Karihwatéhkwen is spoken while the speaker burns tobacco, carrying the acknowledgements and words to the Creator with the rising smoke.

REQUESTING TRADITIONAL OR CULTURAL TEACHINGS WITH TOBACCO

Requests or invitations may be made *without a tobacco offering*. In many Indigenous cultures (including Kanien'kéha), a request or invitation for medicine, knowledge, ceremony, assistance, or teachings is *traditionally* made with an offering of tobacco. If you wish to provide a tobacco offering, you must arrange a meeting in person with the Elder or Knowledge Keeper. Be sure to make clear your intentions and be specific about your request. The tobacco is presented to the person in a small bundle or pouch held in the palm of your left hand. Keep your hand open and outstretched offering the tobacco. If the Elder or Knowledge Keeper takes the tobacco, they have accepted your request.

IMPORTANT: Not all Indigenous elders (e.g. Inuit Elders) expect a tobacco offering. A request made with a tobacco offering may be difficult for someone to refuse despite the fact that they are aware they have the option to decline. *Tobacco should only be offered with sincerity and pure intentions; it should not be viewed as an obligation.*

GIFTING TOBACCO

Tobacco may be offered to an Indigenous Elder, Knowledge Keeper, or community member as an acknowledgement of their wisdom and teachings that they have shared (a sacred gift in exchange for their knowledge). The tobacco is usually presented in a small tied bundle, a basket, or a leather pouch. If the community member is a Pipe Carrier, they may also appreciate pipe tobacco.

RECEIVING TOBACCO

Tobacco is a sacred plant that was originally cultivated on Turtle Island by First Nations. Inuit do not traditionally grow or use tobacco. If you receive tobacco on or off campus for any reason, you must handle it with respect.

If tobacco is given out at a gathering (for a “big tobacco burning,” it will be collected and burned during the Ohèn:ton Karihwatéhkwén), the Elder or speaker usually explains its purpose and how to use it. If it is gifted to you, the person giving it should explain how to store it and use it later. If they do not, you can ask how to properly handle and use the tobacco.

In general, tobacco is grown and prepared for many uses. Do not attempt to smoke tobacco (or any other medicines) you are given by an Indigenous person unless they expressly say it is appropriate and safe to smoke. Most of the sacred tobacco in use was grown from heirloom seeds and is different

from common store-bought tobacco. *Smoking or inhaling too much of it may be harmful to you.*

Tobacco is mainly burned in an open fire for sacred ceremonial purposes. The rising smoke from the burning tobacco carries out into creation the words of acknowledgement, thanksgiving, and the “minds of the people” that have been gathered (hence the word “Oienkwa’ón:we” in Kanien’kéha explains its purpose).

ALTERNATIVES TO TOBACCO OFFERINGS

A number of items may be presented when a formal request or invitation is made to an Elder or Knowledge Keeper or presented as a gift for the wisdom and knowledge they have shared. A few examples of local Indigenous cultural items are sweetgrass, rattles, a drum, baskets, feathers, handcrafts, or medicines. Other gestures include a song, words of acknowledgement, or a story. It is also acceptable to present *any gift* that you made or purchased if that is what is accessible to you, such as tea, items from Concordia Stores, books, etc. The act of the exchange between the teacher and the learner made with appreciation and sincerity is what is important and not necessarily the gift itself. This protocol of exchange maintains the balance of giving and receiving knowledge to ensure that Indigenous ways of knowing are passed on to future generations.

SMUDGING OR “CLEANING”

“Smudging” is a cleansing of the mind, body, and spirit of negative energy or may be viewed as a way to “open the mind and spirit.” It has become extensively practiced by many Indigenous peoples across Turtle Island and is an option when a tobacco burning in an open fire is not feasible. Smudging can be done by any experienced or qualified Indigenous person but it is usually an Elder or Knowledge Keeper.

When arranging a visit with an Elder or Knowledge Keeper, verify ahead of time if they intend to smudge. The decision to do a smudging ceremony at an event on campus should be made by the invited speaker and not requested or expected. There are different ways that smudging is explained and carried out. It is respectful to follow the directions of the Elder or Knowledge Keeper that is doing the smudging ceremony.

RESEARCH PROTOCOLS AND RESOURCES

After centuries of exploitative research conducted “on” or “about” Indigenous peoples, research ethics protocols are being developed within academic institutions as well as Indigenous communities to reduce harm and increase positive outcomes of research. Research should be conducted *with* people and communities as co-researchers, collaborators, and/or informed and consenting participants.

Concordia’s Research Ethics policies and procedures set the requirements for researchers who plan to conduct research involving human participants.

In addition to university ethics, research with an Indigenous population often includes *community or organizational ethics requirements or other responsibilities*. It is the obligation of the student/ researcher to learn what these requirements are and to understand that successful Indigenous-focused research depends on building trusting relationships and having the appropriate knowledge, background, and experience. There are many examples at Concordia of successful and respectful **Indigenous research projects** and community engagement initiatives listed on the **Indigenous Directions hub**.

INDIGENOUS RESEARCH RESOURCES

The Concordia Library has prepared an extensive directory of **Indigenous educational resources for faculty and students**. Keep in mind that not all knowledge or information is available in written forms as many Indigenous peoples use oral tradition as a means of knowledge gathering and cultural transmission.

Anti-racism training, diversity workshops, and awareness campaigns are increasing at Concordia in recent years. These are helpful options but not sufficient to avoid uncomfortable or offensive situations. It is our responsibility to educate ourselves on these matters and hold ourselves accountable. We have prepared guidelines to follow to foster meaningful interactions with Indigenous peoples based on respect.

GENERAL GUIDELINES TO FOLLOW

These guidelines will help students, staff, and faculty at Concordia to be respectful and accountable when extending invitations to Indigenous guests or participating in Indigenous-focused events.

- Do not wait until the last minute to invite an Indigenous Elder/guest to speak. Clearly discuss your expectations in advance.
- Verify if there will be smudging or if a fire (outdoors) is needed for a big tobacco burning. Contact Concordia Security or Hospitality to make arrangements (e.g. smoke alarms).
- Do not rush or limit time for Ohèn:ton Karihwatéhkwén or an opening, as it is disrespectful.
- Do not ask an Indigenous student, faculty, or staff member at the last minute to open or speak at an event (putting them “on the spot”).

- It is inappropriate and considered highly disrespectful to interrupt an Elder while they are speaking during an event.
- Care for Elders by offering assistance (carrying things, finding them a seat, etc.). If food is being served, *Elders should be offered or served first.*
- If an Indigenous guest or group will be drumming or singing, secure an adequate space for it and consider that the sound may impact nearby classrooms.
- Never touch cultural dress/regalia, the body, hair, or personal items of an Indigenous person without their permission.
- It is offensive to wear feathers, “Indian” costumes, headdresses, or clothing with Indigenous mascots. The same is true of doing “war cries.”
- Drums, rattles, or other sacred items are not toys. Do not “try them out” or touch them without permission.
- Pregnancy, childbirth, adoption, naming, child-rearing, and Clan systems
- Spiritual guidance/knowledge
- Traditional or historical knowledge
- Cultural protocol and practices
- Language
- Storytelling and oral tradition/history
- Caretakers or Keepers of Knowledge
- Selecting, appointing, and/or grooming community leaders
- Specific skills/expertise
- General advice and decision-making

IDENTIFYING ELDERS, KNOWLEDGE KEEPERS, AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Individuals may be identified as an Elder, Knowledge Keeper, or use a similar term to describe their responsibilities to their people and community. In some cases, an Indigenous person fills these roles but does not outwardly identify with a term. It is important to understand what these roles entail and avoid stereotyping. Responsibilities of Elders and others in leadership roles may include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Emotional or psychological support
- Political advice
- Health, well-being, and medicine

WHO IS AN ELDER?

Elder, Grandmother, Grandfather

Within the majority if not all Indigenous communities, Elders are a primary source of support, knowledge, and expertise. Elders are highly respected and cherished for the roles they fulfill within communities, which often entail offering guidance, advice, and support on a wide variety of matters. Keep in mind when working with Elders that they may be vocal or opinionated and take political positions that challenge stereotypical expectations of Elders as passive or neutral.

All elderly people should be treated with respect considering their knowledge, life experience, and seniority in a community or society. Within many Indigenous communities, an Elder is someone who has reached a certain age or has grandchildren. The terms “grandmother,” “grandfather,” “auntie,” or “uncle” are used in a literal sense but are also endearing terms for Elders and Knowledge Holders in some communities.

An individual identifying as an Elder (with a capital “E”) may have been appointed, sanctioned, or have

simply arisen as an advisor, role model, and leader within a given community. This may happen formally through a traditional ceremony or commemoration of some kind or can occur informally through a gradual process over time. To state it plainly, an Elder is recognized and identified as such by the community.

Policies and practices of colonization and assimilation such as residential schools resulted in language and culture losses that particularly impacted First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. In many communities, this caused a knowledge gap between generations. Efforts to reclaim and revitalize language and culture have resulted in an influx of younger generations of Indigenous leaders and Elders who speak an Indigenous language and have acquired traditional and ceremonial knowledge that their elders may not possess. In these cases, an “Elder” may be someone much younger than our grandmothers and grandfathers who hold traditional and cultural knowledge.

CLAN MOTHERS, CHIEFS, AND COMMUNITY LEADERS

Traditional Rotinonhsión:ni leaders are known as “Clan Mothers” or “Chiefs.” They are official representatives of their respective Longhouse and community leaders that provide spiritual and political direction and guidance. They are not paid to fulfill this sacred role. Many other Indigenous groups have Chiefs (Hereditary Chiefs) or similar representatives, each with unique protocols for eligibility and responsibilities of leadership.

Indigenous traditional leaders should not be confused with elected leaders such as band councillors or mayors who are sometimes called or self-identify as “Chiefs.” The band council system

was imposed on First Nations communities through Indian Act policy. Mayors, band councillors, or band “Chiefs” are elected to office and receive a salary. They do not necessarily possess traditional or cultural knowledge yet are still considered community leaders by some. Additional Indigenous community leaders include (but are not limited to) healers, lead hunters or trappers, camp leaders, traditional support workers, organizational leaders, and organizers.

KNOWLEDGE KEEPERS OR HOLDERS

“Knowledge Keeper” or “Knowledge Holder” is a widely used term that generally describes an individual with traditional or cultural knowledge or expertise. This may include land-based knowledge, singing, or drumming. A similar role that exists in many Haudenosaunee Longhouses is “Faith Keeper.” Many other communities have “Pipe Carriers.” Individuals with extensive cultural knowledge and experience but not yet ready to be considered an “Elder” may be identified as a Knowledge Keeper, Knowledge Holder, or use a similar term. An Indigenous person with extensive knowledge and experience in academic, political, or economic settings may also be considered a Knowledge Holder.

COMMUNITY MEMBERS

The term “Indigenous community member” is broad but it is generally understood as someone claimed, accepted, or recognized as being a part of a specific Indigenous community. Indigenous community members have valuable knowledge, experiences, and stories to share. This includes Indigenous faculty, staff, and students at Concordia and within Tiohtià:ke. Their opinions on matters that concern their community, people, or culture should be respected. Conversely, they are not to be viewed

as “experts” on Indigenous matters, objectified, or tokenized in the classroom or on campus. It is also important to keep in mind that many individuals that self-identify as Indigenous do not necessarily have ties to community or may identify with an urban Indigenous community.

URBAN INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY

In our Territorial Acknowledgement rationale and FAQ (see Appendix A, page 12), we revisit the Indigenous histories and connections with the land and waters of Tiohtià:ke or Montréal, which have deep roots. Again, we acknowledge the Kanien’kehá:ka as the caretakers of the lands and waters here. Tiohtià:ke has a diverse urban Indigenous community including the Kanien’kehá:ka, other First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples as well as Indigenous peoples from elsewhere in the world.

The colonial history of Turtle Island (and many other places around the world) has resulted in language and culture loss, dispossession of land and resources, and the displacement of Indigenous peoples from their homelands or territories. Many of those Indigenous peoples have chosen to move into urban areas, some of whom do not have the option of remaining in or returning to their traditional territory. In this light, Tiohtià:ke continues to be a refuge and special gathering place where Indigenous peoples, languages, and cultures should be recognized and embraced. There are approximately 35,000 individuals who self-identify as First Nations, Inuit, or Métis here. More than half of people who self-identify as Indigenous in Canada live in urban areas or cities.

Urban Indigenous populations face unique challenges and experience a different reality from those living on reserves or in rural communities.

The infrastructure and development in densely populated urban areas restrict access to land and limit traditional cultural activities. As a result, a number of Montréal-based groups and organizations have emerged to help support a growing urban Indigenous populace. Languages, cultures, and Indigeneity is expressed and practiced differently in this environment. Urban Indigenous Elders, leaders, and support workers have also naturally arisen to nurture and guide the growing community. It is our responsibility at Concordia to maintain relationships with the urban Indigenous population. We welcome their knowledge and insight on the complexities of Indigenous experiences in urban environments and Indigenous life in a changing world.

ON-CAMPUS INDIGENOUS LEADERS

On-campus Indigenous Leaders and staff may assume a number of roles or use titles such as Elder, Elder in Residence, advisor, community resource worker, cultural support worker, or cultural liaison. The Indigenous Directions Leadership Group has put forward a concerted effort to bolster Indigenous engagement at Concordia. The result is a notable increase in Indigenous leaders, faculty, and support staff at the university.

Indigenous leaders (such as an Elder) may be approached for guest speaking invitations but it is recommended to check what falls within their role at the university. Should an on-campus Elder agree to do an opening or speak at an event during their regular office hours, it is still recommended to offer words of acknowledgement and if possible, a small gift in appreciation of their time and knowledge. We must keep in mind the “invisible” or emotional labour associated with the work of an Elder, as people often gravitate to them in various settings for advice and support.

INDIGENOUS SPACES ON CAMPUS

At the moment, Concordia lacks a dedicated Indigenous building or space (such as a “First Peoples House”). The Indigenous Directions Leadership Group is working with Concordia administration to create spaces at our campuses for this purpose.

The Aboriginal Student Resource Center (ASRC) at Concordia is designated to support **Indigenous students**, with priority given to *First Nations, Inuit, and Métis students*. The ASRC does not have the capacity or resources to provide support to students-at-large, staff, faculty, or the public. Kindly respect the center and its purpose as it is not meant for recruiting Indigenous students for events, research, or causes (i.e. do not show up asking for interviews, translations, or to find Indigenous “experts”).

HONORARIA, PER DIEM AND COMPENSATION

It is respectful to offer Indigenous Elders and guest speakers a gift for sharing their knowledge and wisdom including an honorarium as a gift for their time. *All gifts and honoraria should be prepared well in advance.* Compensation for travel and parking should be arranged. Many Indigenous Elders do not wish to provide their social insurance number or private information for payment (and should not be forced to). Some Indigenous people may choose to refuse an honorarium or alternatively request that a donation be made to an organization or a cause in exchange for their time, knowledge, or labour. *We have prepared a chart as a guideline for recommended honoraria amounts.*

RECOMMENDED HONORARIA FOR INDIGENOUS ELDERS & GUEST SPEAKERS	
Description	Amount (\$)
Classroom presentation, a brief talk or presentation (1-1.5 hours), or short opening words at a small event	\$100 - \$125
Panel or 2-3 hour presentation or discussion	\$250
Opening, Ohèn:ton Karihwatéhkwén, and tobacco burning at a conference or large public event	\$250 - 300
Keynote address, long talk/speech, presentation, or facilitating a workshop at a conference	\$450+

Half-day participation in workshop, conference, or event (no opening or other responsibilities*)	\$300+
Opening or other responsibility and half-day participation in workshop, conference, or event.	\$500+
Full-day participation in workshop, conference or event (no opening or other responsibility)	\$600+
Opening or other responsibility and full-day participation in workshop, conference or event.	\$800+

* “Other responsibility” may be facilitating discussions or “circles,” moderating, teachings, ceremony, medicine keeping, etc. It includes any duty or responsibility beyond what is expected of any other participants at the conference or workshop.

Honoraria and compensation for Indigenous community members should be reasonable and affordable. Gifting honoraria larger than the amounts recommended here is unnecessary unless there is a justifiable reason or expense (e.g. keynote speaker travelling from a great distance, workshop supplies, etc.)

Important Notes: The recommended honoraria amounts do not include transportation (taxi, mileage), accommodation, parking, meals, additional expenses, or gifts. If you have a smaller classroom budget, discuss that with the Elder/guest as many will work with your available budget. We recommend a *minimum honorarium of \$75 per hour for consulting*

or other work with an Indigenous Elder or Knowledge Keeper. A half-day is four hours and a full day is eight hours.

EMPLOYMENT AND CONTRACTS

Indigenous Elders and community members often fill many roles within their communities in addition to employment responsibilities. Cultural and ceremonial duties and commitments should be considered when developing positions. Consideration should also be given to the title advertised for positions such as “Elder” or “Elder in Residence.” Many people qualified as Knowledge Keepers, leaders, advisors, cultural liaisons, or support workers are capable of filling support roles on a university campus but will not feel qualified for an “Elder” role. Without a clear understanding of the background, abilities, and community roles an Indigenous person holds, issues may arise.

CLOSING WORDS

This document was created to help prepare Concordia students, faculty, and staff to initiate respectful engagements with Indigenous peoples and communities. It can be difficult for Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and community members to feel welcome and at ease in an academic environment. We hope that these guidelines and protocols help everyone to feel more confident and prepared for meaningful Indigenous engagement on campus and within Tiohtià:ke and surrounding communities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This document was written on behalf of the Indigenous Directions Leadership Group by Wahéhshon Shiann Whitebean, a Wolf Clan member of the Kanien’kehá:ka Nation at Kahnawà:ke.

*I would like to thank my fellow members of the Indigenous Directions Leadership Group who gave valuable insight and contributions to this document, especially **Vicky Boldo, Geneviève Sioui, Tiffany Ashoona, & Charles O’Connor.** Niá:wen to you all for the important work you continue to do at Concordia. My role in this has been to ‘gather the minds’. The teachings, information, and translations I have shared here are according to the way I have been taught, including what I learned through oral tradition. I have tried to ensure accuracy to the best of my ability but I respect that others may have a different understanding. The work I have put into this document and Concordia’s Territorial Acknowledgement, should evolve through Indigenous-led community engagement & relationship building. This is a path for Concordia, not the final destination. Niawenhkó:wa to my many Elders and teachers! Kwanorónhkhwa.*

Skennenhkó:wa,

Wahéhshon – “She Walks About”

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APPENDIX A

TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT RESOURCE

Written by: Wahéhshon Shiann Whitebean.

Edited by: Dr. Karl Hele, with input from Charles O'Connor.

(Updated January 2019 by Wahéhshon Shiann Whitebean).

TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AT CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY, TIOHTIÀ:KE/MONTRÉAL

Indigenous Directions Leadership Group, Concordia University

Territorial Acknowledgement – February 16, 2017

English:

I/We would like to begin by acknowledging that Concordia University is located on unceded Indigenous lands. The Kanien'kehá:ka Nation is recognized as the custodians of the lands and waters on which we gather today. Tiohtià:ke commonly known as Montreal is historically known as a gathering place for many First Nations. Today, it is home to a diverse population of Indigenous and other peoples. We respect the continued connections with the past, present, and future in our ongoing relationships with Indigenous and other peoples within the Montreal community.

Français:

J'aimerais / Nous aimerions commencer par reconnaître que l'Université Concordia est située en territoire autochtone, lequel n'a jamais été cédé. Je reconnais/Nous reconnaissons la nation Kanien'kehá:ka comme gardienne des terres et des eaux sur lesquelles nous nous réunissons aujourd'hui. Tiohtiá: ke / Montréal est historiquement connu comme un lieu de rassemblement pour de nombreuses Premières nations, et aujourd'hui, une population autochtone diversifiée, ainsi que d'autres peuples, y résident. C'est dans le respect des liens avec le passé, le présent et l'avenir que nous reconnaissons les relations continues entre les Peuples Autochtones et autres personnes de la communauté montréalaise.

HISTORY

Throughout our history, Concordia has sustained relationships with Indigenous peoples and communities on the Island of Tiohtià:ke or Montréal and its surrounding area. The Concordia Indigenous Directions Leadership Group has developed an **interactive timeline** on the **Indigenous hub** to depict and celebrate many of the occasions and collaborations that we have shared.

The following is a brief history and explanation of the Territorial Acknowledgement upon which we hope to build.

The Concordia community has developed many versions of territorial acknowledgements, practices, and gestures that continue to foster meaningful and respectful relationships with Indigenous community members, knowledge keepers, and collaborative partners. The Territorial Acknowledgement that we

are practicing today is grounded in that history. Many members of Concordia's staff, faculty, students, and community partners have made a contribution to the discussion, wording, and rationale behind it. Our acknowledgement is built from cumulative efforts of many minds from diverse backgrounds and we hope to keep an ongoing dialogue with all of our stakeholders.

RATIONALE *(How and why we worded the acknowledgement this way, line by line)*

This specific version of the Territorial Acknowledgement was primarily authored by Wahéshon Shiann Whitebean and Dr. Karl S. Hele, with significant contributions at the final stages from Dr. Louellyn White. The final draft was agreed upon unanimously and passed by the Indigenous Directions Leadership Group on February 16, 2017.

1. *"I/We would like to begin by acknowledging that Concordia University is located on unceded Indigenous lands".*

We debated and discussed variations of this statement that included naming a number of Indigenous communities that are rooted in the Island of Montréal and surrounding area. Many First Peoples claim the land and waterways as a homeland, traditional territory, or birthplace of their people since time immemorial. This includes, but may not be limited to, the Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk) of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, Huron-Wendat, Abenaki, and Anishinaabeg (Algonquin). It is not our role to offer a determination of claim, instead we offer recognition and support of all Indigenous peoples and Nations who have and continue to make these lands and waters their homes. We kept the word "unceded" since there were no agreements or treaties that have transferred title from any Indigenous Nation to settler ownership or control; the land was occupied without permission. This also demonstrates that we recognize the injustices that are part of the colonial history of this place and that Concordia boldly supports and stands in solidarity with the Indigenous members of our community.

2. *The Kanien'kehá:ka Nation is recognized as the custodians of the lands and waters on which we gather today.*

Many Indigenous peoples, communities, and Nations helped to build the foundation of Tiohtià:ke. However, it is understood and widely supported that the Kanien'kehá:ka have a strong historic and ongoing presence in the territory with two communities bordering Montreal: Kahnawà:ke and Kanehsatà:ke. This is also in consideration of the oral tradition/history of the island that the Kanien'kehá:ka Nation has passed from generation to generation. We must recognize the role of the Kanien'kehá:ka in protecting and caring for the lands and waters that we share and enjoy today. Their stewardship is a model for how we must collectively respect our natural environment and community as a whole.

3. *Tiohtià:ke, commonly known as Montréal, is historically known as a gathering place for many First Nations.*

The historic and current presence of two Kanien'kehá:ka communities is acknowledged by the use of the place name "Tiohtià:ke," an abbreviation of "Teionihtiohtiá:kon," which loosely translates to "where the group divided/parted ways." It is here "where the group divided/parted ways" that formed a natural stopping point for First Nations' travellers. Thus, the region since time immemorial has served as a

gathering place which marked the area as a key site of diplomacy, as well as for the exchange of culture, language, and goods. It is this centrality and importance of the region that drew the first settlers to the island. The importance of Montréal/ Tiohtià:ke for First Nations and settlers was demonstrated in 1701 when a Great Peace was negotiated and signed thereby ending a series of destructive wars among various First Nations.

4. *Today, it is home to a diverse population of Indigenous and other peoples.*

It is important to include our vibrant urban Indigenous community as well as the many peoples from diverse backgrounds that now reside here.

5. *We respect the continued connections with the past, present and future in our ongoing relationships with Indigenous and other peoples within the Montreal community.*

This is similar to a gathering of the minds. We are weaving together the past, present, and future of the entire Montréal community that is built on an Indigenous foundation. This is a reminder to anyone that is not Indigenous to this place that the history/past enabled us to be here, that Indigenous peoples and communities are still present and vital to our prosperity, and that we all must be engaged and invested in our collective future to move forward together.

CONVOCATION (GRADUATION CEREMONIES)

Spring Convocation ceremonies in 2017 included a territorial acknowledgement at the start of the proceedings, stated publicly by a lead member of Concordia's administration. The Indigenous Directions Leadership Group will continue to work with the Convocation planning committees and Concordia's administration to modify and adapt future convocation ceremonies in a way that includes and supports Indigenous identities, cultures, and languages. Our goal is to develop an inclusive and open environment for all Concordia students, staff, faculty, and community members. Concordia also supports the choice of any Indigenous peoples to wear regalia/cultural dress at Convocation ceremonies in addition to or as an alternative to formal academic attire.

FAQ

1. Q: Why does Concordia have a territorial acknowledgement?

A: Concordia is committed to fostering positive and mutually respectful relationships with local Indigenous peoples and communities, many of whom are students, staff, and faculty members. A territorial acknowledgement is a means of recognizing that Indigenous peoples have a long history with the land and waters that we gather upon today and that this is their home and territory. This creates a space for dialogue, community building, and exchange in the true spirit of Tiohtià:ke/Montréal by drawing on its deep-rooted history as a place of diversity, diplomacy, and economic significance. This is also a way that we embrace our role within the territory to ensure the long-term prosperity of our diverse community and the longevity of the lands and waters for future generations.

2. Q: When/Where can the acknowledgement be stated/read aloud?

A: Typically, the acknowledgement would be stated **at the beginning** of any event, meeting, or gathering happening at Concordia or sponsored by the university within the territory. The objective of stating it at the beginning of an event is to situate the events and its participants. It also serves as a means of reaffirming the type of relationships that we, as an institution, collective, or individual, are establishing with the place and Caretakers of the lands and waters. Therefore, the intention set in the Territorial Acknowledgement should be stated consciously.

In an effort to foster positive relationships with Indigenous peoples across Canada, a similar acknowledgement should be stated elsewhere when visiting the territory of another Nation or People. This gesture respects local Indigenous peoples and communities outside of Concordia and the Montréal region when hosting or participating in events within other territories. Simply put, an acknowledgement of people, territory, or space should not be limited to the Concordia campus or Montréal area.

3. Q: Who can state/read aloud the acknowledgement?

A: A territorial acknowledgement can be read aloud/stated by anyone. The acknowledgement is particularly designed to assist people with roots elsewhere, all those that are not from this *specific Indigenous territory or homeland*, to situate themselves in this place. It acknowledges that living, working, and/or studying here is a privilege made possible by a colonial legacy that has dispossessed or displaced the original Indigenous occupants or Caretakers of the lands and waters. It is necessary to remind people of a deeper history that is often forgotten or neglected.

4. Q: Can the Territorial Acknowledgement be added to publication materials, websites, or a syllabus?

A: Absolutely! We ask that you include a reference to the Indigenous Directions Leadership Group (and the date: February 16, 2017) anywhere that you use the Territorial Acknowledgement so that any questions or comments will be directed to the appropriate person or group at Concordia. Furthermore, the Territorial Acknowledgement is a good starting point for deeper conversations about our relationships with the Caretakers of the lands and waters on which we are situated. It is appropriate to open these discussions in a class, or in any event, as a pedagogical opportunity to learn about history, culture, politics, and to think critically about our institutional and personal relationships with Tiohtià:ke and the diverse peoples who live here today.

5. Q: If I personally/my group or department already has a territorial acknowledgement, do I have to replace it with this one?

A: Of course not! There are many acceptable ways to acknowledge the territory and local Indigenous peoples and communities. As our knowledge, experience, and relationships develop and change, so will our ways of acknowledging and collaborating within Tiohtià:ke/Montréal's Indigenous community. We have also developed a few principles to help guide the process of practicing or developing a territorial acknowledgement as a starting point (below).

6. Q: What's the difference between a territorial acknowledgement and an opening or welcoming by an Indigenous Elder, Knowledge Keeper, or community member?

A: Indigenous peoples and communities have diverse ways of knowing and cultural protocols that guide how they acknowledge each other and recognize the territory they are visiting or residing within. Being Indigenous to a broad area such as Turtle Island (North America) is not the same as being part of a specific community, Nation, or territory that has ancestral roots and a relationship to a particular place. A welcoming or opening may happen in a variety of ways. Here are some examples:

a) Indigenous visitors: When visiting the traditional territory of another Indigenous community, Nation or People, an Indigenous person may draw on their own cultural knowledge and protocols to acknowledge the local Indigenous community to the best of their ability. They may refer to the relationship or history between the two communities or to their personal experiences.

b) By making an offering/gift: tobacco, medicines, food, seeds, personal belongings, words, and/or songs.

c) Opening: Ohèn:ton Karihwatéhkwén, or “Matters/Issues that come before (all else).” This is sometimes referred to as a “thanksgiving address” or “gathering of the minds.” It is the formal way that the Kanien'kehá:ka (People of the Flint, Mohawk) open and begin all types of gatherings. The words and the length of the address vary according to the speaker. It is typically done in Kanien'kéha (Mohawk language) and may or may not include a tobacco burning.

7. Q: What is more appropriate for a gathering at Concordia, an opening or a territorial acknowledgement? Can we do both?

A: Yes, you can do both. However, the preference of an Elder or community member that has agreed to open an event takes precedence. Ask them how they prefer to be introduced and if they are comfortable with a territorial acknowledgement being part of their introduction or the opening. If the event includes Indigenous peoples from many territories, the representative from the local Indigenous territory takes precedence. Respect how they wish to proceed. If at any point you feel you must choose between an opening or a territorial acknowledgement, go with an opening as it has more significance to the territory and to the community.

8. Q: How do I cite this Territorial Acknowledgement?

A: In recognition of the work that was done by members of the Indigenous Directions Leadership Group in creating this Territorial Acknowledgement, it is recommended to cite it as follows:

“This Territorial Acknowledgement and resources were created by Concordia University's Indigenous Directions Leadership Group (2017). To read the entire Territorial Acknowledgement and learn more about why it was written this way, please visit <https://www.concordia.ca/about/indigenous/territorial-acknowledgement.html>.”

APPENDIX B

KANIEN'KÉHA OWENNA'SHON:'A

Kaianerehkó:wa	"The great good" or "Great Law of Peace"
Kanien'kéha	The language and culture or "ways" of the Kanien'kehá:ka
Kanien'kehá:ka	"The people of the place of flint" or "people of the flint/spark". Note: to say "Kanien'kehá:ka <i>people</i> " is redundant.
Haudenosaunee	"The people who make/extend houses" or "Longhouse people." This Onondaga word is more commonly used, but see also "Rotinonhsión:ni." Note: to say "Haudenosaunee <i>people</i> " is redundant.
Ohèn:ton Karihwatéhkwén	"Words that stand before all else." Also referred to as a welcoming or "opening address," "thanksgiving address," and "gathering of the minds."
Oienkwa'ón:we	"Real, true, or continuous smoke," traditional tobacco
Onkwehón:we	"Real, true, or continuous people," Indigenous people (usually of Turtle Island). Note: to say "Onkwehón:we <i>people</i> " is redundant.
Onkwehonwehnéha	The language, culture, or "ways" of the Indigenous people
Rotinonhsón:ni/Rotinonhsión:ni	"The people who make/extend houses" or "Longhouse people." The Onondaga word "Haudenosaunee" has the same meaning. Note: to say Rotinonhsión:ni <i>people</i> is redundant.
Tiohtia:ke	Loosely translated to "where the group divided/departed ways" (a.k.a Montréal). Other derivatives include "Teionihtiohtia:kon" or "Kawénote Teionhtia:kon."

KANIEN'KÉHA GREETINGS & COMMON WORDS

Kwe/Kwe Kwe	Hi/Hello.
lò/loh	You're welcome.
Niá:wén	Thank you.
Niawenhkó:wa	Thank you very much (big thank you)
Ó:nén/Ó:nén ki' wahi'	Bye/Goodbye ("Tentsiatátken" is also a common farewell meaning "we two will see each other again.")
Shé:kon	Often used for "Hello" but is part of a formal greeting (see below). Translates to "still."
Shé:kon Skennenhkó:wa Ken?	Are you still of great peace? (loosely translated)
(Response) Hen, Skennenhkó:wa, Ok ní:se?	(Response) Yes, I am still of great peace, and you? <i>This is the formal traditional greeting of Rotinonhsión:ni.</i>
Wa'tkwanonhwerá:ton	"Greetings to you all. Formal greeting, can also be used for welcome, or congratulations. (Me/we to you all)

