

Glendon Indigenous Strategy

A. Context

Introduction

We acknowledge that Glendon as part of York University is located on the traditional territory of the Wendat, the Petun, the Haudenosaunee and the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation, one of the peoples of the Anishinaabeg Confederacy, and the Métis Nation, and it is still home to many indigenous people from across Turtle Island.

The Glendon Indigenous Strategy draws from York University's Aboriginal Strategy and shares its guiding principle that it should be based on the concept of reconciliation. Both recognize that

Indigenous engagement is a priority for the entire University and all of its faculties and divisions, not as a specific concern for specific areas of the University or just for a concern relating to Indigenous students, staff or faculty. This aspect of the strategy is a direct response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action. (York University's Indigenous Strategy)

Glendon's Indigenous Strategy is rooted in its own history, traditions and values. Glendon's mission is toward French-English bilingualism. Its identity rests on this mission and on values of multiculturalism, multinationalism and internationalisation. In this context, it recognizes a special responsibility in addressing some of the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) final report. It acknowledges the TRC recommendations and is committed to working towards a strengthening of its engagement with First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples.

Although Glendon has never had an indigenous strategy, it has always shown interest in indigenous culture and languages as part of the Canadian fabric. In particular, Glendon's Linguistics program has been forward-looking in its approach to indigenous matters. It has been the only program at York University to offer indigenous languages as part of its curriculum and to take language endangerment seriously. In fact, the Specialized Honours Stream in Language Endangerment, Documentation and Revitalization is notable at the undergraduate level, and over the last ten years, apart from Anishinaabemowin, Glendon has taught Cayuga, Mi'kmaq and Inuktitut in the course "Case Studies in Canada's Aboriginal Languages".

Canadian Studies at Glendon also incorporates indigenous content in its curriculum through particular emphasis on issues related to Indigenous peoples in Canada in its core courses,

especially in the first-year and capstone courses. For the last few years, the capstone course has focused on the topic “Decolonising Canada.”

Other disciplines have also incorporated indigenous content through the years. See recommendation 24, below, for more details.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the University

In the wake of the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, Glendon intends to respond in its own way to the call for postsecondary education institutions to play a key role in reconciliation through education. According to the report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission,

[m]uch of the current state of troubled relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians is attributable to educational institutions and what they have taught, or failed to teach, over many generations. Despite that history, or, perhaps more correctly, because of its potential, the Commission believes that education is also the key to reconciliation. (*Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future*, p. 234).

Glendon College, as part of York University, acknowledges its educational obligation and responsibilities with regard to indigenous peoples.

Given the scarcity of resources at Glendon College, however, we also recognize that the main locus of indigenous services will always remain at the University’s Keele Campus. In this context, Glendon must focus on inter-campus collaborations and call upon Keele units to offer institutionally-relevant services on the Glendon Campus.

B. Vision, Mission, Values

Vision

Glendon will be a welcoming and inclusive institution that fosters an exceptional student experience and academic environment by valuing indigenous peoples and cultures.

Mission

Glendon will foster personal growth and academic success by engaging students, faculty and staff in ongoing discussions and initiatives to celebrate indigenous cultures and bring to light indigenous issues.

Values

Academic Excellence

We are committed to achieving the full development of students' intellectual capacities, skills and qualities.

Student Success

We espouse a student-centric view that sets the objective of unlocking the full potential of all students.

Equity and Inclusion

The values of academic excellence and student success apply to every single student regardless of creed, colour or culture. However, these values are actualized by recognizing and valuing differences.

Friendship and Solidarity

The proper inclusion of other cultures rests on an openness to the other and a sense of community embodied by the sentiments of friendship and solidarity.

C. Our Strategic Goals

I. Creating a Glendon-based collegial structure for advancing indigenous affairs

The implementation of strategic goals requires a permanent collegial body. The challenge in this context is to ensure a continuity through time.

1. Set up a Special Committee of the Principal ("Committee on Indigenous Affairs") to advance indigenous issues at Glendon

Membership: the Principal (ex officio); the Chair of Faculty Council (ex officio); faculty members; First Nations, Métis or Inuit students; representative of the GCSU; representatives from CASS and Student Services; Glendon's representative to the Aboriginal Education Council of York; community partners and/or Elders

Mandate: The Committee on Indigenous Affairs acts in an advisory capacity to the Principal. It helps to link between CASS, York University and Glendon, to coordinate non-academic initiatives and academic matters and issues recommendations to Glendon and York for better engagement on this matter.

The Special Committee of the Principal should report to Faculty Council.

II. Positioning Glendon with regards to the TRC recommendations on post-secondary education

The TRC is at the basis of a renewed awareness and interest in indigenous affairs on the national scene as in academia. It seems appropriate that Glendon formulate a response to the TRC recommendations relating specifically to universities.

2. [TRC Recommendation 10] Increase participation of First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples in shaping and implementing Glendon's Indigenous Strategy.
3. [TRC Recommendation 10] Focus on retention and success of students, develop culturally appropriate curricula, and continue to support the teaching of Aboriginal languages as credit courses.
4. [TRC Recommendation 13 & 16] Focus on already existing assets in Aboriginal languages and explore the possibility of expanding these resources.
5. [TRC Recommendation 57] Enhance student knowledge in the history of Aboriginal peoples, especially in public and international affairs.
6. [TRC Recommendation 57] Include skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution and anti-racism for students, staff and faculty.
7. [TRC Recommendation 62] Foster college-wide discussions within academic and non-academic structures as a first step to educate students, staff and faculty on the TRC recommendations, and to find ways to integrate indigenous knowledges into academic and non-academic matters.

III. Increasing Awareness and Self-Awareness

Change starts with awareness. It will be important to create an environment in which everyone can gain a cultural, historical and social understanding of indigeneity in the Canadian context, which in turn will encourage indigenous individuals to take pride in their heritage and to affirm their identity.

8. Increase awareness of indigeneity and cultivate respect for indigenous peoples, cultures and issues at Glendon.

9. At the beginning of functions and in public announcements in which external groups are present, acknowledge the Wendat, the Petun, the Haudenosaunee, Métis and Mississaugas of the Credit River, on whose traditional territories we live and work.

10. Encourage students to self-identify as indigenous so they can take advantage of resources intended for them.

IV. Recruiting indigenous students, staff and faculty and ensuring academic success

A key step to making sure all feel welcome and at home on campus, is to be sure that all are able to recognize themselves in their peers and their instructors.

11. Include indigenous students in Glendon's recruitment and retention plans

12. Encourage the recruitment of indigenous faculty and staff in units

13. Identify and seek out sources of funding for indigenous students (e.g. scholarships, INDSpire, Ministry of Education, Student Success Fund, Target Initiative Fund, etc.)

14. Promote access to student funding earmarked for indigenous students

V. Establishing partnerships

Given Glendon's size and available resources, as well as the fact that it is a small Faculty within York University, it will be important to establish partnerships in order to provide ourselves with the means to fulfill our ambitions.

15. Create and strengthen internal York partnerships that will advance indigenous issues at Glendon (CASS, AEC, etc.)

16. Establish and strengthen relationships with First Nation, Métis and Inuit communities

17. Invite Elders-in-residence at Glendon and include them in Glendon functions

18. Work with School Boards (including the Bureau d'éducation) to share experiences of success in reaching out to and supporting indigenous groups

19. Share academic resources with universities having indigenous programs (e.g. University of Sudbury's program in Études autochtones, Wilfrid Laurier University and its inter-campus model, etc.)

20. Link with government departments at all levels (e.g. Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation, Ministry of Education, MAESD, PCH, INAC, etc.) in coordination with York administration.

VI. Indigenizing curricular offerings and content

Central to the university's responsibility toward indigenous people is to "recognize the importance of indigenization of curricula" (Universities Canada, priority 3). Glendon intends to build on the current efforts to enhance indigenous content in its curricula.

21. Increase the number of courses with indigenous content

22. Enhance indigenous content in all courses and encourage considerations of indigeneity in programming at the department level

23. Ensure in-house training for the curricular and pedagogical realization of the principles and goals of this document (with the involvement of Elders and community members)

24. Promote existing courses with indigenous content.

Glendon offers an array of courses with indigenous content:

- CDNS 1920 6.0 (EN) Understanding Contemporary Canada
- CDNS 1920 6.0 (FR) Comprendre le Canada contemporain.
- CDNS 4622 6.00 (EN/FR) Critical Perspectives on Canadian Issues/Perspectives critiques sur le Canada (compulsory fourth-year seminar focussing on indigenous/non-indigenous relations under the theme "Decolonizing Canada/Decoloniser le Canada")
- LIN/CNDS/SOSC 3616 Case Studies in Canada's Aboriginal Languages (Since it was first created, the course has focused on the following languages: Micmac, Inuktitut, Cayuga and Ojibway. Ojibway has been the focus for the past few years)
- CDNS 4622 Experiential learning: Visiting the Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre to listen to residential school survivors, and meeting Elders in class as knowledge advisers. Students in this seminar also work on specific projects to promote change and understanding. For instance, these include: Talking Treaties that invited the Glendon Community to experience contemporary indigenous voices and art that remind us of the history of this city before it was made of cement and glass; and a REDress event, following similar events in other cities, that exhibited about twenty red dresses in the Breezeway and Lunik Café, each with a story of a missing and/or murdered indigenous woman pinned to it.
- EN 3205 Postcolonial Literatures and Theory
- EN 4450 Contemporary Canadian Literature

Other relevant courses, not all of which are taught on a regular basis:

- CDNS 3677 Premières nations du Canada
- HIST 2670 Canadian History since 1663 / Histoire du Canada depuis 1663
- HIST 3215 The Canadian West and North (to 1921)
- HIST 3218 History of Northern Canada
- SOCI 2630 Aboriginal People of Canada
- ILST 3915 Indigenous Peoples in International Relations

Upcoming:

- EN Canadian Literature and the TRC
- LIN Anishinaabemowin (Ojibway I) Language and Culture
- LIN Intermediate Anishinaabemowin (Ojibway II) Language and Culture

VII. Indigenizing campus life

Creating a welcoming environment that recognizes the dignity of indigenous people is an undertaking that goes beyond the classroom. It must encompass the campus space, to which indigenous people have a special relationship, as well as extracurricular and social activities that create a sense of community and belonging.

24. Including and valuing indigenous peoples and cultures in the full suite of student life offerings

25. Foster a sense of pride in indigenous cultures among students, faculty and staff through various events and activities (e.g. medicine walks, a “bannock and soup” event, pow-wows, smudgings, discussion groups, etc.)

26. Schedule relevant courses in the Don River Valley

27. Establish spaces for indigenous activities, including gathering spaces, linguistic spaces, and ceremonial spaces

28. Include indigenous public art on the Glendon Campus and include traditional art performances at various Glendon events