

SGS Fee Referendum Package 2018/2019

Part A – Contact Information

Organization: Four Directions Indigenous Student Centre

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Department: Cultural Studies

Degree Program: PhD

Part B – Group Description

Four Directions Indigenous Student Centre is committed to enhancing the wellbeing of Indigenous students at Queen's University through holistic programming that honours their diverse backgrounds and needs. We are particularly committed to supporting the success of Indigenous students by providing cultural, academic, career, and social programming that connects them to the Queen's University community.

We also provide service to non-Indigenous students by encouraging them to attend our workshops, visit the centre, and attend events that foster an awareness and education of Indigenous peoples in Canada. We are educating and broadening the Queen's University student experience and thus encouraging non-Indigenous students to question their previously held views of Indigenous peoples.

We keep costs for programming at a minimum for students, thus a student fee greatly assists in offsetting program costs. The student fee we receive contributes to our feasts and cultural programming offered at the Centre. All of our programming is open to the Queen's community. Our cultural programming includes workshops such as moccasin making, leather mitten making, drum-making, beaded earrings, pottery, and basket-making. We organize cultural trips to conferences and art galleries. In addition, we also hold weekly hand drumming classes, traditional teachings, Full Moon Ceremonies, twice monthly "Three Sisters' Feasts" and our monthly "Frybread Fryday" event. The fee also assists with our SAGE (Supporting Aboriginal Graduate Enhancement) programming which supports Indigenous graduate students at Queen's find community and build skills. In particular we host a week long writing retreat in the spring that allows them to focus on their writing and self care.

The FDISC is currently funded by the Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities, Post-secondary Education for Indigenous Learners Grant and the University. Neither the grant nor the University financial contribution has increased much in the past few years and so the student fee allows us to continue to offer a wide variety of programming to an expanding population. Both the Indigenous student population and the Queen's student population have

increased in the last few years. However; we have been providing the same level and amount of service to more students with the same budget.

FDISC has a staff compliment of seven who are available to provide support for Indigenous students from their application to career search following graduation. Our centre acts as a home away from home for students and includes a full kitchen, laundry services, library, study and lounge spaces.

Part C – Budget Breakdown

The entirety of the student fee will support monthly gatherings and larger events of SAGE. This includes the writing retreat in the spring which costs \$6,000 per year. The fee will also offset the program costs for our cultural workshops.

Part D – Student Fee Questionnaire

1. Why is your group seeking a fee?

Four Directions Indigenous Student Centre, as our vision states, is committed to enhancing the wellbeing of Indigenous students. However; the climate at Queen's university must also embrace diversity to ensure the success of all students. By providing cultural programming, teachings, education and awareness of Indigenous peoples in Canada, we are educating and broadening the Queen's University student experience and thus encouraging students to question their previously held views of Indigenous peoples. We also try to keep costs for programming at a minimum for students, thus a student fee greatly assists in offsetting program costs.

2. What direct benefit will SGPS members derive from granting your group a fee?

Indigenous members of SGPS will benefit from the programming that we offer for them at FDISC. This includes our cultural and academic programming that we offer all students, as well as our SAGE program that is specific to graduate students.

3. How is the dollar value of the fee related to the benefit you are proposing to provide?

All students, regardless of background or knowledge, are welcome at Four Directions. We feel that the \$1 fee allows us to continue to ensure our programs and events are open and accessible to all who seek to learn about Indigenous cultures, histories, and lived experiences. The Queen's community benefits greatly from the programs and events we offer to all students, faculty, and staff as it meets several of the recommendations of the Queen's Truth and Reconciliation Task Force Final Report. This allows all of campus to engage in meaningful work around reconciliation.

4. When was your group established?

The Four Directions Indigenous Student Centre was established in 1998 and moved to 146 Barrie Street in 2000. In October 2018 based on student demand our space has doubled to include 144 Barrie Street. Our Centre was born out of the need to provide cultural counselling and advising for Indigenous students at Queen's University. Given the low numbers of Indigenous students in post-secondary education, the university recognized the need to provide space for Indigenous students. The Centre has increased from two staff to seven full time staff and a greater presence in the Queen's community and we are seeing an ever increasing use of the Centre.

5. If you have collected a fee in the past, what initiatives and/or opportunities have you provide the Queen's Community with the collected funds?

Four Directions offers a feast twice monthly, along with a Welcome Back BBQ in September, and Holiday Feast in December. We see approximately 25-60 students at each feast. We also host a very popular "Frybread Fryday" once per month.

We offer many different traditional cultural workshops. Recently we have hosted a beading circle which drew more than 20 participants. We host weekly hand drumming where students learn traditional Anishnaabe drums songs.

We also support the Indigenous graduate student population through the SAGE Nest. SAGE provides a supportive network of like-minded graduate students who mentor each other and engage in dialogue surrounding their research. Every year approximately ten students attend a week-long writing retreat held off campus. The Retreat provides opportunity for students to focus on their research, self-care, and meet with an Elder and Writing Instructor in a quiet, peaceful setting.