

Nibi and Manoomin: Bridging Worldview Committee Meeting

October 19, 2011

10:00-11:30

Present: Rachel Walker, Joe LaGarde, Paul Bloom, Craig Hassel, Karl Lorenz, Mark Bellcourt, Louis Mendoza, Adam Kokotovich, David Andow, Alex Kahler, and Emily Ehlinger.

Drafting Responses to the White Paper:

The group discussed whether a response should come from the university while the current provost is still in their position or if it should wait until the new provost has started, which would not be until February 7th. The group generally agreed that the formal response should come once the new provost is in place. This will allow for greater ownership to be taken over the process and actual response letter. A provost committee will be formed to advise the provost as they begin their position.

The group discussed ideas on how to go about building a relationship and create a dialog with the members of the provost committee, as they will also be important in helping to shape the formal response to the white paper. Some members thought it may be a good idea to arrange a lunch meeting with the whole committee; others felt it may be best to meet with the members one-on-one or in smaller groups. Another possibility mentioned was to hold one or more open Nibi and Manoomin committee meetings and invite members of the provost committee to attend to gain a better understanding of the work that is being done. The group also proposed creating an event that the committee members could be invited to attend. The event could give an overview of the history of the relationship between the university and tribal communities, as well as the symposia that have taken place and the work that has been going on around these issues. It could also help provide the background information that will be needed for a formal response letter to be drafted by the university. This event could be hosted by the Office for Equity and Diversity. A sequence of events could also be developed if necessary, which may allow for a greater number of people to attend and get involved.

The group spoke about the possibility of getting others involved with the committee work. Paul will be inviting Faye Sleeper and Emi Ito to attend future meetings. Joe would also like to get the tribal colleges more involved in the work. Committee members asked Joe if the fact that a formal response might not be issued from the university before 6 months from now would be a problem in the tribal community. Joe did not think this would be a problem but recommended that the process and timeline be kept transparent. The committee generally agreed that a letter acknowledging the receipt of the White Paper would be a good idea.

Acknowledgement of Receipt of the White Paper Letter

The committee discussed next steps for constructing the letter and agreed that it should include an acknowledgement of the difficult history between the community and the university, an articulated

desire to continuing to build relationships, mention of the changeover between provosts, as well as some sort of timeline for action.

President Kaler was not able to make it to the symposium but has invited tribal leadership to the Eastcliff for a dinner on November 8th. The deans of the various colleges have also been invited to attend. Students have not been invited to attend the event but the group discussed whether or not the American Indian Student Cultural Center should be invited to hold a drum circle to welcome the tribal leaders. If this can be put together, an invite could go to tribal leaders to come an hour before-hand for the welcoming ceremony; an invite could also be extended to the president. Mark will contact the American Indian Student Cultural Center about the drum circle.

The committee generally agreed that language could possibly be taken from the dinner invite to be incorporated into the letter that will acknowledge receipt of the white paper. The group discussed including the following items in the letter:

- Acknowledgement of the historical context and difficult relationship between the tribal community and the university.
 - University leadership would like to build toward more positive and collaborative relationship.
- Recognition that this is a complex issue and a developmental process but could create the opportunity for learning.
- The university is in the process for moving forward, layout a timeline.
- Description of the context of the university transition, especially with the new provost.
 - A committee is being created to develop a formal response.
- The university would like to pursue a collaborative and transparent approach and would like to have an opportunity to dialog with the community.
- The university is willing to show up and learn. There is a commitment to getting it right this time.

The committee generally agreed that a relatively short response would be best. A Google Doc will be created so that the group can work on editing the letter. The goal is to have the document posted for comments for about a week, with the intention of getting it out two or three days before the dinner at East Cliff on November 8th.

A working group will be established to work with the provost committee by early next semester sometime. The committee generally agreed that the earlier the group is prepared to work with the provost committee, the better. Al Levine and some of the faculty from Soil, Water and Climate, and Agronomy should be involved in early conversations, especially around the moratorium on wild rice research. The committee will aim to have more concrete steps laid out by February or March.