

NOTE TO APPLICANT: Unless stated otherwise, all redactions in this package are made pursuant to s. 40 (1).

IAP Office

From: [REDACTED]
To: Policy
Subject: Feedback - Indigenous Verification Policy
Date: Thursday, April 17, 2025 4:09:14 PM

Good afternoon,

[REDACTED]

The NunatuKavut Community Council students at MUN are Indigenous, full stop. The matter is before the courts and MUN should not change it's policy of recognizing the NunatuKavut Community Council students until the Supreme Court of Canada has ruled.

The Metis membership across the nation is very open and easy to get. If you want to become a Metis citizen you have to join a provincial organization: Metis Nations of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Ontario.

For example, in Alberta when a child is born to a mom or dad with a Metis card, the child will automatically get a membership as well. The membership list is all based on family trees and connection to historic Metis families, which there are many. The only thing done before membership is finalized for MNA, they submit each name to Crown Indigenous Relations Northern Affairs Canada to ensure a new member is not a status Indian. Ensuring no double dipping of benefits. The child of the abovementioned child also gets membership, and it goes on forever. This is very important, as you don't need to have a certain percentage of Metis heritage to get a Metis card, all offspring get citizenship.

The Metis membership will never end and keeps increasing, that is why the numbers are so high in each of the provincial organizations. In Alberta they hold membership drives on a regular basis. At some point, First Nations and Inuit might stop having kids with themselves and their memberships could technically end. Sounds extreme but it's possible.

Due to the existing Métis Self-Government Recognition and Implementation agreements with 4 of the 5 provinces, except BC, Metis benefits are very impressive for all Metis citizens. Health, child, housing and education benefits that Canada is paying for. Metis citizens with very little actual Indigenous blood are getting full benefits. The same can not be said for their First Nations cousins or the Inuit.

People of First Nations and Inuit ancestry do NOT have the same level of benefits as Metis, for their families because membership is limited. First Nations children lose their status all the time. It used to be based on the mother but is now based on both parents. Still some restrictions from 1985 related to mothers only. 2 First Nations parents' status, 1 First Nations parent status, that person's kid will have status and if they have a child with a non - status person, then it ends. No more status or benefits for that child and all their children unlike the Metis. First Nations get status cards from Government of Canada, but membership rules are from each band or tribal council. Important to note here many nations have their own programs for housing, annual payments and education. Health and dental are all covered by Canada by showing your status card.

There was a bill in the 44th parliament on this matter trying to change the Indian Act. Bill C —

38, An Act to amend the Indian Act (new registration entitlements). It hopes to expand the membership to include those excluded. The bill is stalled because there is no agreement among the 500 plus First Nations on membership and moving it forward.

For the four Inuit regions it's all based on percentages to become an Inuit beneficiary (AKA: member). You must have a minimum of 25% Inuit heritage in your family tree to get status. If below the threshold there are no more benefits for that person and their children. If reproducing with non-beneficiaries all the children will not get membership or any benefits. Unlike the Metis.

From what I have read on each website, from news clips and chatrooms, the Nunatsiavut Government have the strongest membership rules of all the Inuit and maybe of all of the Indigenous groups in Canada. Just look at how hard Federal Court Justice Grammond, ruled against the Nunatsiavut Government's membership rules in his recent decision last year.

The NunatuKavut Community Council argue they are a stand-alone group and the Supreme Court of Canada will decide in several years about their case. Lots on their website about that in a well written report.

There is only one group of Inuit in Canada with four regions and the NunatuKavut Community Council is clearly a part of the Labrador group. I think the members of the Nunatsiavut Government and the NunatuKavut Community Council are all the same but their original land claim only covered the northeast coast.

Instead of doing what a First Nations would do, an "Addition To Reserve" The group on the south coast formed their own group, first Metis and now, NunatuKavut Community Council. In many cases they are all the same families if you trace their roots.

If the Nunatsiavut Government admits to NunatuKavut Community Council members being any amount Inuit (which they are) then they will have a major flaw in their argument. Some Metis citizens only have a small amount of Metis blood and they've been allies of the Nunatsiavut Government, so why not the same for the NunatuKavut Community Council, when some of their members only have a small amount of Inuit blood traced to their ancestors who are members of the Nunatsiavut Government.

I don't see anything on the NunatuKavut Community Council website about their membership guidelines and or percentages. They currently have health and education benefits just like the Metis, from the agreement signed by former Minister Bennett a few years ago but now in the courts.

It needs to be asked if the members of NunatuKavut Community Council are in fact just the offspring of the Nunatsiavut Government members who don't have 25% in their family tree.



This is a different argument than the NunatuKavut Community Council has made in court, as being a stand alone Indigenous organization.

The Metis National Council has made public statements opposing the NunatuKavut Community Council to put the MNC in line with Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami. But in reality, the NunatuKavut Community Council has only done what the 5 provincial Metis governments have done, gotten excellent benefits for their membership of citizens who in some cases only have a very small percentage of Indigenous ancestry.

Regards [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: Scott, Tina (Regents); Russell, Lisa; Evans, Rhyder John; [REDACTED] Policy
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: MUN Indigenous Verification Policy
Date: Friday, April 18, 2025 12:37:35 AM

To the Board of Regents,

[REDACTED]

False claims of indigeneity are a serious concern, particularly when individuals use those claims to gain an advantage over their peers. Ultimately, this harms legitimate claimants by depriving them of limited resources and opportunities to pursue their path to prosperity and self-realization. Therefore, an Indigenous Verification Policy is critical to maintaining the integrity of organizations that seek to level the playing field for traditionally marginalized groups and, in doing so, help to improve equity and create fairness in our society.

[REDACTED] heritage alone does not make a person Indigenous. [REDACTED] it is easier to be recognized as Indigenous—by outsiders or by oneself—when you are living your culture in the land of your ancestors. The historical presence of Inuit in southern Labrador and the genealogical ties to Inuit ancestors of those who live in southern Labrador are, frankly, irrefutable. The question that remains seems to be whether or not NCC represents a distinct Inuit cultural group, subpopulation, or collective. It is clear that, for all the common cultural ties and shared bloodlines, the Inuit who live in southern Labrador are separate from those in Nunatsiavut. At some point, and for good reasons, we must delineate boundaries—good fences make for good neighbors.

Recognition of NCC as a group with rights under Section 35 of the *Constitution Act* is a matter for the Crown to determine “based on law and history, not politics.” Despite Minister Anandasangaree's idyllic statement, politics knows no bounds. It is inevitable that in matters with the potential to change the calculus on limited government supports and resources, all affected parties deserve a seat at the table. However, it is critical that those at the table argue for their fair share in good faith. “Inuit know who Inuit are” is a tidy way of asserting authority over membership and an organization's internal vetting process, but applying the same slogan to delegitimize a neighboring Inuit collective, actively pushing falsehoods about the very ancestry of its members, is at worst harmful. At a minimum, it exemplifies a conflict of interest on the part of a key contributor to the Indigenous Verification Policy, potentially detrimental to students who express their belonging and legitimacy as Indigenous individuals through membership with NCC.

I think we would agree that it is not the responsibility of MUN, or of any Indigenous group, to be the arbiter of who holds Section 35 rights under the constitution outside of their own members. I do not wish to belabor this point, but if federally recognized Section 35 rights are the threshold for Indigenous Verification, you do not require a policy—the law is clear. But if the definition of Indigenous people is broader than whose rights are currently recognized by the Crown, a group with a shared, unbroken lineage and a distinct culture, with its own rigorous process to identify its legitimate membership, and federal recognition to the extent that triggers a duty to consult, must take precedence over the whims of groups that would seek to undermine their legitimacy for political gain.

MUN has a role to play in improving equity and creating a fairer society. The policy you implement here will move that needle, and I hope that it is for the benefit of all Indigenous people, the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, and Canada as a whole.

Regards,

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the sender.

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Policy](#)
Subject: Draft Indigenous Verification Policy
Date: Friday, April 18, 2025 12:37:15 PM

To:
Board of Regents
Memorial University of Newfoundland
230 Elizabeth Avenue
St. John's, NL A1C 5S7

From:

[REDACTED]

Date: April 18th, 2025

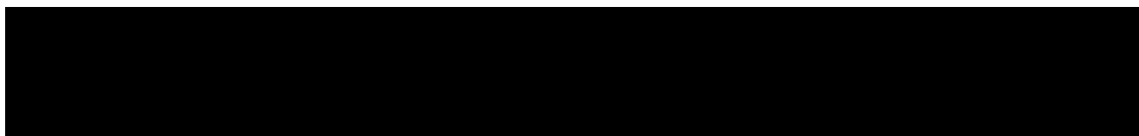
I am writing to you respectfully regarding the Draft Indigenous Verification Policy [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Memorial claims to be moving toward decolonization and an equitable, diverse, inclusive, and anti-racist university, yet through this policy, they are conveying absolutely none of these traits. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



I encourage Memorial to make a careful decision that will allow all university students to be accepted for who they are.

Thank you for your time and consideration,



From: Anonymous Account
To: Policy
Subject: Indigenous Verification Policy
Date: Monday, April 21, 2025 3:47:16 PM

Dear Policy Office,

I am writing with feedback on the draft Indigenous Verification Policy document. I am trying to be as level and objective as possible, but this is a terrifying document—

[REDACTED]

I believe the VP Indigenous has a **conflict of interest** and is using this policy to carry out the mandate of the Nunatsiavut Government to undermine and discredit the NunatuKavut Community Council,

[REDACTED]

Yours truly.

From: [REDACTED]
To: Policy
Subject: Indigenous Verification Policy
Date: Monday, April 21, 2025 5:17:34 PM

Good Day,

[REDACTED]

The policy I read has the ability to effect positive change by following long-standing protocols [REDACTED] and other Indigenous communities, have traditionally practiced. This is a good thing.

It protects the community, as it is their agency to decide who speaks for them and who's advocacy and representation they claim by providing them with the agency to tell the academy who their people are. This has always been of paramount importance [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] many harms have been perpetrated by people who have made false claims.

A confirmation and check with the people of the community would clear out a great amount of work in the future. I hope Memorial approves this policy in the spirit of good relations with Indigenous Communities in this province.

Best,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: Policy
Subject: Re: Indigenous verification policy drafted
Date: Wednesday, April 23, 2025 8:05:13 AM

Good morning,

For specific context of my email today, I am responding to below:

Re: Memorial University's Indigenous verification policy and procedures are drafted and open for consultation.

All members of the university community are invited to review the proposed policy and procedures until May 2, 2025. Feedback on the policy and procedures may be sent to policy@mun.ca.

The development of this policy supports Memorial's Strategic Framework for Indigenization (2021-26) and specifically, its recommendation to develop "protocols/guidelines to address issues of Indigenous identity as they pertain to internal processes such as targeted hires, reserved seats and other Indigenous-specific opportunities."

I wanted to write, to express my genuine and respectful gratitude to the University of Memorial for this.

[REDACTED]

In terms of policy, Inuit experience displacement, heavily, since 1967 when the province of NL drafted policies to forcefully relocate Inuit family's from their homelands and regulate family life, through forced assimilation into English speaking spaces only. Schools were one of the first places Inuit children experienced racialization, becoming an 'other', and survived abuse. 3 generations later of intense and specific colonization [REDACTED] Inuit continue to experience the disadvantageous affects of colonization, and regularly experience displacement in public spaces [REDACTED] There is no history taught [REDACTED] that teach students about the forceful and cruel way, Inuit specifically, were integrated into the province of Newfoundland, from their Inuktitut speaking family homelands that lived on the land, [REDACTED] have serious degrees of language loss across all communal dialects of Inuktitut across northern Labrador.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

For those reasons, I wanted to thank the University for putting something out there, finally a policy, to support true indigenization of the University of Memorial.

On another note of secondary importance, I am writing this letter to speak back to a phenomenon I am observing happening in real time, because MUN has drafted this Indigenous Verification policy. It is all over the news that the NCC organization is unhappy with this policy and are putting pressure on the University to respond. I would like to **speak back** to this [REDACTED] I am certain that any status seeking organization claiming indigeneity, will not rest, until they have a member in every white privileged office of high importance in this province, including the University, to push forward the agendas of the indigenous status seeking organization. After all, it has been light work for the organization to indigenize so far, with NCC [REDACTED] pushing indigenization of the NCC along in parliament, [REDACTED]

If only Indigenous Fraud was made illegal, these efforts to put pressure on prominent organizations to accept self-indigenization, would finally subside. Sadly, Indigenous Fraud will never happen in an English speaking country built on stolen Indigenous lands, that operates on white privileges. Only those who can navigate ways to build more white privileges, speaking English, will prosper in our province, until more policy work is completed to truly reconcile Indigenous languages with Indigenous people, as well as work to Indigenize our systems, with legitimate integrity.

In all, I thank the University for its thorough and widespread work so far, in attempting to indigenize the University, and to draft this Indigenous Verification policy. Please continue to listen to the voices of Inuit and Innu that lend their Indigenous specific knowledge to the University. Please consider writing more policies to enhance the voices of Inuit (and Innu), and increase their chances of being heard, to support your Indigenous students to do well at your University, specifically.

Thank you,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: President, The; Policy
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: NunatuKavut: MUN's new Indigenous verification policy
Date: Wednesday, April 23, 2025 11:30:36 AM

MUN President Jennifer Lokash
MUN VP Indigenous Catharyn Andersen
[REDACTED]

Hello all,

There is strong opposition to NunatuKavut from their northern and western neighbours, the Nunatsiavut, the Innu, the Metis of Red River, the Chiefs of Ontario, and others, however, their southern neighbours in Newfoundland also have an opinion that carries considerable weight and should be considered in this matter.

The April 22, 2025 CBC article by Abby Cole, "Memorial University won't recognize NunatuKavut in new Indigenous verification policy," fails to address the decades of support shown by NunatuKavut's southern neighbours, the Mi'kmaq of Conne River who have Sec. 35 rights under the Constitution and are in a position to go on record with MUN to support NunatuKavut education if that is their position (or the Mi'kmaq Grand Council's position).

As Todd Russell said last year about Chief Joe's retirement, "Chief Joe has always been present. He has always been that constant, when it comes to aboriginal rights, aboriginal issues, the fight for recognition. Chief Joe has been a constant for me."

Russell says his most recent work with Joe was on the Premier's Indigenous Round Table. "My entire work, my entire time in doing this work, Chief Joe has been there." (Source: <https://www.saltwire.com/atlantic-canada/ill-get-to-spend-more-time-on-the-land-doing-the-things-ive-always-wanted-to-do-for-the-community-miawpukek-first-nations-chief-misel-joe-announces-retirement-100929355> accessed April 23, 2025)

I am writing in response to MUN's request for policy feedback, not to express my personal opinion. Thank you for your consideration.

Regards,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: Policy
Subject: Re: Indigenous verification policy drafted
Date: Wednesday, April 23, 2025 12:44:39 PM

In my previous email I made a typo. The year 1967 is supposed to be 1957 - to refer to the policy that forcefully relocated Hebron and Nutak Inuit families.

On Wed., Apr. 23, 2025, 07:34 [REDACTED] wrote:

Good morning,

For specific context of my email today, I am responding to below:

Re: Memorial University's Indigenous verification policy and procedures are drafted and open for consultation.

All members of the university community are invited to review the proposed policy and procedures until May 2, 2025. Feedback on the policy and procedures may be sent to policy@mun.ca.

The development of this policy supports Memorial's Strategic Framework for Indigenization (2021-26) and specifically, its recommendation to develop "protocols/guidelines to address issues of Indigenous identity as they pertain to internal processes such as targeted hires, reserved seats and other Indigenous-specific opportunities."

I wanted to write, to express my genuine and respectful gratitude to the University of Memorial for this.

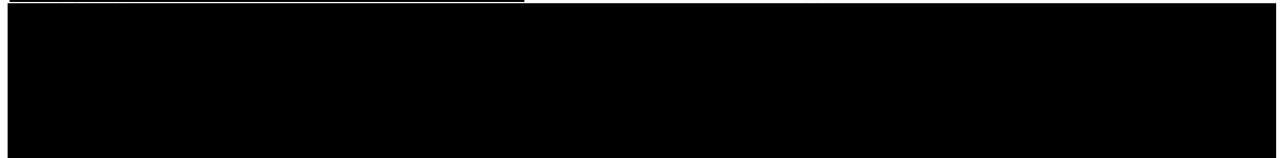
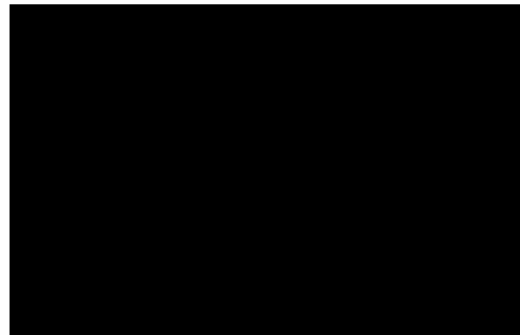
[REDACTED]

In terms of policy, Inuit experience displacement, heavily, since 1967 when the province of NL drafted policies to forcefully relocate Inuit family's from their homelands and regulate family life, through forced assimilation into English speaking spaces only. Schools were one of the first places Inuit children experienced racialization, becoming an 'other', and survived abuse. 3 generations later of intense and specific colonization [REDACTED] Inuit continue to experience the disadvantageous affects of colonization, and regularly experience

NOTE TO APPLICANT: The remainder of this thread has been removed as they are already found above in the responsive records.

IAP Office

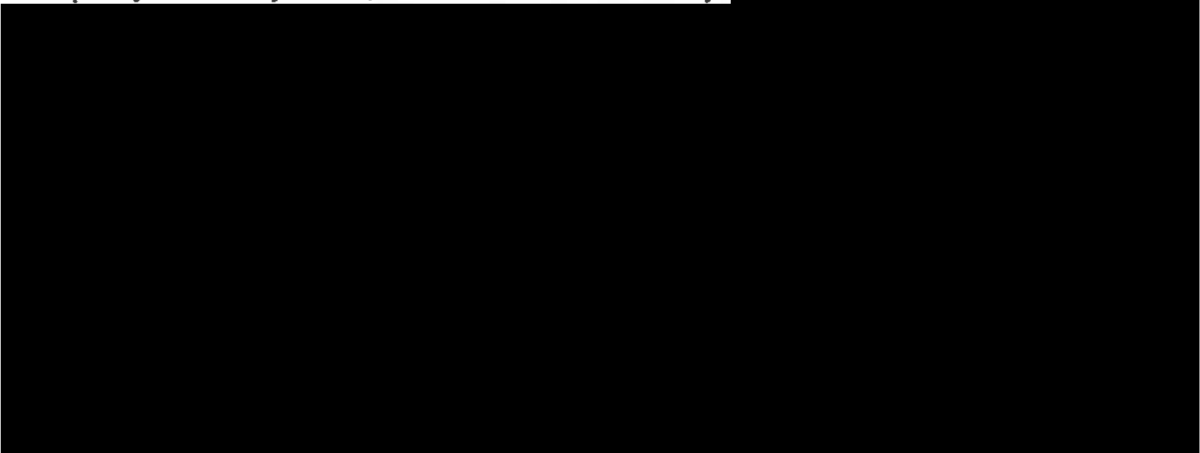
From: [REDACTED]
To: Policy
Subject: FW: Urgent Appeal: Recognition of NunatuKavut as an Indigenous Organization at Memorial University
Date: Thursday, April 24, 2025 9:11:11 AM



From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, April 22, 2025 9:48 PM
To: Scott, Tina (Regents) <tinas@mun.ca>; Russell, Lisa <lisar@mun.ca>; Evans, Rhyder John <rhyder.evans@mun.ca>; [REDACTED]
Subject: Urgent Appeal: Recognition of NunatuKavut as an Indigenous Organization at Memorial University

Dear Members of the Memorial University Board of Regents,

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] I am reaching out with deep concern and disappointment regarding the university's draft Indigenous verification policy, which proposes not to recognize NunatuKavut as an Indigenous organization. This policy is not only unfair, but it is also discriminatory. [REDACTED]

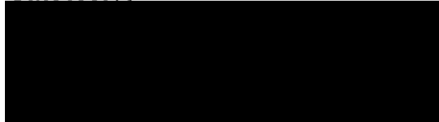


No Indigenous student, faculty

member, or alumnus should be told that their identity is invalid or that they do not belong. I urge the Board of Regents to reconsider this policy and to recognize NunatuKavut as an Indigenous organization. The university has an opportunity to lead with courage and integrity by fostering true reconciliation and inclusion. Please do not let Memorial University be remembered for deepening harm and division, but rather for standing up for all Indigenous peoples who call this province and this institution home.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



From: [REDACTED]
To: [Policy](#)
Subject: Submission - Consultation on Indigenous verification policy and procedures
Date: Thursday, April 24, 2025 9:32:08 AM

Hello. I support MUN's proposed Indigenous verification policy and procedures. Indigenous verification is an important tool writ large and especially for universities.

1. **Identity Fraud.** A quick Google search reveals numerous instances of individuals falsely claiming Indigenous identity to gain material advantages, such as targeted hiring, scholarships, and other benefits. These fraudulent claims undermine the integrity of initiatives aimed at supporting Indigenous communities.
2. **Fair Representation:** Indigenous verification helps ensure that Indigenous people actually receive the benefits and opportunities intended for them. This is crucial for fair representation and advancement within academic settings.
3. **Truth and Reconciliation:** The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Final Report and its 94 Calls to Action emphasize the importance of indigenization and Indigenous-specific hiring practices. Verification processes are part of the broader effort to honour these calls and support reconciliation by ensuring genuine Indigenous representation in academia.
4. **Academic Integrity:** False claims to Indigenous identity can harm the integrity of Indigenous ways of knowing and being within academic institutions. Verification protocols help maintain the authenticity and respect for Indigenous knowledge systems.
5. **Community Consultation and Engagement:** It is clear that developing the proposed verification protocols involved robust consultation with Indigenous Peoples in NL. I am confident that MUN has ensured that the processes were respectful, culturally appropriate, and aligned with the needs and perspectives of NL-based Indigenous groups with Section 35 recognition.
6. **Institutional Accountability:** I am pleased that MUN and other Universities are beginning to recognize the need to move beyond self-identification and implement formal verification processes. This accountability is essential for building trust and credibility within Indigenous communities and ensuring that institutional policies are effective and just.

Indigenous verification is a critical step towards creating equitable, respectful, and authentic academic environments that genuinely support Indigenous students, faculty, and staff. I congratulate MUN for drafting this new policy. It is a significant step which demonstrates your commitment to fostering an inclusive and equitable academic environment. By ensuring authentic representation and support for Indigenous communities, you pave the way for meaningful reconciliation and respect for Indigenous knowledge systems in NL. Your leadership in this initiative is commendable and sets a valuable example for other institutions.

Regards,

[Redacted Signature]

From: [REDACTED]
To: Policy
Subject: Verification Policy
Date: Thursday, April 24, 2025 11:49:38 AM

NCC is not accepted by any Inuit group in Canada. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

They do not have rights under section 35 of the Constitution Act. They are not accepted by any other Inuit group. They are not supported by ITK. They do not have a language. **They have Google and Facebook and imitation and politicians.**

I commend MUN for considering what FEDERALLY RECOGNIZED INDIGENOUS PEOPLE are asking from their institutions - stop allowing self-ID and stop supporting pretendians. To support NCC and their claims would be a choice to diminish the integrity and support of Nunatsiavut, Nunavut, Nunavik, ISR, ITK, Innu Nation and many more nations and groups across Canada.

The fact that this is even up for debate is beyond me. If somehow they manage to get Federally recognized, maybe then it's time to revisit but, having students have to prove they belong to a recognized community is how it should be, and NCC is not one of these communities. That is simply a fact.

Many thanks and all my support.

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: Policy
Subject: Proposed Indigenous Verification Policy
Date: Thursday, April 24, 2025 1:14:31 PM

Dear sir/madam,

This is to state to the decision makers of Memorial University that I strongly support the proposed policy to verify indigenous identity. It is well known across Canada that many individuals have falsely self identified as indigenous people. This must be addressed and the proposed policy of indigenous verification is a fair and very reasonable way of doing so. In doing this, Memorial University will not just be protecting the tral indigenous person(s) but, its own integrity as an institution.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Policy](#)
Subject: Support MUN in regards to NCC recent policy change
Date: Thursday, April 24, 2025 1:21:19 PM

[REDACTED] I am very impressed with Memorial University's decision to no longer accept self identification as proof of belonging to an Inuit collective.

Showing proof of indiginity is not a threat to Inuit.

I wonder in NCC's case, is it not enough that they have claimed millions of dollars that should have went to indigenous groups with rights under section 35 of the Canadian Consitution Act? Is it not enough that they have took up seats designated for such rights holders at MUN for many many years? Not to mention university grants, scholarships, and jobs?

[REDACTED] I think that MUN have taken a stance and I appreciate that much work has been done to right the wrongs that were happening for many years!

Your policy makes MUN a more creditable University, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Please don't change your policy due to guilt or any of those feelings that are being triggered by the NCCs response.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Policy](#)
Subject: Support for Verification Policy at Memorial University of Newfoundland
Date: Thursday, April 24, 2025 1:43:04 PM

Dear Memorial University of Newfoundland (MUN) Administration,

I hope this message finds you well. [REDACTED] I am writing to express my wholehearted support for the verification policy recently proposed by MUN.

The commitment to ensuring that Indigenous positions, seats, awards, scholarships, fellowships, bursaries, and funding opportunities are reserved for Indigenous people—and not for individuals who might claim Indigenous identity without authenticity—is a monumental step forward. This policy is crucial in addressing the pervasive issues of cultural appropriation, exploitation, and misrepresentation that Indigenous communities have faced, especially within academic institutions across Canada.

It is imperative that MUN continues to demonstrate its dedication to upholding Indigenous voices and perspectives, allowing for a more inclusive and representative academic environment. By adopting this verification policy, MUN not only aligns itself with the values of respect and integrity, but it also fosters a community where Indigenous culture can thrive without the threat of erosion or dilution.

I encourage other beneficiaries and community members to lend their voices in support of this initiative. It is vital that we collectively convey our appreciation for MUN's commitment to authenticity and respect for Indigenous identities.

Thank you for taking the necessary steps toward ensuring a more equitable educational landscape. Way to go, MUN!

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Policy](#)
Subject: Policy
Date: Thursday, April 24, 2025 1:49:06 PM

To whom it may concern,

[REDACTED] I am pleased to hear that the university of MUN has updated their policy to exclude self identification under indigenous status.

Of course there will be many mixed emotions during this change, but I applaud you for taking steps towards a more progressive movement for indigenous people. This will give real opportunity to many who probably lost out on an option in the past.

Thank you for doing the right thing.

[REDACTED]
Sent from my iPhone

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Policy](#)
Subject: Your Indigenous Verification Policy
Date: Thursday, April 24, 2025 1:58:46 PM

Hi I am concerned that your Indigenous Verification policy does not incorporate sec 91 (24) of the Supreme Court of Canada, in the Daniels decision. It specifically targets Métis who are non MNC Métis citizens and NonStatus people. How will your policy affect these people who don't necessarily have a tribe or band collective.

[REDACTED]
Sent from my Android device [REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Policy](#)
Subject: IVP feedback
Date: Thursday, April 24, 2025 3:11:45 PM

[REDACTED] I would like to offer some feedback for the draft Indigenous Verification Policy, along with my reasoning for it.

It is my understanding that, in the past, self-identification had an important role in reducing systematically constructed barriers for displaced or marginalized people who needed to access services and benefits meant for them. Regrettably, a process with zero accountability provided a back door for fraudulent access. In my opinion, if Memorial intends to reduce this type of fraud from occurring internally, then a verification policy is absolutely necessary. That said, this policy must have provisions for displaced or marginalized people who are still forced to navigate systematic barriers. I have reviewed the draft policy and have found that these provisions are adequate. I, therefore, support the draft as it exists. However, the response that others have vocalized indicates that there seems to be some confusion between 'verifying' and 'validating'. Perhaps the verification process should be further clarified and communicated as **verifying what has already been validated outside the university by other recognized bodies**, as it seems the policy is being interpreted as Memorial being the entity that is validating identities.

There is something fundamentally wrong with relying on universities or other non-Inuit institutions to validate identity. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] collective ethnic identities are not fixed, and 'what it means to be Inuit' fluctuates as Inuit culture develops in relation to time, space, and circumstance. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] when Inuit identity is determined by externally defined parameters, the result is harm.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] it seems very counterintuitive to approach a non-Inuit institution for validation.

[REDACTED]

But the consequences of imposterism are much greater today and Memorial must remain aware that many are mimicking and then leveraging the position of an Indigenous person as some autological loophole to legitimacy. For example, they claim "lateral violence" when questioned about the legitimacy of their statements. Perhaps some of these challenges have been violent, but their rebuttal remains focused on the 'being wronged' and this distracts from any substantiation of the 'lateral' component.

I believe the draft policy should be accepted. Displaced or marginalized individuals can still access services and opportunities meant for them by availing of its provisions. The members of representative bodies who can demonstrate legitimacy may experience an inconvenient delay in accessing these same opportunities, however once they have finalized their validation processes outside the university, then their members can too be protected by the same verification policy.

Thank you for your time in considering this feedback.

Regards,

Anonymous

Please do not identify me if you choose to reproduce any part of this email.

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Policy](#)
Subject: Indigenous Verification
Date: Thursday, April 24, 2025 8:37:46 PM

[REDACTED]

I'm writing to express support for the policy regarding verification of Indigenous peoples within MUN. This space has been dominated by people falsely claiming Indigenous status and has allowed little room for Indigenous students to grow, learn, and connect. I hope with this new policy we are able to have a bigger spotlight on those who are truly Indigenous and celebrate their achievements in their academic and professional lives as well as show the way other Indigenous youth can pursue their education.

Thank you for taking the difficult step to ensure that Indigenous titles and celebrations are held sacred for those who are deserving.

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: Policy
Subject: Support of new Indigenous verification policy
Date: Thursday, April 24, 2025 8:54:47 PM

Hello,

I am emailing to show my support of the new indigenous verification policy. There has been an ongoing issue of fraudulent claims of Indigenous identity. I am glad to see this new policy taking effect and the benefits going to those Indigenous students and staff who deserve it.

Thank you,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Policy](#)
Subject: Indigenous Verification Policy
Date: Thursday, April 24, 2025 9:38:33 PM
Attachments: [MUN Policy Letter.docx](#)

Good evening,

I have attached a letter of support below on the proposed Indigenous Verification policy [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Thank you,
[REDACTED]

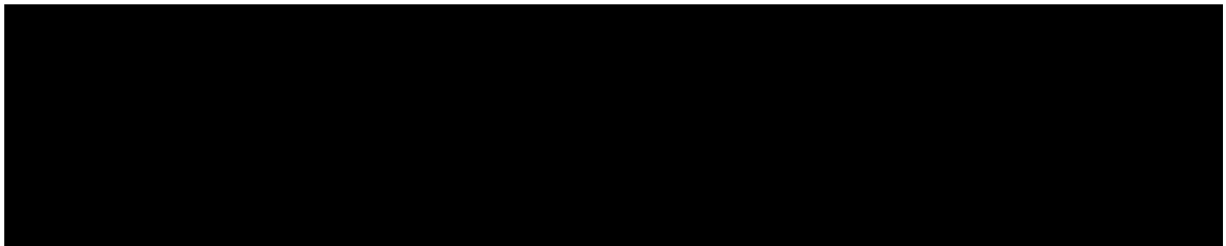
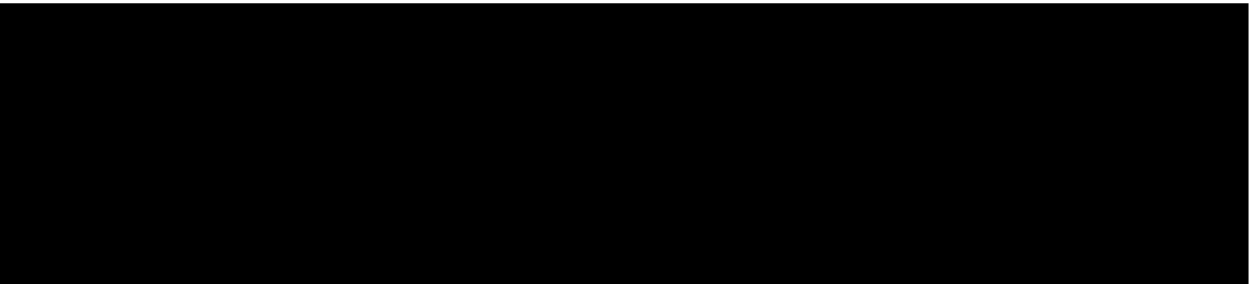
To:
Memorial University of Newfoundland
Indigenous Verification Policy Proposal

From:



Good day,

[Redacted]
[Redacted] Memorial University of Newfoundland has made tremendous efforts to clear the air with Indigenous students. [Redacted]
I agree wholeheartedly with the proposed policy.



The pure ignorance of NunatuKavut as a whole is disgusting, and scholarships and Indigenous seats at this institution should not include them, as their fight for recognition is not heartfelt. It is unbelievable how one group can attempt to be recognized as Métis, non-status First Nations and now Inuit. They claim they can trace their Inuit lineage back hundreds of years, focusing on the blood that runs through them. How can a group that didn't identify as Inuit a few years ago now try and say that they are entitled to a majority of the Labrador Inuit Land Claim Agreement area?

I hope that this policy is implemented and shows recognized Indigenous groups under Section 35 of the Canadian Constitution that Memorial University of Newfoundland is on their side. This is a step in the right direction for MUN, and all scholarly institutions should be held to a standard with Section 35.



From: [REDACTED]
To: [Policy](#)
Subject: Feedback for indigenous students
Date: Thursday, April 24, 2025 10:22:29 PM

Hi there,

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] am emailing in support of the new policy against self-IDing as indigenous for academia-related purposes.

[REDACTED] Thank you.
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Policy](#)
Subject: Re: draft indigenous verification policy
Date: Thursday, April 24, 2025 10:41:44 PM
Attachments: [MUNletter.docx](#)

Please see the attached letter re: the draft indigenous policy.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

[REDACTED]

Mr. Justin Ladha

Chair, Board of Regents

Memorial University of NL

St. John's, NL

Dear Mr. Ladha and Board of Regents:

[REDACTED] This is a letter to the MUN Board of Regents regarding a recent draft policy concerning "indigenous verification policy".

I have read the policy. It is at best a poorly written and ill conceived document. At its worst it is a lazy and cynical attempt at sideswiping particular indigenous groups via lateral racism. I will let the board decide which of these it is. Instead there should be meaningful discussions and drafting of a fair document with the aid of an independent counsel experienced in developing a fair and unbiased policy. This is vitally important as this type of policy will be seen as a potential template which will have not only local and provincial implications but national implications as many other educational institutions struggle with similar policies. So, the importance of getting it right in the first place becomes all the more important when one considers the far reaching implications not only geographically but temporally as future indigenous groups and affiliations seek for recognition. I am sure we are all aware of how bad policy today negatively affects generations tomorrow.

The matter of the relationship between key members of the division creating the draft policy should be discussed. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I would bring attention of the board to the fairly recent public and petty rhetoric perpetrated by groups such as Nunatsiavut, the Innu Nation and ITK toward legitimate indigenous groups such as Nunatukavut. It is not the purpose of this letter to debate either side but to simply make you aware of the potential concern for a significant conflict of interest. I would call upon the board to investigate this conflict of interest and to ensure there is fair representation at the table for ALL parties. It is my firm belief these issues should be discussed via the higher road of cogent mature

discussion. I believe the president of Nunatukavut has made several overtures to this extent but these other parties have yet to engage, instead depending on harmful public strategies rife with misinformation, political rhetoric and divisive dogmatic propaganda. Unfortunately the policy in question largely echoes this campaign of deception and division. The potential conflict of interest here could certainly bias the outcome of any policy generated by the office in question. It behooves the Board of Regents to ensure there is no conflict of interest in this circumstance as to allow otherwise will possibly propagate a large amount of harm to unfairly targeted groups.



MUN Is not an indigenous entity and has no business deciding who is and who is not indigenous. It would be akin to MUN deciding who is and who is not Christian, as an example. Would you ask a person to prove their religious identity as evidence of their faith? I doubt it. That would be hubris and arrogance beyond belief. Which is why I ask the Board of Regents to roundly and assertively reject the draft proposal put forward by your department of indigenous affairs. MUN Is a respected institution. And as such must be better and do better by all indigenous peoples.

Sincerely,



From: [REDACTED]
To: [Policy](#)
Subject: New indigenous identity policy
Date: Friday, April 25, 2025 6:50:21 AM

Good day,

I'm sending a quick note to acknowledge your new policy, regarding indigenous identity. I'm really pleased that you have taken this strong stance, I wish our federal government would do the same. Cultural appropriation is something that is happening more and more, it is very harmful to our identity and should be taken much more seriously by all levels of government. Once again, thank you for this, I commend you, it is time we have more institutions fall in line with your wonderful policy.

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Policy](#)
Subject: I commend you!
Date: Friday, April 25, 2025 11:44:05 AM

Hello,

[REDACTED]

“pretendians” on MUN campus. It made me cringe, and angry, because I felt they were only looking to receive services or programs which were intended to assist actual Indigenous students. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

So, I commend Memorial University for stepping up and taking a stand on your Indigenous identification policy. Keep up the great work.

[REDACTED]

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Policy](#)
Subject: MUN's Indigenous Verification Policy
Date: Friday, April 25, 2025 2:44:50 PM

Hello!

With regard to the discussion regarding MUN's Indigenous Verification Policy, I feel that self-identification as a Native is not enough.

In the case of the NunatuKavut Community Council, their members appear to be falsely claiming Indigeneity. For a long time now, the Nunatsiavut Government, other Inuit groups, and the Innu Nation have all rejected their claims.

I feel that only if NCC members pass a DNA test should they be eligible to claim Native status.

For some reason the debate attracts little attention to DNA testing, although I feel that many people have this in mind but are uncomfortable expressing it.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Policy](#)
Subject: Feedback for proposed MUN Indigenous Verification Policy
Date: Sunday, April 27, 2025 3:10:03 PM
Attachments: [MUN Indigenous Verification Policy.pdf](#)

Please see attached letter providing feedback for MUN's proposed Indigenous Verification Policy.

[REDACTED]

Subject: Deep Concerns Regarding the Draft Indigenous Verification Policy

Dear Dr. Jennifer Lokash,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I am writing to express my deep concern with the draft Indigenous Verification Policy. This policy is deeply rooted in colonized ideologies and is already causing significant harm to Indigenous youth across the province.

[REDACTED]

Driving more Indigenous students out of the classroom is not the answer. Policies like this will only widen the gap, not close it.

There are serious concerns about the objectivity of this policy, especially given the heavy involvement of the Nunatsiavut Government (NG). NG should know better than to endorse a colonial mindset [REDACTED] Blood quantum requirements and exclusionary definitions of identity are tools of colonization [REDACTED]

Allow me to provide a brief history lesson: When settlers first arrived in Labrador, they segregated themselves from the Inuit, viewing them as “savages” and “godless.” As relationships between settlers and Inuit grew and children of mixed ancestry were born, settlers invented new categories to maintain their racial hierarchies. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The draft Indigenous Verification Policy mirrors this colonial legacy and continues its harm today.

Memorial University must ask itself: is this really the legacy you want to leave? Deepening exclusion and perpetuating racism?

This policy undermines reconciliation, excludes Indigenous students, and perpetuates colonial harm at a time when you should be working to dismantle it.

I urge you to reject this policy. Listen to Indigenous students. Engage with **all** Indigenous peoples of the province, not just those with self-serving interests. Choose a future of inclusion, respect, and true reconciliation, not exclusion masked as procedure.

Memorial University claims to stand for reconciliation, equity, and respect for Indigenous Peoples. But true reconciliation is not about gatekeeping Indigenous identity or reinforcing colonial divisions. It is about listening, honoring lived experiences, and empowering Indigenous students to lead change. Right now, MUN is doing the opposite. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] You must do better.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Policy](#)
Cc: [Andersen, Cathryn](#)
Subject: Indigenous verification policy Consultation Comment
Date: Monday, April 28, 2025 9:40:40 AM
Attachments: [REDACTED]

NOTE TO APPLICANT: The attachment has been redacted pursuant to s. 40(1) [Disclosure harmful to personal privacy].

IAP Office

Hi

[REDACTED]

to state that Beothuck culture is extinct and beyond reclamation is, in effect, enacting a form of genocide against the Beothuck of Newfoundland in contravention of the terms of UNDRIP, and the basic Human Rights set in place by the United Nations; both universally apply to all people.

Please consider adding Beothuck to your Indigenous Verification Policy.

Regards

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: Policy
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Indigenous Verification Policy
Date: Tuesday, April 29, 2025 9:21:55 AM
Attachments: [re MUN policy.pdf](#)

Please see the attached letter.

Thank you,
[REDACTED]

Office of the Board of Regents

April, 29, 2025

Bruneau Centre, IIC-1001
Memorial University of Newfoundland
St. John's, NL A1C 5S7

policy@mun.ca

Dear Board of Regents:

I write on behalf of Mushuau Innu First Nation, Health Commission, to express our support for Memorial University's Indigenous Verification Policy (the "Policy").

The stated goal of the Policy is to move away from "self-declarations" of Indigenous citizenship / membership towards a verification framework that respects Indigenous protocols and practices.

The Policy acknowledges that "Self-declarations" of Indigenous identity are not sufficient because of the growing number of fraudulent claims of Indigeneity in Canada, a trend which is complicated by the growing number of collectives across Canada claiming to be Indigenous. We agree this is a significant problem. False claims of Indigeneity harm Indigenous peoples. They are a nefarious contemporary manifestation of colonialism, which erases and trivializes the experiences of Indigenous peoples under Canada's colonial regime.

That is why we support the Policy. As we understand it, the Policy will use a dual approach for recognizing Indigenous collectives. A group will be recognized as an Indigenous collective if it has been recognized by either (a) the Government of Canada as an Aboriginal people of Canada under s. 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982; or (b) its federally-recognized neighbours. Neighbours include those groups with whom a recognized Indigenous collective has historical relationships. The Policy recognizes, rightly, that Indigenous groups know who is Indigenous. The Policy lists three "pathways" through which individuals can establish their membership in one of these Indigenous collectives.

The Policy also rightly recognizes that it is not Memorial University's role to determine who is, and who is not, Indigenous. Those are complex issues, and it is not Memorial University's role to address them. Those questions are best left to other Indigenous peoples. Overall, we believe the Policy applies an appropriate level of scrutiny to mitigate the harms of both individual and collective identity theft, without imposing an undue burden on individuals seeking to establish a connection with a Recognized Indigenous Collective.

The Policy is therefore an important step forward on the path to Reconciliation, and we whole-heartedly support it. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.



Health Director, Health Commission

Mushuau Innu First Nation

From: President, The
To: vpindigenous; Andersen, Cathryn; Policy
Cc: Lokash, Jennifer
Subject: FW: Memorial University's Discriminatory Indigenous Verification Policy
Date: Tuesday, April 29, 2025 10:39:02 AM
Attachments: image001.png

Forwarding for your attention.

I have acknowledged receipt on behalf of the President's Office.

Best regards,

Rose

Rose M. Frew, Executive Assistant to the President (Correspondence)

President's Office, Room A-2028

Arts and Administration Building | 230 Elizabeth Avenue

Memorial University | St. John's | Newfoundland and Labrador | A1C 5S7

t: 709.864.8212 | f: 709.864.2059 | email: president@mun.ca



We acknowledge that the lands on which Memorial University's campuses are situated are in the traditional territories of diverse Indigenous groups, and we acknowledge with respect the diverse histories and cultures of the Beothuk, Mi'kmaq, Innu, and Inuit of this province.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, April 28, 2025 4:03 PM
To: President, The <munpres@mun.ca>
Subject: Memorial University's Discriminatory Indigenous Verification Policy

Dear President Lokash,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to Memorial University's proposed Indigenous verification policy, which, as it stands, excludes the voices and rights of the NunatuKavut Inuit community.

As a community recognized by the Government of Canada, the courts, and Memorial University itself, through the Labrador Campus constitution, [REDACTED] deeply troubled by the policy's failure to acknowledge the progress and recognition of NunatuKavut Inuit. This policy, relying on colonial definitions and a flawed external report, is not only misleading but also harmful [REDACTED]

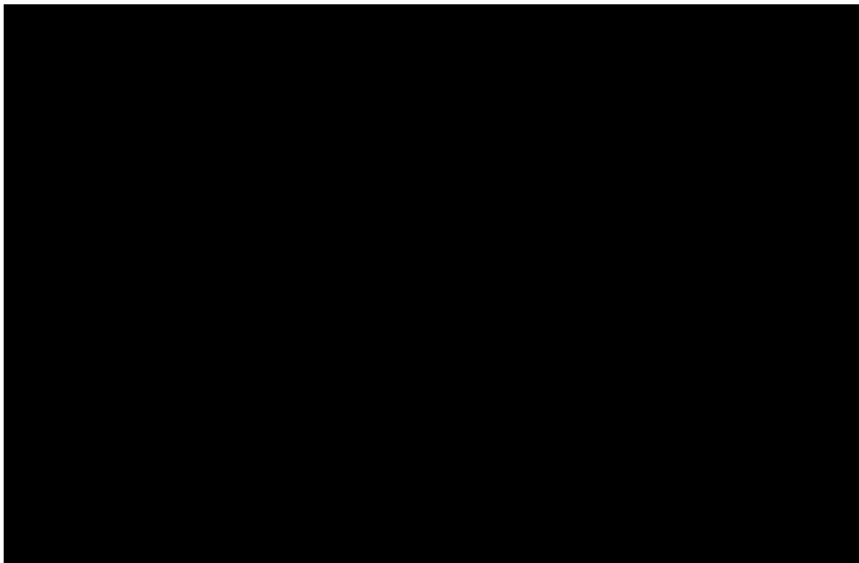
The exclusionary nature of this policy undermines the principles of inclusion and reconciliation that Memorial University purports to uphold. It devalues Indigenous identity and perpetuates harm by excluding thousands of NunatuKavut Inuit from Indigenous spaces within the university.

I urge Memorial University to take the following actions:

1. Immediately withdraw the proposed policy in its current form.
2. Begin meaningful, respectful, and rights-based engagement with the NunatuKavut Community Council (NCC) and other impacted Indigenous organizations in the province.
3. Introduce a policy based on recognition of rights, respect, and shared priorities, one that reflects Memorial University's commitment to true reconciliation.

As it stands, this policy does not reflect the values of Memorial University or the spirit of reconciliation. [REDACTED] I stand in solidarity with the NunatuKavut Inuit students, staff, faculty, and alumni and call for Memorial University to immediately correct this injustice.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter. I look forward to your prompt action in ensuring that Memorial University is a space that truly welcomes all Indigenous peoples.



From: [REDACTED]
To: Policy
Subject: Feedback on the Draft Policy for Consultation: Indigenous Verification Policy
Date: Tuesday, April 29, 2025 12:08:38 PM

Feedback on the Draft Policy for Consultation: Indigenous Verification Policy

Dear Committee:

I have read the draft document and provide some feedback below. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I very much welcome and appreciate the work of this committee. It is vital, and I understand that you solicit feedback in order to produce the most effective document. My contribution here is very minor, suffice to say that I have read the draft closely and hope the few comments I do have are of some value. (Most are just to say "this is good", I have little in the way of constructive criticism.)

Pages 1-4 clearly statement the purpose of the policy, its scope, and definitions.

Regarding the (page 3) definition **Self-declare**, this draft definition in my view covers the important points – I only mention this as it is clearly one of the most important issues to directly address in this document. I understand that this is why an Indigenous Verification Policy is required. Likewise the definition of **Verification** seems clear (and it is good that it is internationally contextualized).

Clause 1.1 (page 5) This seems to me to be as it should be: "Without proceeding through the verification process students will NOT be eligible for Indigenous specific scholarships, awards, etc." To proceed in any different manner would in my view be unfair.

Clause 2.0 (page 5) This clause makes a crucial point, emphasizing the requirement for a Verification Policy: "Collectives is, in part, accomplished through the implementation of a verification policy that respects the right of Recognized Indigenous Collectives to determine their own citizenship/membership in accordance with their own governance, customs, traditions, and procedures."

Minor point, you've probably got it already: there are two clauses 4.3 (4.3 Members of the University Community with Academic or Administrative Authority, 4.3 Office of the Vice-President (Indigenous))

Clause 4.3, Office of the Vice-President (Indigenous), "the VPI or delegated authority will provide related educational initiatives and resources to the University Community." Such education in my opinion is essential, as is the statement forming clause 5.0, Student Supports.

Clause 6.0, Compliance/Non-Compliance – again, this seems essential; without sanctions, the policy has no power; likewise clause 6.1.

Clause 8.0, Information Management – insert links to the 'records retention policy'. The

phrase “any associated schedules as applicable” feels opaque – provide clarification?

Clause 9.1, Third Party Requests for Verification “... As such, the University will not vouch, affirm, attest to, or deny the citizenship/membership of a former or current employee or student when requested by individuals or organizations that are external to the Memorial University.” [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I have read the section “Procedures” and this seems well thought through and articulated. A minor point, I felt that I wanted to have the information laid out in clause 3.0 “Verification Committee” right at the start of “Procedures”. Also, “communication with internal and external resources” feels a bit opaque - can any more transparent wording be used here? I’m just thinking about reading this if I were on a committee using the policy document as my guide - would I know what this was referring to?

I appreciate that a policy document is not light reading, so my few pleas for greater transparency/readability are probably not in order here. I’m fishing rather for constructive feedback, but in general I think this is a solid piece of work which covers the essential issues and offers committees good definitional and procedural guidance. It reflects the hard work and careful consideration of those who have put it together. I wish you well in reviewing the feedback and finalizing the document.

From: [REDACTED]
 To: Policy
 Subject: Feedback on the draft Indigenous Verification Policy document
 Date: Wednesday, April 30, 2025 10:36:36 AM

Dear policy office staff,

I am writing with feedback on the draft Indigenous Verification Policy document. I am evaluating based on some premises of what makes a good policy:

1. It causes more good than harm
2. It is feasible in terms of existing or new dedicated logistics, reporting structures, and administrative labour/burden
3. It aligns with other policies and stances at the university in a way that is not contradictory, and ideally strengthens all
4. It is sensitive to having different personalities and people in administrative positions
5. It is sensitive to the current climate of the university/province as well as future climates
6. All members of the university are treated equally under a policy

Given the complexity and politics of this policy, my first point of feedback is **to request a longer timeframe for feedback**. The policy on policies gives four weeks as a minimum response time, but I do not think that is enough time for a polarizing policy regardless of how thoughtful and careful the process might have already been.

Overall, I do not think this policy should go forward (see details below). I would recommend a policy on fraud (which MUNL does not have—[REDACTED] one on integrity in scholarly research and one on academic misconduct) which would best address the issue of identity fraud without the high error of false negatives (saying Indigenous Peoples and persons are not Indigenous) and further harm to Indigenous persons at MUNL and university-Indigenous relations.

My overall feedback is that the policy does not do well on points 1, 2, 3, 5, or 6.

1. It causes more good than harm

[REDACTED]
 [REDACTED] There are four core sources of harm of harm from my perspective: A. University-community relations. As I'm sure the policy office is aware of, the policy *de facto* alters Memorial's current stance that there are 5 Indigenous groups into the province to having only 4. This is already having impacts on university-community relations and university-Indigenous relations (including Indigenous people who are not part of NCC)
 B. This policy puts MUNL in the middle of the most contentious modern Indigenous politics, particularly via the "neighbour" clause. Indigenous groups often have Nation-to-Nation arguments and even fights, particularly when it comes to overlapping land claims, and casting doubt on indigeneity is a core method in those fights. As an example, there are three factions in Cayuga Nation that, among other tactics, claim the others are not legitimate, which under the policy means there is no valid Cayuga Nation. Sometimes this is legitimate and sometimes not, but the policy legitimizes all neighbour claims of false indigeneity, which will catch both

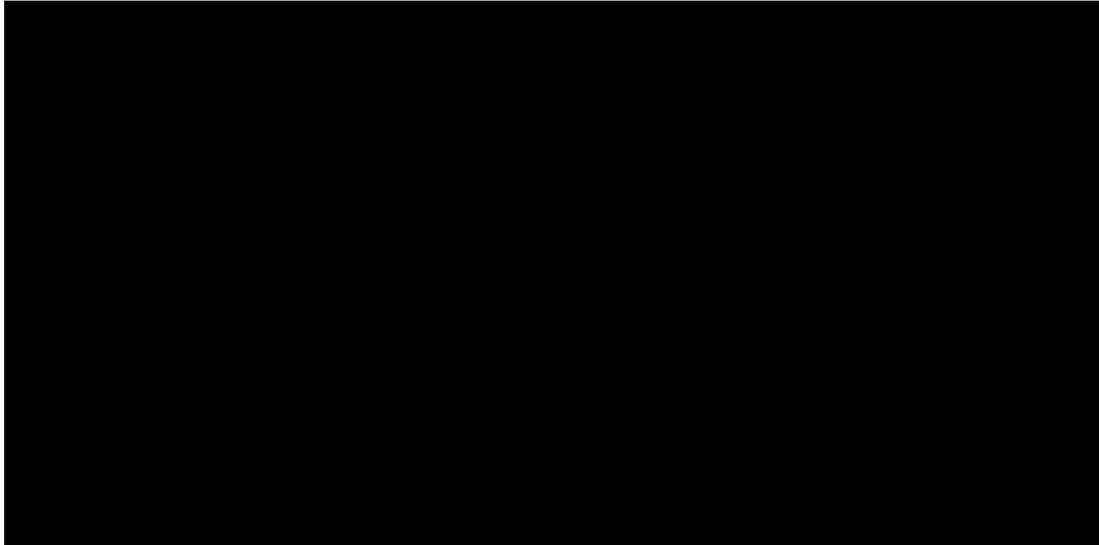
identify fraud as well as normal Indigenous politics

C. Though the policy states that this doesn't impact people's identities, it certainly does. As you may be aware, one of the core ways colonialism has been internalized is that some people are not Indigenous "enough", and even if an Indigenous person has access to resources through the policy pathway A, the surveillance and adjudication causes harm. The policy also introduces a concrete way that will fail to recognize many Indigenous people, mainly those that are most impacted by colonialism (from groups seeking but not yet granted Federal recognition, who cannot produce the type of documents desired via adoption, estrangement, abandonment, or are from countries without federal recognition of any kind and must go through pathway C, which is underdefined [and must be underdefined])

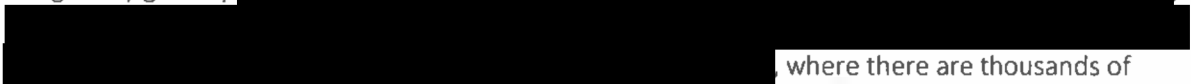
D. The people who go through pathway B or C, but especially C, must allow their employer or academic institution into their private lives in ways that are not replicated in other many other policies. While some policies such as disability or respectful workplace require some private information, they are only as they pertain to work. The policy office is in the best position to identify whether the degree of private information and investigation required for this policy path C is appropriate given similar policies.

2. It is feasible in terms of existing or new dedicated logistics, reporting structures, and administrative labour/burden

What are the administrative and staff requirements (funding, time, reporting structure) for this? If it is just for held seats and bursaries, that will be small. If it is for all material and reputational gain, that will be extensive.



The other core area of concern around feasibility is the research and expertise required for Pathway C does not exist. It is simply not possible to understand the nuances of Indigenous Nations and indigeneity globally.

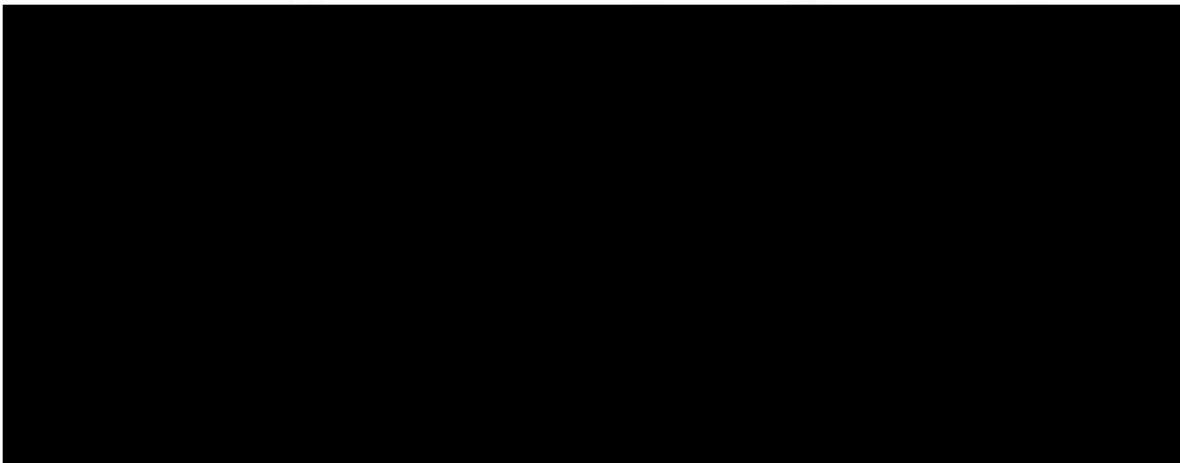


where there are thousands of Indigenous groups from whom you cannot know local practices, protocols, and traditions".

Two examples: Some Yaqui in the US have membership and a Nation, and some do not because

they were skipped by colonial agents who took down names in one place on one day in the 1860s. There is some argument among some Yaqui about whether some of those unrecorded groups are Yaqui. The Yaqui Nation says only that they can confirm who their own membership is, which has lead some research into fraudulent claims to assume that people who are not on the membership roll are not Yaqui, which is a current controversy around the indigeneity of actress Sacheen Littlefeather. This is a case where a committee without multiple Yaqui members or connections could rule that someone isn't Yaqui.

A second and more pressing example: Section 3.1.1 of the Policy: Pathway A contains a list of document types and Canadian Nations, which in turn incudes the Métis Nation of Ontario and Métis Nation of British Columbia. Bill C-53, which is what would recognize Métis Nation of Ontario and Métis Nation of British Columbia, hasn't passed so they are not federally recognized, and moreover that Manitoba Métis Federation and many Metis communities say that neither are Metis, which triggers the "neighbour" clause. This is an existing controversy that is well-represented in Canadian media, yet the error is in the policy, a document that likely will receive more care and attention from more people than a single verification claim. In short, the committee of experts who put together the policy was unable to do research in a very clear and easy to access example of a federally recognized Nation saying another aspiring Nation is not Indigenous. This also relates back to issue #1, where this error would likely be a news story outside of NL because it is an massive Indigenous controversy that MUNL has chosen to take on by creating a policy like this.



3. It aligns with other policies and stances at the university in a way that is not contradictory, and ideally strengthens all

As mentioned above, at the moment MUNL states that there are five Indigenous groups. For instance, the RIIG policy does currently require AIP from NunatuKavut Community Council, or even a bingo group made of 5 women from NunatuKavut Community Council.

The policy lists the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 2015 (ATIPPA 2015), but it is not clear how or where—the policy doesn't appear to fall under 62. It implies it will follow clause 64, but the information will go to a committee (whose make up is not detailed in the procedures).

Will the process have the same kind of infrastructure as HR or the registrar for protecting information (ie, not sending things via email, which can be ATIPPed)? How will this information be safe from ATIPP? If it is not, that has to be very clear, and will impact

Pathway B and C in particular in terms of risk.

MUNL's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in Employment policy 1.2 states, "The University's goal of a diversified workforce is achieved within a Human Rights framework which supports equity-deserving groups, fostering a culture of acceptance, respect and accountability, creating a climate free of harassment, racist and discriminatory barriers, and in recognition of the University's Statement of Vision, Mission and Values." How will this policy be evaluated *in concrete terms* (ie SMART), either now or after implantation, in terms of whether it fosters "a culture of acceptance, respect and accountability, creating a climate free of harassment, racist and discriminatory barrier"?

4. It is sensitive to having different personalities and people in administrative positions

This is not clear, as there is no detail in the procedures about the creation of the verification committee. However, it would have to include an extension of the Conflict of Interest policy, as the line between an Indigenous committee member working as an extension of their Nation and its policies versus as a member of MUNL would not be possible in many cases. It would also have to address the balance of the committee for Indigenous vs non-Indigenous people, and the number of Indigenous people per pathway (an over representation of pathway A possess a bias against pathway C, for instance).

The appeal process has to be updated, as what makes a valid appeal process is that it occurs outside of the original decision structure, to better deal with personalities, COIs, poor administration or lack of administrative resources, etc.

5. It is sensitive to the current climate of the university/province as well as future climates

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] It is also increases anti-Indigenous sentiment in general, and gives license to non-Indigenous people to start questioning Indigenous identity and belonging in general. It reduces the trust and relations with what are assumed to be pro-Indigenous spaces and offices. It is not a good time for this policy, even if the policy was perfect.

The appeal process must include retroactive evaluation if a Nation passes through federal recognition.

6. All members of the university are treated equally under a policy

Pathway B and particularly C require more resources, time, and emotional burden than pathway A. [REDACTED]

There will be greater delays in hiring for people who use Pathway B and C (or try pathway B to realize the require pathway C), particularly with the note that pathway "may include interview(s) with the applicant, research, and communication with the community/group."

[REDACTED]

People using Pathway C will also have to provide access to more personal information, and often more sensitive information, than other pathways, which increases risk to privacy as

well as just having an employer or university have more information about health, abuse, adoption, family, and other information that employers and registrar do not normally have access to.

The policy states, "an equally consistent standard of rigor will be applied in a manner respectful of the community's local practices, protocols, and traditions" when adjudicating Pathway C. [REDACTED]

Other issues/clarifications:

Grandparent clause: Clarify whether positions that are already held have to go through verification or only ones after the approval of the policy. This in the Q&A but not in the policy. There is also no time for Pathway B and C members to get their paperwork in order, so a normal policy lag of 6 months or 1 year would also be beneficial, should the policy move forward. [REDACTED]

Clarity on "reputational gain" or "material gain"

One part of the policy states verification is for cases of "hiring for staff and faculty positions; designated seats for Indigenous students; awards, scholarships, fellowships, bursaries, and funding opportunities slated for Indigenous people". That is clear. Another part mentions "opportunities of advantage such as material gain or reputational benefit" which is extremely broad and can be interpreted to mean whenever someone introduces themselves as Indigenous on a grant application [REDACTED]

Clarity on "persons entering into relationships with the University"

The policy states, "The policy is applicable to all members of the University community, including but not limited to students, researchers, employees, members of governing bodies, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, cultural advisors, and persons entering into relationships with the University." What does "entering into relationships with the university mean"? Co-applicants on grants? Joining an education program funded by a grant held at MUN?

Clarity on "All members of the university community"

The policy states: "All members of the university community share the responsibility for upholding the policy to protect Indigenous space [...] for Indigenous people at Memorial University. (pp 1)" without recourse to existing reporting structures or administrative authority. This means if an Indigenous person applies for something, they can be reported by all staff, students, faculty, and others that might be involved in or hear about the application. This is in a climate where there is already doubt cast on people's indigeneity, particularly those that are white-passing, Black, or in conflict with another Nation. It would be better to have an edit about using existing reporting structures or administrative authority (ie, if the issue is with a hire, it goes to the hiring committee first, then the dept head, etc).

Additional clarity is needed about "the university community" which normally includes alumni, people who use [REDACTED] facilities, and external partners.

Clarity on obligations.

The policy states, "4.1 Those Members of the University Community with academic or administrative authority, including any individuals in positions relevant to Indigenous-specific opportunities, bear the responsibility to maintain working and learning environments that support Indigenous verification for Indigenous-specific opportunities. This includes but is not limited to: a. participating in, and supporting participation in, education about this policy and its related procedures". [REDACTED] and what "education" means, and whether it applies to just particular opportunities or in general.

Clarity on Recognized Indigenous Collective.

What about groups that have entered into the federal recognition process but do not have it yet?

The process can take 10+ years.

What about groups that are not federally recognized but are both recognized AND not recognized by different neighbours (e.g. BC Metis?)

What about federally recognized groups that are not recognized by federally recognized neighbours (eg. Caygua?)

Clarity on : an official representative"

For pathway B, the policy states "the applicant must submit a statement of relationality with a Recognized Indigenous Collective and a letter from an official representative". I am not sure what this means? What is a statement of relationality? [REDACTED]

It also looks like "an official representative" does not include Elders or family members that are card-carrying members. This means Memorial has an official position that elected officials have more say over belonging than Elders (and thus hereditary chiefs). This also puts Memorial in some very contentious politics.

Clarification on Frivolous, vexatious, or extraneous reporting and good faith reporting

[REDACTED]

While it's good policy language, in general it just isn't feasible.

there's going to be a lot of harm and the policy structure won't be able to prevent it as written.

Likewise, how is good faith reporting identified, when we know racism can occur in good faith?

Clarification on reporting/grandparenting

The policy FAQ says this policy is on a going-forward basis, but it also states, "University employees who believe they have specific, verifiable evidence of false claims to Indigenous citizenship/membership", so there is a mechanism for removing the grandparent clause. This should be addressed either way.

Clarification on data reporting

The policy states, "8.0 Information Management. Information collected pursuant to this policy will be retained in accordance with the records retention policy of Memorial University and any associated schedules as applicable". However, there are different record retention policies and schedules, and some of them are contradictory. Private data, research demographic data, registrar data, etc all have different timelines and processes (and policies) for retention.

Requirements for evaluation

Usually a policy will note evaluation after 1-3 years, which should be included. However, the data for evaluation is not clear. I would strongly recommend that a baseline of the number of Indigenous-specific opportunities be created before the policy is implemented, if it is implemented, to see if those opportunities change. An audit of cases where the policy applies would be important at any rate.

Risks

The policy states, "This policy is not about determining or verifying a person's identity," but it seems like this policy can invite Human Rights complaints based on a combination of *identity-based factors* outlined in The Canadian Human Rights Act (CHRA). Has this risk been considered and mapped out with the Chief Risk Officer? Has there been a discussion with the Newfoundland and Labrador Human Rights Commission about whether this policy aligns well with the CHRA?

The policy evokes UNDRIP several times, and Canada is a signatory on UNDRIP (and ratified). UNDRIP has a broader definition of Indigenous community, which is most salient in adjudication of international applicants. This policy runs the risk of working against UNDRIP in international cases.

Verification Committee selection

I can't imagine a good way to do this that would evoke trust among the MUNL Indigenous community right now.

Timelines

The policy requires timelines, particularly as it will impact policies and practices around hiring and for some awards, which have built-in timelines within the terms of reference or policy already.

If at all possible, I would prefer to remain anonymous in my feedback.

Regards,



From: [REDACTED]
To: Policy
Subject: Feedback on draft of Indigenous Verification Policy
Date: Wednesday, April 30, 2025 2:50:40 PM

Dear policy committee,

1. I have read [REDACTED] thoughts and comments regarding the draft Indigenous Verification Policy. I **wholeheartedly** agree with and support every point they make. Their thorough analysis, [REDACTED] is extremely valuable to this process.
 2. More people (students, staff, faculty, and community partners) will be marginalized, disenfranchised, assimilated, and excluded from MUN's academic community than emboldened. The policy will hurt people more than help [REDACTED]. One of MUN's role is to **unite** intellectual, cultural, social, and ecological knowledge for the betterment of future generations. This policy **DIVIDES** [REDACTED]
 3. I DO agree with the policy's focus on **RELATIONALITY** – how we are embedded in a history of social circumstances, how we are embedded in groups that change and navigate social contexts, and how our past, present and future relationships are important to our culture identity.
 4. In general, the policy adopts a **fixed mindset** – it defines the current status of relationships while leaving no room for future growth. It spends more time defining boundaries instead of detailing the **possibility of contexts**. I firmly believe that adopting a **GROWTH** mindset would be much more constructive and allow for a more future-proof policy and this is a very dynamic and challenging context.
 5. What is this policy for? Is it to protect Indigenous students, staff, faculty, and community partners? Or is it to support them? [REDACTED] Fraud? How many fraud cases [REDACTED] had relative to *positive student and faculty identification examples through past MUN Indigenous initiatives*? Why create a policy for **exceptional cases** when it affects **everyone**? IF the main goal is to avoid fraud/misrepresentation, let's make a clear policy about what happens in those unfortunate cases.
-

[REDACTED]

Overall:

- I do not think this policy should go forward.
- We do not need a policy on verification, we need a policy on Indigenous misrepresentation and identity fraud.
- Detailed case-studies with MUN faculty (Indigenous and non-Indigenous who work with Indigenous community partners), Community partners, students, and staff to clearly understand the downstream implementation effects.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: Policy
Subject: Comment on draft Indigenous Verification Policy
Date: Wednesday, April 30, 2025 2:52:07 PM

Hi

Thank-you to the drafting committee for providing a document that sets the stage with definitions, provides excellent context and aims to seek the middle ground of being effective without being overly proscriptive. I certainly appreciate the amount of work that went into it!

Since you will receive lots of feedback, I will confine my feedback to a question. I wonder if the statement of purpose might be refined a little? It currently states:

1. "Purpose: To provide a framework for verifying Indigenous membership/citizenship at Memorial University, in a manner that respects Indigenous protocols and practices."

This seems incompatible with the later statement.

2. "Memorial University does not have the authority to decide who is or is not Indigenous, but rather works to understand, respect, and reinstate Indigenous practices of citizenship/membership."

Given the acknowledged limitations in statement 2 perhaps the purpose of the document might be refined? For example,

To provide a framework for determining eligibility for Indigenous-identified positions at Memorial University that respects Indigenous protocols and practices

Although, I am not clear if this suggestion captures the intended purpose, it appears to sit more firmly within MUN's remit as I understand it.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: Policy
Subject: Feedback [REDACTED]
Date: Wednesday, April 30, 2025 11:40:00 PM

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

Hello

Thank you for providing the opportunity to submit feedback on the Indigenous Verification Policy. [REDACTED]

Page 1 under scope – is it intentional that “Faculty” or “Instructors” are not listed in the last sentence when it speaks to who the document applies to?

Page 2- VERY editorial – there is a period missing off of the end of the indigenous definition

Page 3 in the self-declare section, the “S” in announces should be deleted (1st sentence).

Comments:

[REDACTED]

2. It seems that how this is actually going to be implemented is not included. Will further procedure documentation follow that will provide clarity? As an example, for those that will be making decisions (designated seats, faculty hires, research funding etc.), what needs to go to the Verification Committee and what does not? If everything has to go, what is that process going to entail? How often will the Committee meet and how will the decisions be communicated? Decisions on some general applications will depend on a timely response. Will certain documentation be confirmed as acceptable with discretion given to other bodies to apply that ruling – for example Government of Canada issued ID cards? This is the detail that is more relevant to the admissions committees in coordinating their work for the upcoming admissions cycle. I had expected that this level of detail would have been included in the policy. If this information has not yet been developed, when and who will they involve in the discussion?

3. How does the Indigenous seat decision-making at the PEI regional Campus of Memorial's MD program work with this policy?

4. Where is this information going to be held? The policy permits self-declaration but denotes Verification for specific scholarship-awards, etc. Will information be stored in Banner to help expediate decision making? As an example, what does “8.0 Information Management Information collected pursuant to this policy will be retained

in accordance with the records retention policy of Memorial University and any associated schedules as applicable" mean?

Thank you

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Policy](#)
Subject: [REDACTED]
Date: Wednesday, April 30, 2025 11:44:15 PM
Attachments: [REDACTED].docx

Hello

The attached [REDACTED]

Many thanks

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Feedback on DRAFT Indigenous Verification Policy and Verification Procedure for Applicants (due by 2 May 2025) [Indigenous Verification Policy.pdf](#)

Draft 17 April 2025; updated 29 April 2025

1. In addition to minor typographical errors such as missing periods and grammatical inconsistencies, note that on Page 8 under 7.0 Review, the final sentence lacks a valid reference “For more information, see procedure YYY”.

The following comments 2-7 are focused on the implications of administrative processes around implementation of the Verification Procedure for Applicants, in the specific context of a request for university admission, for a seat/position in a competitive-entry faculty/school that may be designated for applicants of Indigenous ancestry who have met the admission requirements of the program.

For ease of reference, the highlighting and superscript numbering 2-7 inserted in the extracted Verification Process steps below (from page 10 of the [Draft](#)) are followed by numbered comments.

Page 10 specifies the Verification Procedure for Applicants:

“1.0 Verification Process

- A. When an applicant **applies**² to an opportunity requiring the verification of Indigenous citizenship/membership with a Recognized Indigenous Collective, the administering unit/body must submit the **applicant’s name**³ to the Verification Committee.
 - **This process must be followed regardless of prior successful verification**⁴.
- B. If the applicant has already been verified by the Committee and all documentation is current and unexpired, confirmation will be provided to the administering unit/body. **If the Committee determines the applicant has not yet been verified or if previous documentation has expired, the administering unit/body must direct the applicant to submit documentation directly to the Verification Committee**³.
 - Unless otherwise directed by the administering unit/body, under no circumstances should an individual submit documentation directly to the Verification Committee.
- C. The applicant submits current and unexpired documentation to the Verification Committee. **The applicant must:**
 - **Indicate the Pathway under which they are applying**⁵;
 - Provide the documentation required under the indicated pathway. See section 2.0 of procedures;
 - **Indicate the Recognized Indigenous Collective of which they are a citizen/member**⁶.
- D. Documentation will be reviewed and verified by the Verification Committee and the outcome of the verification process will be communicated to the administering unit/body that requested verification.
 - **The Verification Committee may request additional evidence from the applicant**⁷ and/or consult with internal or external resources, as appropriate in order to complete their assessment.
- E. **The Committee will provide notification to the administering unit/body**⁷.”

2. 1.0 A. specifies “When an applicant applies...”. This seems inefficient and problematic in the context of application for university admission to a competitive-entry degree program.

- a. Are all applicants who indicate they wish to be considered for an Indigenous seat reviewed by the Verification Committee?

[REDACTED] If an applicant is determined [REDACTED] to be ineligible for admission to the desired program, it seems inappropriate and frivolous to begin the Verification Procedure immediately upon application.

- b. Has the frequency of meetings of the Verification Committee and volume of applicants for Indigenous seats been considered?

c.

d.

e.

- f. Could a wording change such as this help to avoid some of the undesired negative impacts of premature implementation of the Verification Procedure?

"When an **eligible application is under active consideration for** applicant applies to an opportunity requiring the verification of Indigenous citizenship/membership with a Recognized Indigenous Collective,..."

3. 1.0 A. specifies that "... the administering unit/body must submit the applicant's name to the Verification Committee." 10.0 B includes "If the Committee determines the applicant has not yet been verified or if previous documentation has expired, the administering unit/body must direct the applicant to submit documentation directly to the Verification Committee."

To require that the administering unit/body provide the applicant name in the first instance (rather than an applicant's submitted document) to the Verification Committee, and then to require confirmation under 1.0 B.

[REDACTED] Could a wording change such as this clarify the Verification Committee's review process?

"...the administering unit/body must direct the applicant to submit **the applicant's** documentation directly to the Verification Committee."

4. 1.0 A. specifies "This process must be followed regardless of prior successful verification."

- a. Is it intended that each application require separate implementation of the Verification Procedure?

5. 1.0 C specifies "The applicant must [i]ndicate the pathway under which they are applying."

it could introduce a processing delay.

6. 1.0 C specifies "The applicant must [i]ndicate the Recognized Indigenous Collective of which they are a citizen/member."

- a. In the instance of submitted documentation of citizenship/membership that is not included in the Policy's definition of "Recognized Indigenous Collective," what is the planned communication strategy for the administering unit/body to the applicant?
- b. Is it intended that the application have a list of Recognized Indigenous Collectives of which they are a member so that they choose on the application?
- c. Is there an avenue of appeal in the event that the Verification Procedure is not successfully completed?
- d. Is it intended that an applicant who submits documentation of citizenship/membership that is not included in the Policy's definition of "Recognized Indigenous Collective" may then have the opportunity to pursue "Pathway C: Displacement and Disconnect"? If yes, should that be stated? If no, should that be stated?

The reference on page 13 to "Reconsideration Procedure for Applicants" does not constitute a route of appeal.

7. 1.0 D, E specify that the Verification Committee may contact the applicant to request additional evidence, but would then provide notification of the outcome of review of that additional evidence to the administering unit/body (and not to the applicant).

- a. Has there been consideration of the possibility that Verification Committee contact directly to an applicant may result in an unrealistic applicant expectation, or leave the impression that an offer of designated seat admission may be forthcoming?
- b. Does consultation with external resources mean that an applicant could be discussed with parties outside of Memorial? Or is this intended as accessing general information that is not specific to the applicant?
- c. What is the next step in the process? Is an added Step F required to delineate that the administering unit/body communicates to the applicant that the Verification Procedure has or has

[REDACTED] where is the decision of the Verification Committee stored so it is accessible to the administering unit/body?

- d. In the event that the Verification Procedure is not successfully completed, does the administering unit/body provide information about the implications of this, including next steps for the applicant and possible avenue for appeal (see 6, above)?

8. The administrative burden that seems inevitable for the Verification Committee [REDACTED] seems daunting. Are detailed Terms of Reference envisaged for the Verification Committee [REDACTED]

9. University Calendar changes and administrative process changes (including changes to the online admissions application portal) may be required. Some of these could require substantial lead time and approvals processes. No doubt other administering unit/body process changes are also required. All of these may require additional consultation. What is the anticipated timeline for implementation of the Draft Indigenous Verification Policy and its Verification Procedure for Applicants?

From: Memorial University <newsline@mun.ca>

Sent: Monday, April 7, 2025 11:12 AM

Subject: Draft Indigenous verification policy and procedures open for consultation

Feedback welcome until May 2



Newsline

Memorial University's Indigenous verification policy and procedures are drafted and open for consultation.

All members of the university community are invited to review the proposed policy and procedures until May 2, 2025. Feedback on the policy may be sent to policy@mun.ca. For details, [see more in the Gazette](#).

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Policy](#)
Subject: Indigenous Verification Policy
Date: Friday, May 2, 2025 4:53:58 PM

Good day –

I note the policy is open for consultation to members of the University community:

[REDACTED]

Thank you!

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Policy](#)
Subject: Draft policy
Date: Thursday, May 1, 2025 10:06:24 AM

To Board off Regents
Memorial university of Nfld

[REDACTED]

I cannot passively accept MUN's draft policy. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Disappointment is the word that best describes my feelings regarding this draft policy. I am disappointed in our university and in those who formulated this policy without the inclusion or consultation of Nunatukavut. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Sincerely,
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Policy](#)
Subject: Feedback to Indigenous Verification Policy
Date: Thursday, May 1, 2025 10:34:32 AM
Attachments: [Indigenous verification policy.pdf](#)

Attached is my feedback to the policy!

Thank you,

[REDACTED]

I'm writing to offer my full support for the current draft of the Indigenous verification policy.

It is robust, well-thought-out, offers many pathways, considers the wide variety of contexts in which Indigenous identities have existed and continue to exist.

This policy will boost Memorial's reputation across the country. Additionally it puts Memorial in a strong position in terms of becoming a university that Indigenous scholars want to work with and study at, because they know their identities and the identities of other Indigenous scholars who take up Indigenous-specific positions have been verified and there will be no scandals. It also aligns us with the amazing universities who are leading the way with policies like this, offering strong and clear answers to the problem of false claims to Indigenous identity.

Having read though the document, I find it thorough, inclusive, and clear — and compassionate. The document has carefully set out its definitions and context to avoid confusion and has looked ahead to potential issues and addressed those. [REDACTED]

I think the one issue that still needs to be worked out are the details surrounding the verification committee, including how that committee is selected and who will be on it.

I believe the policy is necessary and is a strong answer to a colonial issue [REDACTED]

Thank you!

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Policy](#)
Subject: IVP feedback
Date: Thursday, May 1, 2025 11:43:54 AM

Good afternoon, I would like to offer feedback on the draft of the Indigenous Verification policy. I recognize that, to reduce fraud, parameters must be set on who can avail of opportunities designated for Indigenous people. I also recognize that wherever the threshold is set, there will ultimately be people who feel excluded. I believe that the draft policy as it exists, expresses measures in which people who might be initially excluded can be ultimately included. That is, members of representative organizations can access opportunities designated for Indigenous people as soon as they have confirmation from, for example, the Federal Government or neighboring Indigenous nations. This being the case, their efforts might better serve their members if it was directed at advancing their status by way of one of those bodies, as opposed to fighting for 'rights' in an academic institution. One of the troubling parts of this feedback process according to what I have seen on social media is that 'fighting for rights' seems to have taken the form of personal attacks on Memorial leadership. I, among others, see that this is misdirected, inappropriate, and unfounded. I see evidence that indicates [REDACTED] leadership has effectively managed a terribly complex and sensitive circumstance where self-identifying is no longer an adequate indicator of Indigeneity. This process gives groups of self-identifying people the opportunity to substantiate their Indigeneity by other means. I hope [REDACTED] leadership will be honored and celebrated for doing this challenging work.

[REDACTED]

From: First Light Board of Directors
To: Policy
Subject: Indigenous Verification Policy - Statement from First Light Friendship Centre
Date: Thursday, May 1, 2025 12:12:16 PM
Attachments: Statement on Identity and Belonging.docx.pdf

Good afternoon,

In response to Memorial University's Indigenous verification policy, please see the attached statement from [REDACTED] Chair of First Light's Board of Directors.

Thank you,

Board of Directors

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



Statement on Identity and Belonging

St. John's, NL – First Light understands that questions of Indigenous identity and belonging are deeply personal, deeply political, and, at times, deeply painful. These tensions did not begin with us as Indigenous Peoples. They are rooted in a long history of colonial systems that have sought to take from us our inherent rights to self-determination: to decide who we are, where we belong, and how we define ourselves and one another.

That ongoing and active history of colonialism continues to shape our present. We see it in the divisions and disagreements that surface within and between Indigenous communities – often in response to decisions made by institutions that are not our own. We see it, too, in the hurt and disconnection that many carry as they navigate complex and/or intersecting identities and relationships in urban spaces. Many hold diverse views on identity, yet disagreement need not lead to conflict. We can – and must – choose to meet it with a commitment to connection and respect.

Memorial University's proposed Indigenous verification policy has reignited difficult and emotional conversations. The impacts are real, and they are being felt throughout our community here in St. John's. In this moment, we believe it is more important than ever to lead with care, humility, and a commitment to good relations.

As part of the Friendship Centre Movement, First Light does not define, verify, or in any way police Indigenous identity. That prerogative belongs to Indigenous nations, collectives, and communities – grounded in their own histories, laws, and ways of knowing and being. Our role as a Friendship Centre is to hold space for Indigenous people seeking connection, cultural safety, and community support.

First Light is committed to being a welcoming place for all peoples regardless of identity, whether Indigenous or non-Indigenous. Friendship Centres have always been inclusive spaces, guided by Indigenous leadership and open to all who come in a spirit of learning, respect, and shared humanity. In moments of conflict and tension, this openness becomes even more important.

At First Light we remain grounded in our responsibility to care for all who walk through our doors, and to foster spaces of healing, dialogue, and mutual respect. We believe that identity cannot be reduced to bureaucratic rules, that healing happens in building good relations, and that our diversity should be a source of strength – not a cause for division.



Chair, First Light Board of Directors

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Policy](#)
Subject: Comment on the Indigenous Verification Policy
Date: Thursday, May 1, 2025 2:47:01 PM
Attachments: [Feedback on Indigenous Verification Policy.pdf](#)

See attached.

Here is my feedback on the draft Indigenous Verification Policy. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

1. Indigenous status should be restricted to Canadian Indigenous groups.

The policy document is meant to implement the “Strategic Framework for Indigenization”, and respond to the “Truth and Reconciliation Report”, and “Universities Canada Principles on Indigenous Education”. My reading of these documents is that they are concerned with reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples of Canada, not indigenous peoples around the globe.

Here are some excerpts supporting this reading:

From “Strategic Framework for Indigenization”:

“Indigenous Peoples have lived on these lands and waters since time immemorial. Therefore, it is critical that in this institution of higher education that we represent those Indigenous knowledge systems that have been built on these lands and waters. It is one way to honour the lands, waters and Indigenous ancestors of the territories in which we work and live.”

“Reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples across Newfoundland and Labrador means establishing and maintaining respectful relationships. It requires knowledge of both the accurate history and present-day situations of Indigenous Peoples in the province and across Canada.”

“Memorial must engage in consultation and partnership with the Indigenous peoples of Newfoundland and Labrador.”

The report also includes 20 photographs of indigenous art/artifacts, all of which are Canadian and almost all of which are from Newfoundland and Labrador. There is no indication that “indigenous” is meant to refer to any people outside of Canada.

From “Universities Canada Principles on Indigenous Education”:

“increase access to university education for First Nations, Inuit and Métis”

“unique needs of Indigenous communities across Canada”

The Truth and Reconciliation Report Calls to Action tends to use the term Aboriginal people rather than Indigenous People. In the context of section 35 of the constitution, aboriginal peoples refer to First Nations, Inuit, and Metis people.

Furthermore, the preamble to those calls to action reads:

“In order to redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission makes the following calls to action.”

This suggests that these actions are meant to apply to peoples affected by the legacy of residential schools, i.e. aboriginal people of Canada.

I think this draft verification policy is using an overly broad concept of Indigenous that is in conflict with the Strategic Framework for Indigenization, the Universities Canada Principles on Indigenous Education, and the Truth and Reconciliation Report.

2. MUN should not recognize the Metis Nation of Ontario as an Indigenous Collective.

The Metis Nation of Ontario has been denounced for falsely claiming Metis identity by the Manitoba Metis Federation and First Nation Chiefs of Ontario in a resolution passed at the Indigenous Identity Fraud Summit in 2024. Until/unless they are officially recognized by the Government of Canada, I do not think they should be recognized by Memorial University.

3. MUN should not recognize Nunatukavut as an Indigenous Collective.

I am aware that Nunatukavut has raised objections to the draft policy because they believe it would exclude them. I encourage the committee to resist these pressure tactics. The Innu Nation and the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami have made it very clear that they do not recognize Nunatukavut as a legitimate indigenous collective.

4. Relationality.

This is a minor point, but I object to the following sentence in the draft policy

“Indigenous Peoples around the world are united by shared worldviews rooted in relationality – the concept that we all exist in relationship to one another and to every facet of the world around us.”

It is presumptuous to make sweeping declarations about the worldviews of all Indigenous

Peoples and I do not understand why one needs to be made here. Better to cut this paragraph entirely, and begin with "This policy establishes a procedure..."