

TITLE: Indigenous Ceremonial Burning Protocol

Date of Approval: August 24,
2017; September 4, 2018

Effective Date: September 4, 2018

**Mandatory Review
Date:** September 4,
2023

Approved By:

- ☐ Board of Governors
☒ Executive Committee
☐ Senate

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All three of Sheridan's campuses are on what has been for thousands of years, the traditional territories of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, the Anishinaabe Nation, the Huron-Wendat and the Haudenosaunee Confederacy.

It is our collective responsibility to honour and respect those who have come before us, those who are here now and those who have yet to come. We are proud to be working and learning together on this land.

Sheridan acknowledges the importance of the use of sacred medicines and other Indigenous spiritual and cultural practices on our campuses. Indigenous students and employees are affected by ongoing colonialism and its legacy.

PURPOSE

This Protocol reaffirms the rights of Indigenous members of the Sheridan community to practice ceremonies such as Smudging, Pipe Ceremony, and Kullik Lighting on Sheridan campuses.

The primary goals of this Protocol are:

- to make Indigenous ceremonial burning practices possible on Sheridan's campuses;
- to ensure the health and safety of everyone on Sheridan's campuses; and
- to prevent fire and false fire alarms.

This Protocol does not constitute a process to request and gain permission to perform Indigenous ceremony; rather it provides clear direction so that sacred practices may take place without interruption or interference.

DEFINITIONS

Kullik Lighting

The Kullik is a seal oil lamp, often made of soapstone, traditionally used by the Inuit as a source of light and heat. Today, the Kullik has taken on a ceremonial function, often lit during important events and ceremonies.

Pipe Ceremony

A Pipe Ceremony is a prayer ceremony practiced in many First Nations cultures, and is usually led by a Pipe Carrier, who carries the ceremonial pipe on behalf of their people. The Pipe Ceremony was traditionally used to open and close negotiations between nations, to ensure that negotiations took place with a good mind.

Sacred Medicines

Tobacco (sema), sage (mshkwadewashk), sweet grass (wiingash), and cedar (kiishig), are Sacred Medicines in many Indigenous nations and are often used in traditional events and ceremonies, such as smudging. Sema, mshkwadewashk, wiingash and kiishig are the Ojibwe (Anishinaabemowin) words for these Sacred Medicines.

Smudging

Smudging is ceremony practiced in many First Nations and Métis cultures, in which one or more of the Sacred Medicines are burnt to purify a space and sometimes to invite the ancestors into a space. Some research has shown that smudging reduces levels of bacteria in a room¹.

PERMANENT CEREMONIAL BURNING LOCATIONS

At each campus, an area has been designated by Sheridan to be a permanent Ceremonial Burning Location, where Kullik lighting, Pipe Ceremonies, or Smudging may occur as needed. These locations will have permanent signage to educate the Sheridan community about these ceremonial practices. The locations are:

Davis Campus

- H153
- C322
- A-Wing Atrium

Hazel McCallion Campus

- TBD

¹ Shekhar Nautiyal, C., Singh Chauhan, P., & Laxman Nene, Y. (2007). Medicinal smoke reduces airborne bacteria. *Journal of Ethnopharmacology*, 114, 446-451.

Trafalgar Campus

- Room B127 (Centre for Indigenous Learning and Support)

Permanent Ceremonial Burning Locations will be places that the Sheridan community can expect ceremonies to happen regularly.

INTENT TO HOLD A CEREMONY

Most areas of the Sheridan are ceremony-friendly when producing an average amount of smoke associated with usual practices, such as burning sage in an abalone shell for 5-7 minutes.

If you desire to perform or host a ceremony in which you expect to produce more than an average amount of smoke, for example to give many people an opportunity to individually participate, it is important to notify Facilities Services (FS) at the appropriate campus, so that appropriate arrangements can be made to allow for your ceremony to go ahead without interruption. Twenty-four (24) hours' notice, where possible, is preferred. The following are the FS contacts for each campus:

Davis Campus

Jaime Cowan: jaime.cowan@sheridancollege.ca, x 2549

Hazel McCallion Campus

Danilo Perucho: danilo.perucho1@sheridancollege.ca, x2248

Trafalgar Campus

Gordon Ide: gordon.ide@sheridancollege.ca, x2251

NOTICE TO COMMUNITY

In order to meet Sheridan's obligations related to the Ontario *Human Rights Code* and the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, a notice must be posted in the area to be used for the ceremony. A poster template is available from the Centre for Equity and Inclusion (CEI) at equity@sheridancollege.ca (x2777).

This notice serves to educate our community about Indigenous practices, prevents interruptions that may arise from inquiries and/or concerns about fire risk, and safeguards the health and safety of Sheridan community members.

Some members of the Sheridan community may have disabilities that include sensitivities to smoke and/or scents. In order to ensure that everyone's rights are respected on campus, we must advise the community of when and where ceremonies will be taking place. This allows time and opportunity to make alternate arrangements related to their health.

THE RESPONSIBLE EXECUTIVES

The Responsible Executives for this Protocol will be the Vice President, Human Resources and Equity and the Provost.

The Centre for Equity and Inclusion and the Centre for Indigenous Learning and Support will be the Responsible Offices and will have the shared responsibility to review and revise this Protocol to be approved by the Responsible Executives.

INFORMATION RELATED TO PRACTICING INDIGENOUS CEREMONY AT SHERIDAN

- [Harassment and Discrimination Policy](#)
- [Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology, Academic Employees Collective Agreement](#)
- [Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology, Support Staff Collective Agreement](#)
- [Workplace Accommodation Policy](#)

MORE INFORMATION RELATED TO INDIGENOUS RIGHTS GENERALLY

- [Creed and Human Rights for Indigenous Peoples \(Ontario Human Rights Commission\)](#)
- [Human Rights Code, R.S.O. 1990, c. H.19](#)
- [Occupational Health and Safety Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. O.1](#)
- [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action](#)
- [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#)