

###### Council Minutes

Thursday, October 17, 2019

7:00 pm, Dunning Hall 11

Speaker: Thomas Wright

Secretary: Dana Fahey

*Council begins, 7:11pm.*

# I. ATTENDANCE

Thomas Wright: Welcome back everybody. Because not enough people notified the Director of Internal Affairs that they were going to be absent we did not reach quorum, and therefore we can’t proceed with council. We still have a special land acknowledgement to do in light of recent events that happened at Chown Hall, for that we’re going to turn over to Brielle.

# ii. presentations

Brielle Thorson: Hello everyone if you don’t know me I’m Brielle Thorson, I’m Danish from my father’s side and I’m Cree from my mother’s side, I just introduced myself in Cree and I said that I was a Cree woman, you only would’ve understood that if you were Cree. I said that I went to Queen’s University and I thanked the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee people. So, I’d like to start with acknowledging the fact that we’re on Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee traditional territory, and I’d also like to acknowledge all those that came before them, and after them, and everyone that calls Kingston home today. Though to do a land acknowledgement I think we also have to think more about the historical context of our colonial history in Canada, dating all the way back to first contact. Not that I want to get too much into all that stuff because there’s a lot to talk about there, but I think we really need to think about when we recognize the territory, the people that call this place home and used to call it home, the lives they used to live, their cultures, languages, and traditions that they shared and still to this day continue to practice. So, when we talk about reconciliation, I think we need to go beyond land acknowledgments, which are very important but I think we also need to know what that means. To me, that means recognizing that probably most of you including half of myself are settlers, now that’s really important to recognize, that you are not necessarily the first people of Turtle Island. That’s not to pass blame on the history of Canada, but I think in order to work towards truth and reconciliation we need to work towards that truth, we need to come to a collective understanding of the history of Canada and how it came to be, and the history of both the colonial side and the Indigenous perspectives because those differ greatly. So, we can talk about inter-generational trauma caused from the colonial legacy of the residential schools, the Sixties Scoop, the Indian Act, and many of these things, there’s a lot to touch on there and I don’t want to focus on all those negatives because I think there are a lot of positives in moving towards this truth and reconciliation. I think it means that we can start on the same page, we can start with some better inclusion, diversity and equity on campus. I think that what happened last week was a reminder of how far we have to walk to move towards that truth and that reconciliation of our relationships and what a collective future for Canada looks like. So, saying that I think we can talk about allyship, because it shouldn’t just be Indigenous people’s responsibility to move towards this truth and reconciliation, it needs to come from non-Indigenous and Indigenous peoples alike. So, I’m not trying to pass blame on our colonial history on all of you because none of you are responsible for it. But we’re all responsible for the actions that took place last week. Just as your parents or grandparents and mine as well are responsible for ignoring residential schools while they were taking place and the Sixties Scoop. So, last week was a reminder that we need to listen to Indigenous voices and Indigenous peoples because there is systemic and embedded racism in all institutions within Canada, including Queen’s. So, how can we combat that? I think first it starts with listening. We need to listen to what Indigenous students and Indigenous peoples are saying, because what they have to say is important. When we share our feelings and our thoughts, our traumas and our stories, it’s so important to listen and try to empathize with those people. As a student whose Indigenous, as a fourth year Apple Math student, I’m not just a student. I’m a family member back home and I carry a lot of those traumas that my family went through as a grandchild of resident school survivors. I’m not up here saying I’m better than you because I have these experiences, but I think we need to acknowledge what’s happened in our past lives and listen. So, there’s great resources on campus like the Four Directions Centre, I really recommend attending a blanket exercise if you haven’t already. It’s a great opportunity to listen and to learn and to get to that truth from our past. Secondly, I think that everyone can do research. There’s so much to learn about our history Canada and about the issues that are happening today. There’s over 50 long-term drinking water advisories in Canada on Indigenous communities; that’s really disturbing. And I think we need to start listening to these statistics, start learning about these issues that Indigenous people are facing and research them. A lot of Indigenous people are currently faces the burden of constantly having to share those emotional stories and traumas and have to advocate for those issues. I think it’s time for allies, which many of you are, to start advocating for them as well and start learning more so you can help move forward with those issues. The third thing I’d like to say is that I think that allyship comes from supporting the people that are most effected. SO, for example last week we had the Sacred Fire, a lot of allies came which is amazing, it’s great to see the support that Queen’s has for Indigenous people and LGBTQ+ people, but the one thing I realized is that as much as issues hurt everyone in our community, we need to give attention to those who it affects most. So, I was there and a lot of allies were sitting on the inner tipi, and a lot of us Indigenous students were sitting on the outskirts. So, I think that shows too how sometimes there’s a time to give Indigenous students that space since there was none for so long. SO I think that comes from knowing when to support Indigenous student and support those initiatives by being behind them, amplifying those voices, sharing those stories and inspiring people. There are even Indigenous children doing the same work in Canada that we should be listening to. Try to amplify those voices, follow Indigenous leaders on Facebook and Instagram, there’s so much you can learn from them, and doing all those things; listening, researching, and being a good ally. I think that’s all I have to say.

Thomas Wright: Thank you Brielle. Just a reminder that although we are not having a full council please sign the attendance and proxy book. Next up we have a presentation on inclusivity from Matt and Evelyn.

Evelyn Poole: Hi everybody, my name’s Evelyn I use she/her pronouns.

Matt Panetta: My name is Matt and I use he/him pronouns.

Evelyn Poole: We’re from Get Real which is an organization that focusses on inclusivity of the LGBTQ+ community. I’m the co-chair.

Matt Panetta: I’m the director of presentations. So, we’d like to start by thanking you for inviting us here tonight to speak about the incident that occurred in Chown Hall last week.

Evelyn Poole: Matt wrote this really lovely and well-worded letter, so we’re going to start off by reading it. The letter that was written and posted was a direct attack on the Indigenous and queer community at Queen’s University. It is absolutely imperative that we stand together as a community to condemn this behaviour, and the message that was sent out. It is important to acknowledge that we are trespassers of the stolen land of the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee people, and that and that queer and Indigenous persons are definitely effected by these events.

Matt Panetta: As student leaders, we must come together to support those who have been effected, as well as to educate the student body on why these actions are inappropriate so that we can prevent any similar events in the future. The severity of this crime is indicative of the need for our community to stand up and contribute even more to the fight against bigotry and ignorance. It must be made clear to the student body that no form of anti-Indigenous or homophobic sentiments will be tolerated.

Evelyn Poole: So, we’ve compiled a list of things that you can do as allies to the LGBTQ+ community or as members of the LGBTQ+ community, to make Queen’s a generally more inclusive environment and actions you can take even within a council to make it even just the slightest bit more inclusive.

Matt Panetta: First and foremost, it’s important to listen to queer individuals and queer voices when they bring these concerns to you. These issues must be validated regardless of your own experiences. We all have to remember that we do not have the same history. So, something that may not come across as homophobic or transphobic to you, may be very triggering to an individual with those experiences.

Evelyn Poole: It’s also really important to leave space for people who have these experiences or who are a port of the LGBTQ+ community because as we mentioned already it is a marginalized group and they may have experiences other may not necessarily be able to relate to. It’s also important to not speak over them because we are a minority group and it’s valuable to be able to communicate for ourselves.

Matt Panetta: It’s also important to take an active supporting role rather than a passive supporting role. So, you can say you support the queer community, but something we always love to see is allies engaging in queer activities when welcome and supporting queer fundraisers. Once again, that goes back to the idea that when you’re engaging in an activity with the queer community, for example Pride, remembering that you’re a guest there and not to make the event a bout you but rather the people you’re there to support.

Evelyn Poole: On the topic of questions, because a lot of us may not be so familiar, it’s okay to ask questions but also remember that some individuals in these communities might have traumatizing experiences in regard to their identity, so it shouldn’t always be on the members of this community to explain these experiences. And as mentioned in the presentation before us, it is very valuable to look into research and educate yourself because there are so many accessible resources in the internet now.

Matt Panetta: Another point, even if you are not being actively homophobic, queer individuals have been ostracized by much of the community, and a great step forward would be fostering inclusive spaces, and welcoming queer people into predominantly straight events.

Evelyn Poole: It’s also important to educate yourself on queer history, and queer terms. Get Real is actually an overarching organization and a really cool initiative that they did this last week is that they have these t-shirts with QR codes on them. You can just take your phone and scan a code and it brings you to this website. This is kind of a tangent, but with the new education cuts as some of you might have heard, the sex-education curriculum has been reverted to the 1998 curriculum which doesn’t include a lot of queer sex education, which a lot of us could have benefited from in high school. What Get Real decided to do is that when you scan that QR code it brings you to a list of terms that explain different queer identities and provides some queer sex education. So, we’re going to compile a list of resources and we’re going to add that one in there, and that could be a first good step for you.

Matt Panetta: It’s also important that if you witness homophobia, transphobia or any type of queer phobia, that you call it out immediately. That shouldn’t just be done is there are queer individuals around you, being an ally is something that is happening 24/7, and people that have the power to do so should be standing up when the people that are marginalized can’t do so for themselves.

Evelyn Poole: Who’s heard of intersectionality? Good, important! So, intersectionality is the concept that all of us have these different spheres of our identity that are always in constant intersection with each other. So, the experiences that I have as a cis-gendered queer woman are going to be different from everyone in this room who identify was different factors. So, it’s important that the combination of our experiences define what we experience, and what someone else is experiencing might not be the same thing as what you’re going through. The best tip for that is again to listen and to have an open ear, leaving space for everyone to voice what they have to say.

Matt Panetta: Another important point is, on pronouns. Yesterday was actually pronouns day, I don’t know if anyone’s heard of that. So, this is something that you can do to make a more welcoming environment for trans individuals and gender non-conforming individuals. It’s just introducing yourself as you normally would with your name and your pronoun as Evelyn and I did at the beginning of our presentation. You can also add your pronouns to your business cards, to your business uniforms, and to your email signature to normalize that behavior.

Evelyn Poole: I see name cards here, that would be perfect for pronouns. One of our last points is to provide resources for the queer community, there are so many. I know they get thrown out there all the time but there are lots of resources for support on campus for people who are struggling with aspects of their identity or anything. Quick plug, Get Real has a lot of events coming up, including the Queer Prom, which is open to not only members of the LGBTQ+ community, but allies as well. There’s also the education on queer issues project which has discussions every Tuesday touching upon all sorts of different queer topics. Their next one is this Tuesday and I believe it is on Asexuality and Aromaticism. Even if you don’t have anything to contribute, it’s super valuable to go and listen and hear their voices being shared.

Matt Panetta: So, if anyone has any questions on the content or would like us to expand on any of the things we’ve said. Feel free to approach Evelyn and I at any point after council, and we’ll also be giving our contact information out to everyone.

Evelyn Poole: Thanks so much everybody!

Thomas Wright: Thanks so much to Matt, Evelyn and Brielle for coming in and shedding some light on these supportive issues. I’d like to thank everyone for coming out to council, we really appreciate that you take the time to volunteer, and I’m sorry we couldn’t carry out the whole meeting.

Felix LeClair: Seeing as council will not be voting, will it still be possible to receive the reports from the executive director team?

Thomas Wright: I believe no because we can’t adopt the agenda. The reports were sent out with the agenda in the council newsletter. Any proxy’s that would like to see the reports just email someone, it’s also on the website. Thank you all for coming out!

**Attendance (voting members)**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Position** | **Proxy** | **Notified the DoIA (Y/N)** |
| Sam White | Senior Senator | None | N |
| Kaija Edwards | Sci 22 Vice-Pres | None | Y |
| Katherine Faulkner | Sci 22 FB rep | None | Y |
| Matt Julseth | Sci 21 Pres | Matthew Grekul | Y |
| Kate Lappan | Sci 21 Vice-Pres | Spencer Lee | Y |
| Miranda Bundgard | Sci 21 FB rep | None | N |
| Alex McKinnon | Sci 20 Vice-Pres | Carson Cook | N |
| Coleen Galang | Civil Pres | Jared Mason | Y |
| Jared Mcgrath | Apple Math Pres | David Hoskin | Y |
| Jon Groh | Chem Pres | Lydia Moorehead | Y |
| Ally Eastmure | EngPhys Pres | Chris Hudson | Y |

*\*All first-year voting members were absent due to a midterm*