

Bylaws of the Indigenous Studies Program  
University of Kansas

[Approved by the Task Force on the Reorganization of Indigenous Studies at KU  
Fall2011]

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## I. Mission

The mission of the multi-disciplinary Indigenous Studies Program is to educate students and promote scholarship about the complexity and diversity of Indigenous peoples' cultures and histories, and to provide students with the knowledge to understand and assess the U.S. tribes' unique relationships to the US government. Indigenous Studies encourages appreciation of the contributions of Indigenous peoples to the global society, provides students with an understanding of the difficulties confronting tribal nations, and offers foundational knowledge to assist them in finding innovative solutions to solve those problems.

## II. Faculty

### A. Membership:

1. Eligibility for membership in the Indigenous Studies program, with all rights, privileges, and responsibilities as described in II.B., requires:

- a. That the individual holds a faculty appointment at the University of Kansas.
- b. That the individual is actively engaged in research pertinent to the mission of the program and has made positive scholarly contributions relating to Indigenous Studies, commensurate with rank and years of service.
- c. A positive record of effective mentoring and instruction of students, commensurate with rank and years of service.

2. Admittance to membership:

- a. Nominations for membership to the Indigenous Studies Faculty will ordinarily be made by the Director, but the Executive Committee will also entertain self-nominations from faculty interested in joining the program.
- b. Membership in Indigenous Studies is decided by a vote of the Executive Committee. After a majority vote in the affirmative, the Director will send an invitation to the selected member. If the invitation is accepted, the invitee becomes a member of the Faculty with all attendant rights and privileges. This is accomplished through the affiliate appointment of the faculty member as a courtesy professor to the Program.

3. Removal of Faculty status. Any individual may have their membership status revoked for any one of the following reasons:

- a. The individual withdraws their membership.

- b. The individual no longer holds an appointment at the University of Kansas.
- c. The Executive Committee determines one of the following:
  - i.) The individual no longer maintains a research agenda pertinent to the mission of the program.
  - ii.) The individual has disengaged from Indigenous Studies activities such as attending meetings, serving on committees, working with Indigenous Studies students, etc.,.
  - iii.) The individual has failed to comply with academic policies or procedures established by the program.
  - iv.) The Director concurs with the Executive Committee's recommendation for removal of the individual following its annual review of faculty. (See V.A.2.a. below)

4. Appeals. In the event that an individual seeks to appeal a decision removing his or her membership status, he or she must file an appeal with the Executive Committee within 15 days of receiving the decision. The Executive Committee must reach a decision and notify the individual within 15 days. Appeals may be upheld by a majority of Executive Committee members.

#### B. Rights, Privileges, and Responsibilities:

1. Attending Meetings: All Indigenous Studies Faculty have the right to attend Indigenous Studies Faculty meetings.
2. Voting: All Indigenous Studies Faculty have the right to vote for members of the executive committee, after the Dean appoints the initial committee.
3. Teaching: All Indigenous Studies Faculty who are extended courtesy appointments can conduct directed readings or independent studies with Indigenous Studies students, serve as primary advisors of students seeking a degree or certificate through the Indigenous Studies Program, and teach core courses when the need arises.
4. All faculty members are expected to actively and regularly participate in the Program.

C. Evaluation. The Indigenous Studies program will evaluate faculty members annually on their contributions to the program, including teaching, advising, and directing MA theses or portfolios. These evaluations will be provided to the chairs or directors of their home units for inclusion in their annual evaluations.

1. Indigenous Studies faculty members will be evaluated on the basis of the following activities according to the following procedures:

a. Teaching core courses or other courses with the ISPcourse listing, including those cross-listed. Every individual teaching a course with the ISP listing will arrange to have a copy of their student evaluations and course syllabus sent to the Director after completion of the course. The Director will write an evaluation of the course to be provided to the faculty member and to be used by the Executive Committee during its annual review of faculty members. In the event the Director teaches an ISPcourse, the most senior member of the Executive Committee will write the evaluation of the course and provide the Director and Executive Committee with the results.

b. Directing Master's Theses. Every individual directing an Indigenous Studies Master's thesis must abide by the Program's and the University's policies and procedures. [See VII. A. below] The Director, in consultation with the Student Progress Committee, will evaluate annually each faculty member who directs one or more Master's students to ensure compliance with the policies and procedures of the program and to gauge a faculty member's advising of his or her students to timely completion to degree. The evaluation will be provided to the faculty member and to the Executive Committee prior to its annual review of members.

c. Research and Service. In order to document their continuing activity in the program and a continuing research agenda pertinent to the mission of the program, every faculty member will submit to the Executive Committee an updated curriculum vitae before the end of the first week of the spring semester. The Executive Committee will make a recommendation to the Director regarding any cause to remove membership from any individual for reasons outlined in II. A. 3. above.

### III. Director

#### A. Selection:

The Director of Indigenous Studies is appointed by the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences in consultation with the Executive Committee. The term of appointment is usually for a period of three to five years and can be renewed at the discretion of the Dean in consultation with the Executive Committee.

#### B. Responsibilities:

1. The Director is the administrative and operating head of Indigenous Studies, the chairperson of the Executive Committee, and an ex-officio member of all other committees. As a faculty member, he or she retains all rights and privileges thereof. The Director is the official representative of Indigenous Studies to other departments/programs, divisions, and administrators of the University, except in

those cases when the Director or the faculty, acting jointly and with the Director's consent, specifically designate another faculty member of Indigenous Studies to represent the program.

2. The Director calls all committee meetings, directs and oversees Indigenous Studies programs, initiates and/or carries through curricular and other changes approved by the Executive Committee, appoints and oversees Indigenous Studies staff, supervises the Indigenous Studies budget, applies Indigenous Studies and University rules as appropriate, and performs other normal tasks as required by the College and other University administrative units.

3. The Director is responsible for updating and correcting changes approved by the Executive Committee in the Indigenous Studies Bylaws or in the other official documentation necessary for the operation of the program. The Director shall send copies of all changes to program faculty and make these available to new faculty members and staff.

4. The Director advises all students on all aspects of the Program except for research in the student's area of specialization, for which the student will select an area advisor from willing program faculty.

5. The Director chairs the Student Progress Committee.

6. The Director chairs the Admissions Committee.

#### IV. Meetings

Indigenous Studies Faculty meetings are open, except when a majority of the Executive Committee elect to go into executive session. At such times, only Executive Committee members will remain. The Director provides an agenda for each meeting at least 48 hours in advance, presides as chair of faculty meetings, and conducts the meeting in an informal manner. However, he or she may invoke *Robert's Rules of Order* at his or her discretion. Minutes will be taken by a faculty or staff member, as appropriate to the meeting agenda, designated by the Director. Minutes will be distributed after the meeting and presented for approval at the following meeting. Indigenous Studies Faculty meetings will be held at least twice per year, usually with one in the fall and one in the spring term. Meetings at other times can be determined by the Director, by petition of 20% of the members, or by any three members of the Executive Committee.

#### V. Standing Committees

##### A. Executive Committee:

1. Membership. The Executive Committee is chaired by the Director of the Program, who serves as a voting member. The Committee will additionally have at least four tenured or tenure-track faculty members initially appointed by the

Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. At least three members of the five-member committee must be individuals whose academic work focuses primarily on North America, with this number to be adjusted proportionally should the size of the committee change. The terms of these initial appointments will be staggered with the first member serving for four years, second member for three years, third member for two years, and fourth member for one year. Upon completion of his or her term, an individual must wait a year to serve again on the Executive Committee unless there are no other eligible members available to serve.

Replacement of initial appointments will be for a full four year term. Nominations to fill these positions will be made by the Director and confirmed by a majority of the voting members of the Program. In the event that an Executive Committee member steps down or has been removed, the Director will nominate an individual to serve out the remainder the vacated position and the voting members of the Program will confirm.

Removal of a member of the Executive Committee will be initiated by the Director and will require approval of a majority of the voting members of the Program.

## 2. Duties.

a. Annual Review of Faculty: At the beginning of the spring semester, the Executive Committee shall review an updated c.v. of all members of the Program, the Director's evaluations of the performance of each individual who taught a core course over the past calendar year, and the Director's evaluations of each member who directed a Master's thesis student over the past calendar year. The Executive Committee shall provide their recommendations for continuing membership in the Program to the Director who will then formulate his or her own evaluation as to the continuance or discontinuance of the individual in the Program. The Director will send his or her decision to each faculty member being reviewed prior to March 31<sup>st</sup>.

b. Determining Membership: The Executive Committee will entertain self-nominations and nominations by the Director for membership in the Program. Nominations are confirmed by a majority vote of the Executive Committee. Voting must be by secret ballot.

c. Policy Creation and Changes: The Executive Committee is the main policy-generating and decision-making body. The Executive Committee oversees policies regarding membership, curriculum, degree programs, and admissions. Any proposed changes to these policies must first be brought to the Executive Committee.

d. Creation of Committees: The Executive Committee can create *ad hoc* committees to deal with extraordinary situations that arise.

e. Approval of Master's Theses and Portfolio Exam Committees: Master's students will submit the proper forms identifying the composition of their committees at least two months prior to a Master's Thesis or Portfolio exam for approval. In the event of disapproval, the Executive Committee will make recommendations regarding the proper composition of the Thesis or Portfolio committee.

### 3. Meetings and Voting.

Only members of the Executive Committee can vote at their meetings. Meetings are open except when a majority of Executive Committee members elect to go into executive session. In such cases, participation is limited to Executive Committee members and the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences or his or her designees.

## B. Curriculum Oversight and Graduate Student Progress Committee:

1. Membership: Three members appointed by the Director on the basis of fields and experience, subject to the approval of the Executive Committee.

### 2. Duties:

Identify and approve courses to be cross-listed with ISP.

Twice a year, early in the semester, review the ISP offerings for the following two semesters to ensure that the core courses will be offered and an adequate number of electives will be available to permit students to complete their degrees, certificates, or minors in a normal timeframe.

Before February 1<sup>st</sup> of every year, the Graduate Student Progress Committee will review the academic performance of each Master's student and write a one-page summary of their findings. The summary will be provided to the Director who will then provide a report to both the advisor and to the student. If a student's progress has been hindered by advising or procedural problems, the Executive Committee will be notified.

## C. Admissions Committee:

1. Membership: Three program faculty members appointed by the Director.

### 2. Duties:

a. Following requirements for admissions established by the Program and College Office of Graduate Affairs, the Committee reviews applications for admissions from prospective Master's students and makes recommendations to the College Office of Graduate Affairs for admissions of new students. Any exceptions to the guidelines must be approved by a majority of the Executive Committee.

b. Selects students to receive scholarships administered by the Program and nominates admitted Master's students for any scholarships, fellowships, or assistantships for which they are eligible.

#### D. Advisory Board:

1. Membership: Individuals without an appointment at the University of Kansas who have expertise or interest in Indigenous Studies and who have the desire to help the Indigenous Studies Program fulfill its mission. Such members may include but are not limited to the following: alumni, representatives from federally recognized Indian tribes and other Indigenous leaders, local professionals, and scholars outside of KU.

2. Duties: The Advisory Board will meet once a year and receive a report from the Director and other faculty about the program and its activities. Members of the Advisory Board are asked to make recommendations to improve the program. Recommendations are non-binding until approved by the Executive Committee.

E. Ad Hoc: The Director or the Executive Committee can create *ad hoc* committees to make recommendations to the appropriate body regarding extraordinary situations or issues. Such committees can be composed in part or entirely of individuals who are not members of the Program.

## VI. Hiring

The composition and number of the staff is necessarily dependent on College and University resources, regulations and approval. In the event that a hiring opportunity arises, the Director will conduct the process.

## VII. Academic Programs Oversight

### A. Master's Degree Program:

1. Admissions: Admissions standards as established by the College Office of Graduate Affairs, as well as such standards established by the Indigenous Studies Program as published in the *Graduate Handbook* and on file with the College Office of Graduate Affairs, will be upheld. Any exception to these standards must be approved by the Executive Committee.

## 2. Oversight of Master's Degree Requirements:

- a. Requirements for the Master's Degree are established by the Executive Committee and approved by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.
- b. The Director will publish current requirements on the Program's website and in a handbook made available to newly admitted graduate students.
- c. Any exception to established requirements must be approved by the Executive Committee.
- d. A student's area of study beyond the required core courses must be approved by the Executive Committee prior to the completion of the student's second semester of coursework in the program.
- e. The composition of student thesis and exam committees must be approved by the Executive Committee and shall include at a minimum three individuals as follows: a Program faculty member who serves as advisor, a fulltime faculty person at the University of Kansas who is a member of the graduate faculty and who has expertise closest to the student's area of study and/or thesis, and an individual appointed by the Director. Additional individuals may be added with the approval of the Director and in accordance with University policies and procedures.

## B. Graduate Certificate:

1. Requirements for the Graduate Certificate in Indigenous Studies are established by the Executive Committee and approved by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.
2. The Director will approve publication of current requirements on the Program's website and in a handbook made available to graduate students at the beginning of each fall semester.
3. Any exception to established requirements must be approved by the Executive Committee.
4. Elective courses will be approved by the Director.

## VIII. Student Affairs

### A. Meetings:

Students are invited to participate in meetings of the faculty as a whole.

## B. Advising:

The Director advises all students on all aspects of the Program except for research in the student's area of specialization, for which the student will select an area advisor from willing program faculty.

Area advisors are responsible for following all policies and procedures of the Indigenous Studies Program and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences regarding the administration of portfolio exams and thesis defenses.

Each student will have a committee of three faculty members to serve on their thesis or portfolio exam. The committee will consist of the area advisor and two other faculty members chosen with the guidance of the area advisor. The student must submit the proper forms requesting the Executive Committee's approval of his or her committee at least two months prior to the proposed date of the portfolio exam or thesis defense.

## IX. Grievance Procedures

The Indigenous Studies Program will follow the Grievance Procedures of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences for grievance arising within the Program.

## X. Amendments to the By-Laws

A. Amendments to the by-laws may be adopted at a meeting of the Program faculty by a majority vote. Amendments may be proposed by any member or standing committee of the Program. Proposed amendments must be distributed in writing at least one week before the meeting at which they are to be considered.

B. At the request of ten-0 percent of those present at a meeting at which amendments are being considered, these amendments may be submitted to a mail ballot. On such a ballot, members of the Program who are on leave or out of town shall be entitled to vote.