



ON TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

Summary of the 2016 Turtle Lodge Knowledge Keepers Engagement with the Faculty of Health Sciences

A Consultation Prepared for the University of Manitoba

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Edited by Dr. Sabina Ijaz

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"Reconciliation will not happen if we have senior officials saying "We need to raise you to our standards before we can have reconciliation." The gap in education outcomes for our children is a result of your curriculum and your system. It is supposed to be giving them the foundation for their education. We are coming out with children indoctrinated in your system, a system that is failing all children; what good is that?"

Knowledge Keeper Katherine Whitecloud

"We're currently developing some good relationships with the universities. One of the things they are proposing is the indigenization of their institutions. And I said, "No." I'm in total opposition to that.

We are not interested in indigenizing the institution. That's our responsibility to share our knowledge. If they want to learn about us they need to come to us. How can you take the ceremony that we do, that is the foundation of our identity, and put that into the institution? It can never happen within those institutions. It's impossible. We have to have full autonomy. Rather than indigenizing the institution, why don't you come and learn from us? Don't try to take something and put it into your institution, where you will then have ownership and control over our way of life. Come here! Come here to learn who we are. We have our own professors. If your community is serious and wants to learn about Indigenous peoples and our ways, why not bring your people to this lodge and have them experience our ceremonies. Why is that so hard to do?

We can't overstep where the knowledge is received from. Before we talk about the university, we have to talk about how we share knowledge without relinquishing our responsibility to take care of that knowledge. I think the spirit of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's proposal [Call to Action #60] is well intended, but the reality of the situation is that in order to be successful we're going to have to begin here [in the lodges of the people]."

Knowledge Keeper Dave Courchene



"Upon suffering beyond suffering; the Red Nation shall rise again and it shall be a blessing for a sick world.

A world filled with broken promises, selfishness and separations.

A world longing for light again.

I see a time of seven generations when all the colors of mankind will gather under the sacred Tree of Life and the whole Earth will become one circle again.

In that day there will be those among the Lakota who will carry knowledge and understanding of unity among all living things, and the young white ones will come to those of my people and ask for this wisdom.

I salute the light within your eyes where the whole universe dwells.

For when you are at that center within you and I am that place within me, we shall be as one."

Crazy Horse (Lakota Nation), 1877

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS, ENGAGEMENT PRIORITIES AND NEXT STEPS

1. Engage with Indigenous peoples based on the principle of nationhood, following the spirit of a Nation to Nation framework with sovereign Indigenous communities, based on principles of equal partnership and respect, as reflected in the signed Treaties.
2. Engagement needs to be based on respect for the Indigenous peoples' autonomy and positions, whether they want to engage, in support of what their needs, hopes and aspirations are, and for the uniqueness of a people that wish to share their own contributions to health and health education.
3. Engage as partners with Indigenous environments – sacred lodges such as Turtle Lodge – which are places where Indigenous knowledge can be shared with integrity and authenticity, rather than attempting to integrate Indigenous knowledge into a western system. Continuing to develop the relationship between the Turtle Lodge Knowledge Keepers and the Faculty of Health Sciences has a high potential for the development of high quality collaborative initiatives through ongoing Knowledge Keeper guidance, grounded in ceremonial traditions.
4. Support the partnership by helping resource the establishment of an Indigenous centre of excellence in education, as an equal and distinctive partner to the Faculty of Health Sciences.
5. Engage with and champion the role of the Knowledge Keepers as the best spokespeople for the values, needs, aspirations and solutions for Indigenous communities, and the appropriate representatives of Indigenous leadership in the Nation to Nation partnership.
6. Formalize and sanctify a partnership with Indigenous peoples in some way, through a relationship with Knowledge Keepers at Turtle Lodge.
7. Adopt the Turtle Lodge Treaty on Education “Our Way of Life” as a guiding document for future engagement and Indigenous education.
8. Support curriculum and resource development and the implementation of Indigenous education for faculty and students at the Faculty of Health Sciences, as led by the Knowledge Keepers within their environment at Turtle Lodge, as a means to achieving reconciliation.

9. Set implementation goals, for example with Knowledge Keepers defining initiatives, curriculum development for faculty and curriculum development for students, beginning with seasonal sessions and moving to lunar-based educational sessions at Turtle Lodge.
10. Encourage an ongoing process of engagement, setting goals for regular and ongoing opportunities, such as a series of meetings, for administration to continue to meet at Turtle Lodge to continue to build and solidify a relationship.
11. Focus on decolonization for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners as a means to educating themselves in the process of reconciliation.
12. Support the Knowledge Keepers in offering Indigenous education as a foundation of values and a strengthening of the spirit and identity for all learners, as well as a valuable contribution to a more holistic understanding of health and wellness.
13. Ensure that learners have the opportunity to come voluntarily to receive an Indigenous education, rather than it being imposed.
14. Engage without an agenda, rather with an open mind, reflecting an honest desire to learn and to serve the needs, hopes and aspirations of all.
15. Engage with the Giigewigamig First Nation Health Authority, a collaboration between four local First Nations who are often served by Winnipeg hospitals – Hollow Water, Black River, Sagkeeng and Bloodvein First Nations – in learning from the communities' experience, educating learners, and developing collaborative programs and initiatives that lead to enhanced traditional and western healing services in Winnipeg and inside the communities, that could directly benefit Indigenous community members utilizing services provided by the WRHA as well as learners at the Faculty of Health Sciences.
16. Bring Indigenous physicians and students together and offer them the opportunity to engage with the Knowledge Keepers within Indigenous environments.
17. Support Indigenous Knowledge Keepers in taking the lead on accrediting learners through their Indigenous environment and institution, out of respect for the principle of nationhood.

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

On September 22, 2015 the Faculty of Health Sciences held its initial Truth and Reconciliation Action Planning Workshop to explore the Faculty's responsibility to respond to the Calls to Action. Since that time five working groups have been drafting Action Plans in the following theme areas:

1. Closing the Gaps in Admissions
2. Indigenous Knowledge and Traditional Healing
3. Student Support, Mentorship and Retention
4. Creating Safe Learning Environments and Professionalism
5. Education Across the Spectrum

In March 2016 the draft plans had progressed sufficiently far to begin asking for feedback from Indigenous community representatives and Knowledge Keepers. A letter was sent to Anishinabe Knowledge Keeper Dave Courchene from Dr. Brian Postl, Dean of Medicine and Vice-Provost (Health Sciences). The letter specifically asked how the Faculty should engage with Indigenous communities and representatives in both the planning and implementation phases.

In response to this letter, rather than offer a detailed response in writing, Knowledge Keeper Dave Courchene invited the Faculty of Health Sciences to engage within the Turtle Lodge itself, with Knowledge Keepers belonging to the wider traditional territory that the Faculty of Health Sciences exists within, who have been identified as being connected to their original languages, ceremonies, traditions, songs and communities, taking the lead in engaging the group and in the development of this discussion.

One of the key areas of importance stressed by Elder Courchene is that sacred space matters in the sharing of Indigenous knowledge. Indigenous knowledge is traditionally shared on the land or in the sacred lodges, and the protocols of sharing and delivery are equally, if not more important, than the knowledge itself, as it is always a process guided ceremonially.

It was hoped by the Knowledge Keepers that bringing the team to the Turtle Lodge would encourage reaching a level of the Indigenous community becoming an instrument of nationhood, and reaching a relationship of true partnership, in the transmission and sharing of Indigenous knowledge with the Faculty of Health Sciences.

"We can set a whole new narrative for this country, a whole new national identity that includes our contribution."

Knowledge Keeper Dave Courchene

From the perspective of the Faculty of Health Sciences, it was hoped that during the engagement, they could hear from some Knowledge Keepers on their understandings of Truth and Reconciliation, and the Faculty of Health Sciences' roles and responsibilities for reconciliation. The Indigenous leaders within the Faculty asked to briefly present on the process and work on the Draft Action Plan to date to hear feedback on what they have collaboratively developed to date.

On June 28, 2016, the Turtle Lodge brought together five local Knowledge Keepers from their extended network of Knowledge Keepers, along with two Knowledge Keepers, Deans and senior Faculty members from Faculties of Health Science, Aboriginal Health, Medicine, Nursing and Dentistry at the University of Manitoba for a Roundtable Discussion on reconciliation, as requested by the University of Manitoba.

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION CALLS TO ACTION

In June 2015 the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada released several of its Final Reports, including the Calls to Action. Of the 94 Calls to Action eight specifically address the health sector, including one that calls for more Indigenous health professionals and one that instructs health professional schools on what all future health professionals should be learning about Indigenous health:

ACKNOWLEDGE THAT CURRENT STATE OF ABORIGINAL HEALTH IS A DIRECT RESULT OF PREVIOUS CANADIAN GOVERNMENT POLICIES, RECOGNIZE AND IMPLEMENT HEALTH-CARE RIGHTS OF ABORIGINAL PEOPLE

18. We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to acknowledge that the current state of Aboriginal health in Canada is a direct result of previous Canadian government policies, including residential schools, and to recognize and implement the health-care rights of Aboriginal people as identified in international law, constitutional law, and under the Treaties.

IN CONSULTATION WITH ABORIGINAL PEOPLES, IDENTIFY AND CLOSE THE GAPS IN ABORIGINAL AND NON-ABORIGINAL HEALTH OUTCOMES

19. In consultation with Aboriginal peoples, to establish measurable goals to identify and close the gaps in health outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities, and to publish annual progress reports and assess long-term trends. Such efforts would focus on indicators such as: infant mortality, maternal health, suicide, mental health, addictions, life expectancy, birth rates, infant and child health issues, chronic diseases, illness and injury incidence, and the availability of appropriate health services.

RECOGNIZE, RESPECT & ADDRESS THE UNIQUE HEALTH NEEDS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

20. In order to address the jurisdictional disputes concerning Aboriginal people who do not reside on reserves, we call upon the federal government to recognize, respect, and address the distinct health needs of the Métis, Inuit, and off-reserve Aboriginal peoples.

PROVIDE SUSTAINABLE FUNDING FOR ABORIGINAL HEALING CENTRES

21. We call upon the federal government to provide sustainable funding for existing and new Aboriginal healing centres to address the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual harms caused by residential schools, and to ensure that the funding of healing centres in Nunavut and the Northwest Territories is a priority.

RECOGNIZE THE VALUE AND UTILIZE ABORIGINAL HEALING PRACTICES

22. To recognize the value of Aboriginal healing practices and use them in the treatment of Aboriginal patients in collaboration with Aboriginal healers and Elders where requested by Aboriginal patients.

CULTURAL COMPETENCY TRAINING FOR ALL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

23. Provide cultural competency training for all health-care professionals.

EDUCATION IN ABORIGINAL HEALTH ISSUES FOR STUDENTS AND FACULTY

24. We call upon medical and nursing schools in Canada to require all students to take a course dealing with Aboriginal health issues, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, and Indigenous teachings and practices. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.

PROVIDE ANNUAL DATA ON CLOSING THE GAPS IN HEALTH OUTCOMES BETWEEN ABORIGINAL AND NON-ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES

55. We call upon all levels of government to provide annual reports or any current data requested by the National Centre for Reconciliation so that it can report on the progress towards reconciliation. The reports or data would include, but not be limited to:

Progress on closing the gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities in a number of health indicators such as: infant mortality, maternal health, suicide, mental health, addictions, life expectancy, birth rates, infant and child health issues, chronic diseases, illness and injury incidence, and the availability of appropriate health services.

TURTLE LODGE TREATY ON INDIGENOUS EDUCATION: “OUR WAY OF LIFE”

The *Treaty on Indigenous Education “Our Way of Life”* was originally ratified at Turtle Lodge in 2013 by a number of Indigenous Nations including the Anishnaabe, Siksi kai’ tsi tapi (Blackfoot), Nehiyaw (Cree), Dakota, Lakota, Nakota, Nisga’a, and Mi’kmaw Nations, First Nation organizations, as well as sovereign individuals. This Treaty is being used by the Assembly of First Nations, the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, and by a number of Indigenous communities, educational institutions and organizations across the country.

Turtle Lodge
Treaty:
“Our Way of
Life”

Indigenous
Education

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Preamble

A Treaty on Education is essential to protect the spiritual gifts granted by our Creator. A Creator, who, in the beginning, gave the laws of miyo pimātisiwin to nistameyimākanak¹ through the Law Lodge. For as long as we continue with the Law Lodge our lands will be protected and we will not see wars or strife on Turtle Island. These laws of the clans are enacted every year by families and Nations who are honoring the human and spirit blood and protecting the children, grandchildren, and generations yet unborn. We protect this knowledge; these lands; and all our relations to fulfill our sacred responsibilities, specifically, to ensure that those generations coming after us will enjoy the gifts of clean air, lands, water, and medicines of our sanctified Mother Earth; for as long as the sun shines, grass grows, waters flow, and for as long as there are Indigenous Peoples.

Indigenous Institutions of Higher Learning willingly step forward to assist in the stewardship of this knowledge by privileging our ceremonies and protecting the clans against those that misunderstand the beauty and wonder of the spiritual nature of our beings granted by our Creator. The benefits of this knowledge are meant not only for Indigenous Peoples but are to be shared with all our younger brothers and sisters present to fulfill Creator's vision of Turtle Island. A vision of unity, peace, good minds, and harmony as Creator intended. Uniting our Nations to serve this common purpose is the intent of a Treaty on Education.

Glossary of Terms: Nehiyawewin/ Anishinaabemowin / English

miyo-ohpikināwasowin / gwa-taa-gwanaa-ga binoojiyik / *good child rearing*
miyo pimātisiwin / mino bmaadziwin / *good way of life*
nistameyimākanak / ntamagaabii'aajig/ *First People*
wāhkōhtowin / dawenmaaganak / *kinship*

¹ The limitations of the colonizer's English language should be taken into consideration and this document is to be interpreted from within an Indigenous paradigm.

1.0 Treaty Parties

Article 1.1

The undersigned representative individuals of the Anishnaabe, Siksi kai' tsi tapi (Blackfoot), Nehiyaw (Cree), Dakota, Lakota, Nakota, Nisga'a, and Mi'kmaw Nations agree to this Treaty and gather in ceremony May 6th and 7th, 2013 to make this sacred promise to each other in the presence of our Creator. This Treaty is an expression of our jurisdiction over education as peoples of sovereign Nations. The Parties to this agreement hereby signify commitment and support to one another as we collectively act as stewards of our Indigenous Knowledge for generations to come.

Article 1.2

Indigenous parties who share a common understanding and wish to be added into this Treaty are welcomed at any time so long as they agree to adhere to the terms contained herein. Treaty parties may collectively amend the Treaty from time to time.

2.0 Lifelong Education

Article 2.1

From time immemorial, the learning lodges throughout Turtle Island have been held and owned by the authority of Indigenous women; shared with Indigenous men and the Nation in various capacities. This sacred duty is guided and directed by the inherent responsibility and obligation to carry a sacred law from conception onward throughout the life span: this law is called miyo-ohpikināwasowin. miyo-ohpikināwasowin, means to raise children in a good way. This law guides and directs the education of each child as a clan or relational obligation as understood and applied by each Indigenous Nation within a lived tradition where the child is the center of the Nation. Indigenous jurisdiction and authority of teaching, language, and practice is a lifelong right and obligation. It is the original educational system in a relational-based context and is enduring.

Article 2.2

Indigenous Peoples have never relinquished nor extinguished jurisdiction over our right to educate our children.

3.0 Indigenous Knowledge

Article 3.1

Land based Indigenous Knowledge is inextricably intertwined with the language and culture of Indigenous Peoples. International discourse recognizes five (5) elements to Nationhood: land, governance, language, culture and peoples. Indigenous knowledge is “written” in pictographs, petroglyphs, winter counts, the lands, the stone markings, the burial grounds, birch bark and sand scrolls, wampum belts, ancient wisdom of our people, sacred ocean gardens, rivers, and numerous other sacred sites encompassing the history of Indigenous Peoples.

Article 3.2

Indigenous Knowledge(s) are sacred, profound, and a gift connected to the spirit world. Indigenous education is transferred and transmitted through our songs, stories, languages, ceremonies and lands of Indigenous Peoples; these are interconnected and cannot be separated. Indigenous Knowledge is transferred and transmitted through oral tradition passed from generation to generation and is intrinsic to the lands, skies, and waters in which our history is tied and our culture is created.

Article 3.3

Indigenous Knowledge has always, and will always exist: self-determination is the practice and expression of intellectual, physical, emotional, and spiritual gifts given to the people and thus translated into the education of children. Indigenous Knowledge comprises all knowledge pertaining to a particular Nation and their territory, the nature or use of which has been transmitted from generation to generation. This knowledge includes our way of life. The use and transmission of Indigenous Knowledge is an inherent right from the beginning of time. Indigenous Knowledge continues through the languages, lands, and cultures of Indigenous Peoples which persevere today.

4.0 Protection of Indigenous Knowledge and Transfer

Article 4.1

Our Indigenous Knowledge is based on our spiritual connection to Creator, the relationship to the land we inherit and how we survive within our ecosystems: medicines, plants, animals, land, sky, water, and all of Creation.

Article 4.2

We inherit the right and obligation to be keepers of our culture and stewards of our lands and territories. Children have a right to this inheritance through the transmission and transference of Indigenous Knowledge, cultural practices, Indigenous languages, and laws. In inheriting this knowledge each generation learns how they are connected to our relations and Creation.

Article 4.3

Knowledge transmission is guided by our way of life through, ceremonies, songs, observations, traditional teachings, and languages. Language is connected to the plants, animals, and the spiritual relations that help sustain our environments. We have an inherent right to our Original instructions and to live upon our lands under Natural Law. The law of wāhkōhtowin directs and guides the transmission of knowledge. The integral source of our traditional knowledge is our wāhkōhtowin relationship to the ecosystems and those with whom we share the lands. In this manner, Indigenous Peoples carry the memory of our history and connection to Creation.

5.0 Jurisdiction and Authority of Indigenous Education

Article 5.1

As sovereign Nations and Peoples we define the scope and content of lifelong Indigenous education. In so doing, we enact our sovereign right to educate our children and peoples. Article 14 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) affirms our inherent and sovereign rights to determine education for our Peoples and children.²

Article 5.2

Indigenous Nations have exercised our right to educate our children and people since time immemorial. Education is integral to transferring our identity as Indigenous Peoples and as such is a core foundation of how we preserve and sustain our Nations. The practice of education amongst Indigenous Peoples is a requirement of self-determination and is recognized under International Law.

Article 5.3

Various United Nations articles, covenants, and charters recognize the inherent and customary rights that Nations have to pursue self-determination. This Treaty is an act of exercising our right to self-determination through protecting education of

² UNDRIP: http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf

Article 14

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning.
2. Indigenous individuals, particularly children, have the right to all levels and forms of education of the State without discrimination.
3. States shall, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, take effective measures, in order for indigenous individuals, particularly children, including those living outside their Communities, to have access, when possible, to an education in their own culture and provided in their own language.

Indigenous Peoples and Nations that are party to this Treaty. Article 1(2) of the United Nations Charter recognizes this.³

Article 5.4

The parties' rights include collective rights to ownership, protection, and custody of their Indigenous Knowledge and that every such right includes the incidental right to teach such practices, customs, and traditions to ensure their continuity. We assert our right to Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) on decisions affecting us, our education, and how Indigenous Knowledge is utilized. FPIC is recognized under Articles 18 and 19 of the UNDRIP⁴.

6.0 Implementation

Article 6.1

The core of our identities as Nations and Peoples is generated by the transfer of knowledge from one generation to the next through our own education systems. This Treaty is an act of sovereignty to protect our knowledge systems that are grounded in our cultural practices, languages, ceremonies, connection to our lands and to all Creation. We make this Treaty with our brothers and sisters of each Nation in keeping with our laws to protect and preserve for the generations to come. Each generation has the responsibility and obligation to keep our Nations alive and strong.

Article 6.2

The parties agree to meet on an annual basis to strategize and review actions on Treaty implementation.

³ Charter of the United Nations:

<http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/chapter1.shtml>

Article 1(2):

“To develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace”.

⁴ Supra Note 1.

Article 18

Indigenous peoples have the right to participate in decision-making in matters which affect their rights, through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures, as well as to maintain and develop their own indigenous decision making institutions.

Article 19

States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free, prior and informed consent before adopting and implementing legislative or administrative measures that may affect them.

Article 6.3

The parties agree to promote awareness of the Treaty and each other's activities in the expression of our jurisdiction over education.

Article 6.4

The parties agree to engage others to comply and adhere to the articles of the Treaty. The parties agree to create competent authorities within their respective territories to ensure compliance with Free Prior and Informed Consent in exercising ownership, control and possession of Indigenous knowledge and preventing misappropriation (examples of competent authorities include traditional structures such as Elders Councils, Clan Mothers/ Grandmothers, Longhouse, Bundle Societies, among others, and may also include research ethics boards, Community research councils, and Indigenous post-secondary institutions, as our Nations deem appropriate).

Duly signed by signatories of Nations present on **7th day of May**, in the year **2013**, on **Sagkeeng First Nation Territory**.

OBJECTIVES

“Today you will receive a glimpse of the knowledge we want to share. We welcome everyone into our Lodge, and acknowledge you as our family. This is a place in which all of our uniqueness as members of that family is embraced. We have a spiritual destiny to come together to embark on a journey to fulfill our humanness, recognizing that the First Peoples of this part of the world have something to share and contribute.

As a People we are challenged to find survival on <1% of our homeland. For the most part, our people live in poverty. We do not have the same access to resources, to share in the abundance of this land. Our children do not have the same opportunities to have the basic necessities of life.

Our gifts are about peace – living in peace. Will we find a way to work together, as we strive to find wellness for all our children?”

Knowledge Keeper Dave Courchene

The objectives of the Roundtable Discussion, were to assemble a respected and representative group of Knowledge Keepers – traditional ceremonial Elders and Knowledge Keepers, from representative Nations of the local traditional territory, who are rooted and recognized within their communities, fluent in their original languages, and grounded in their identity and spiritual traditions, that would

1. Aid the Faculty of Health Sciences in its Reconciliation Action Planning;
2. Provide Guiding Principles including principles of engagement;
3. Advise on how to best support Indigenous students in strengthening their Indigenous identity;
4. Offer an Indigenous perspective in enhancing education in general at the Faculty of Health Sciences;
5. Provide a Summary Document including recommendations from the Knowledge Keepers

“How do we bring both our perspectives of health and wellness together to create a better system of wellness that works for all of us? What is the vision that we have?”

Knowledge Keeper Dave Courchene

The above objectives would be met by:

1. Hosting a Gathering at Turtle Lodge June 27, 2016, in which Turtle Lodge would bring together representatives from the Faculty of Health Sciences with 5 representative Elders for a ceremonial-based Roundtable Discussion, followed by a private discussion by the Knowledge Keepers to summarize the engagement and make recommendations;
2. Providing a Summary Document of the consultation;
3. Meeting with Dr. Marcia Anderson, Head, Section of First Nations, Metis and Inuit Health from the Department of Community Health Sciences, Faculty of Medicine at the University of Manitoba to discuss the Summary Document and outcomes in detail, post-Roundtable; and
4. Proposing a plan of future engagement options with the Knowledge Keepers and Turtle Lodge to provide ongoing consultation and support to the Faculty of Health Sciences.

VENUE

“We are very honoured that you have come to our environment, to this Turtle Lodge, to listen to what we have to say. This Lodge has welcomed federal judges and people from all walks of life.”

Knowledge Keeper Harry Bone

The venue that was selected for this Roundtable Discussion was the Anishnabe Mikinack Kinamakamik, translated from Anishinabemowin (Ojibway language) as “Turtle Lodge” or “Turtle Place of Learning and Healing”.

The Turtle Lodge is a traditional place of gathering, recognized by First Peoples (as represented by traditional Knowledge Keepers from Communities across Turtle Island, the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, and the Assembly of First Nations), where individuals, communities, governments and organizations seek guidance, and discuss issues that are affecting the well-being of individuals and the nation. It is a sacred lodge where ceremonies for healing are conducted, and traditional teachings and the laws of the people are shared. The Turtle Lodge is located in Sagkeeng First Nation.

At the Turtle Lodge, young people are being reintroduced to a way of life, based on natural and spiritual laws, that has supported and sustained the First Peoples for thousands of years. The Turtle Lodge also engages in contracts and offers workshops for organizations and governments to learn the truth about the history, languages, and the traditional way of life of the First Peoples.

Turtle Lodge is located one-hour north of Winnipeg on Sagkeeng First Nation. The raising of the initial Turtle Lodge building in 2002 and 2003, based on a vision received by Knowledge Keeper Nii Gaani Aki Inini – Leading Earth Man (Dave Courchene), by a group of committed and gifted youth working together as volunteers in a labour of love, is a testament to the survival of a way of life. The Turtle Lodge infrastructure is still considered a work in progress with further expansions, upgrades, and growth planned.

Assembly of First Nations National Chief Perry Bellegarde pledged his support for Turtle Lodge, which, he wrote, “continually supports gatherings, teachings, ceremonies, and endless supports for the achievement of a balanced state of well-being and culturally positive reinforcements for our children, youth, men, women, and Elders” (see **Appendix B**). The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, representing 62 First Nation Communities in Manitoba, unanimously pledged its support of Turtle Lodge of “pursuing federal and provincial partnerships for the Turtle Lodge Centre for learning and healing” through a General Assembly Resolution in 2003 (see **Appendix C**). Turtle Lodge also has a large network of partners and past collaborators who offer their general support for its ongoing work.

ROUNDTABLE CHAIR

The Chair of the Roundtable Discussion was Knowledge Keeper Dave Courchene (Nii Gaani Aki Inini – Leading Earth Man). Dave Courchene was responsible for selecting and bringing together the diverse group of Knowledge Keepers.

Dave Courchene – Nii Gaani Aki Inini (Leading Earth Man) – is a respected Elder and Knowledge Keeper of the Anishinabe Nation. In 2002, he founded Turtle Lodge, an international centre for Indigenous education and wellness based on a vision he received over 35 years ago. Over the last 35 years, Knowledge Keeper Dave Courchene has initiated many projects and facilitated gatherings regionally, nationally and internationally, to promote the sharing and protection of the traditional ancestral knowledge of the First Peoples.

Today he is known internationally for his leadership and for sharing messages of hope and peace, having shared the stage numerous times with spiritual leaders that include the Dalai Lama. In recognition of his work, he has received several prestigious awards including the National Aboriginal Achievement (INDSPIRE) Award in Culture, Heritage and Spirituality in 2010, the Volunteer Manitoba Award for Outstanding Community Leadership in 2012; the International Award of Excellence (2015) and Cosmic Angel Award for Best Film (Audience Choice) in 2014 for *Bridgewalkers*, the Golden Parent's Choice Award in 2003 and 2006 for *Tipi Tales*, the Polar Bear Award at the Manitoba Film Festival in 2003 for *The Harold Hatcher Project*, a major documentary, TV series, and short film he co-created; and multiple awards from Indigenous communities including recognition as an Anishnaabe Achiever of the Treaty #3 First Nation, Aboriginal Circle of Educators Award in 2006, and the International Indigenous Leadership Award in 2012.

TURTLE LODGE KNOWLEDGE KEEPERS

The Turtle Lodge Knowledge Keepers are identified as a network of respected traditional ceremonial Elders and Knowledge Keepers from the four directions across Turtle Island, who are rooted and recognized within their communities, fluent in their original languages, grounded within their identity, spiritual and healing traditions and gifted in building and nurturing relationships.

The Knowledge Keepers selected by Knowledge Keeper and Facilitator Courchene for this particular engagement were from the local traditional territories of the Anishinabe, Cree and Dakota Nations, situated around the sacred site of *Manitou Api (Where the Creator Sits)*.

These invited Knowledge Keepers included:

1. Dave Courchene - Sagkeeng First Nation (Anishinabe)

2. Katherine Whitecloud - Sioux Valley Dakota Nation (Dakota)
3. Harry Bone - Keeseekoowenin First Nation (Anishinabe)
4. Florence Paynter – Norway House Cree Nation (Cree)
5. Mary Maytwayashing – Lake Manitoba First Nation (Anishnabe)

Tobacco was passed to the Knowledge Keepers by the Faculty of Health Sciences and offered ceremonially in accordance with traditional cultural protocols. Their biographies are found in **Appendix G**.

SPONSOR

The Roundtable Discussion of the Turtle Lodge Knowledge Keepers and the compilation of this summary document were sponsored by the University of Manitoba.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

FORMAT

The discussion was carried out in a Roundtable Discussion format, using traditional ceremony including the Pipe Ceremony and Sacred Fire. Offerings of food, tobacco and cloth were made to the spirit, in accordance with traditional Indigenous culture. All participants were invited to participate in the ceremonies if they so desired, and it was made clear that this was not compulsory.

“The Sacred Fire is a doorway for the ancestors and grandfathers to come and inspire us. We make offerings to the Spirit to help us – tobacco, food and cloth. The Fire is about finding our way back, to help us deal with the struggles and challenges we have.”

Dave Courchene, Knowledge Keeper and Facilitator

The value of respect was emphasized by the Knowledge Keepers as a paramount value.

“We offer tobacco ties to invoke the Spirit, following the First Law the Creator gave us, the Law of Respect, the essence of which is to give.”

Knowledge Keeper Dave Courchene

Giving was seen as the highest of ideals, taken very seriously in traditional Indigenous cultures.

“My responsibility is to be the one to give in our ceremonies.”

Knowledge Keeper Katherine Whitecloud

Both the Knowledge Keepers and the Faculty of Health Sciences representatives sat together in the circle, and shared their perspectives, facilitated by Knowledge Keeper Dave Courchene.

A. DEVELOPING A NATION TO NATION FRAMEWORK

Part of the goal of meeting representatives of the University of Manitoba's Faculty of Health Sciences at Turtle Lodge, was to encourage support for a Nation to Nation relationship framework, based on equal partnership and respect.

"It is hoped that by bringing the team to the Turtle Lodge, it will encourage reaching a level of the Indigenous Community becoming an instrument of Nationhood, and reaching a relationship of true partnership, in the transmission and sharing of Indigenous knowledge with the Faculty of Health Sciences."

Letter from Knowledge Keeper Dave Courchene, Founder of Turtle Lodge, to Dr. Brian Postl, Dean of Medicine and Vice-Provost (Health Sciences), University of Manitoba, March 20, 2016

The Knowledge Keepers emphasized the importance of having a solid partnership relationship, following the spirit of Nation to Nation, as the foundation to finding reconciliation.

"How do we ensure that there is an equal participation as First Peoples? We cannot do it through integration. We have to do it by partnership. We use the example of marriage. You want it to be a partnership. You cannot have one person impose. Everyone has the freedom to live their gift, exercising their free will."

Knowledge Keeper Dave Courchene

1. Following the Model of Treaty

The Knowledge Keepers spoke about a Treaty being the model of the foundation of a Nation to Nation relationship, one that is intended to last into perpetuity: "as long as the sun shines, the grass grows and yonder river flows," according to the wording of the Treaties.⁵ The reference to the flow of rivers, according to Knowledge Keeper Katherine Whitecloud, is an allusion to the following:

⁵ Alexander Morris, the first Treaty Commissioner, who as the Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba from 1872 to 1877, led the negotiations of Treaties 3-5, and the re-

“As long as the birth waters flow for our children, the Treaty means the agreements reached will last forever.”

The University of Manitoba is situated on Treaty 1 territory. Treaty 1 was signed in 1871 and formed the basis for a Nation to Nation relationship with the local Anishinabe and Cree Nations and Canada.

“The Treaties are about us working together.”

Knowledge Keeper Harry Bone

The Treaty relationship can be described both in international law terms as well as in Indigenous terms.

“During the signing of the Treaties, it was fully acknowledged that it required two fully recognized Nations to have a Treaty. In order to qualify as a Nation, even under today’s prevailing international definitions and standards, there must be a People, a culture, a language, a history, and there must be land.”

Knowledge Keeper Harry Bone

The Oxford English Dictionary defines a nation as “a large aggregate of people united by common descent, history, culture, or language, inhabiting a particular country or territory.” International law often uses the term “nation” as if it were synonymous with “state” as in “United Nations” or “League of Nations”.⁶

“As a People, we had and still have a homeland, a history, a language, and a distinctive way of life. If we stay with the understanding of Nationhood as defined by international law, we are a distinctive Peoples complete with a land base – granted it has been minimized by the colonizer – we have a language, a defining culture; we have a history that has evolved from Creation to our time. We have a way that supports our autonomy to be a

negotiation of Treaties 1 and 2, which collectively, cover almost all of present-day Manitoba.

⁶ Oxford English Dictionary

self-governing People.”

Knowledge Keeper Dave Courchene

From an Indigenous perspective, nationhood begins with spirit. Nationhood is well-defined through Sacred Law, Natural Law and Human Law, and represented by the Sacred Pipe, which Knowledge Keeper Harry Bone begins to describe:

“In our system, we have three systems of law that guide us - Sacred Law, Natural Law that animals follow, and Human Law. Our Constitution is the Pipe, which we practice every time we do a pipe ceremony. The Pipe ceremony is our expression of sovereignty – our nationhood – as we point the Pipe in each direction, we make that connection with the Creator, Mother Earth and the spirit that lives in the four directions.”

Knowledge Keeper Harry Bone

The Knowledge Keepers expressed that to learn more about their understanding and perspective on nationhood and Indigenous law would require time and effort, invested with the Knowledge Keepers on the part of those willing to learn.

Original instruction was given to everything, not just people. The Creator put its spirit into us, so when he created the first human being, he put all his thoughts into that being including his Sacred Laws – his original instructions – that govern all of the universe. He also gave us Laws of the Land [Natural Laws] that we would learn from Mother Earth. He gave us Laws of the People [Human Laws], which would be based on these Laws of the Land, that would help us stay in balance and connected to him.⁷

2. Enduring Respect for the Partnership Relationship

The issue of respect for the partnership relationship was raised by a number of the Knowledge Keepers.

“I have one question. How serious are you going to be taking our knowledge? How far do we get involved? We have had experiences with

⁷ Bone, H., Courchene, D. Copenace, S., Skywater, H., Atkinson, P., Easter, W., Linklater, D. Journey of the Spirit of the Red Man. New York: Trafford Publishing.

other institutions; we are led to believe that we will be respected as equal partners, then we get weeded out."

Knowledge Keeper Harry Bone

Knowledge Keeper Florence Paynter recalled an experience *"where we were brought in again at the 11th hour."*

The Knowledge Keepers mentioned situations in which they were called in to approve processes rather than being invited from the beginning to help design processes, that had they been involved, would have involved traditional protocol, process and ceremony.

3. The Need for Both Parties to Engage in Ongoing Relationship

The Nation to Nation relationship necessitates a learning on the part of both parties of the other's belief system and values. Beginning to work together following the spirit of a Nation to Nation relationship, as was initiated through the signing of Treaties between Indigenous Nations and Canada, will set the tone for true reconciliation and an effective working relationship. The Knowledge Keepers described this Nation to Nation relationship not necessarily as a political relationship, rather one following the spirit and intent of the Treaties.

"When you came here, you took a step to come and listen to us. We have a belief system of gentleness, kindness, love, respect and caring. You come today, on your own, I hope, to listen and to hear. Your job is more than the physical one. It is to be able to listen, and also to teach the people you work with, the nurses, the doctors that there are reasons why our people are sick.

That healing process is so important, we need your help and we also need our people's help for that to succeed. We need a new framework if we are going to embrace the knowledge of Indigenous people. We are still very much alive – we speak our languages, and live our way of life – and this we can share with you."

Knowledge Keeper Harry Bone

True reconciliation – through enhancing understanding of the Indigenous perspective of nationhood and the values and belief system that underlie Indigenous

nationhood is obtainable through further engagement with the Knowledge Holders within their places of nationhood – the sacred lodges, such as the Turtle Lodge.

“They will learn how to find reconciliation by coming into our environment. They need to know learn how to be in relationship. This is one of the gaps, one of the blind spots in their plan.”

Knowledge Keeper Katherine Whitecloud

The Knowledge Keepers encouraged the Faculty of Health Sciences to “have the spirit to engage with us in the spirit of Nation to Nation,” supporting the sharing of Indigenous knowledge from within its own context, recognizing Indigenous institutions as equal to Western institutions.

“A lot of us are redefining our understanding of health. Our hope is that our institutions are recognized just as much is yours. You have your university and we have the Turtle Lodge. We will partner. When it comes to training and educating the young people, they should be encouraged to come here, to see and to learn from the Knowledge Keepers – those who have taken the full effort to commit themselves to the knowledge and the language.

What is needed is that spirit of partnership, that spirit of recognition that we have something to give. At some point we need to be given support to run our places. We need to be given the resources for our ways of learning, sharing and healing to be supported.”

Knowledge Keeper Dave Courchene

4. Engage without an Agenda

For the most part in the past, the Knowledge Keepers conveyed, whenever others, whether Canadian or urban Indigenous organizations, have tried to engage with Indigenous communities and nations, they have come in with an agenda, and with an attitude that they know more than the communities. The Knowledge Keepers stated it would be a refreshing change for those coming in to have no agenda and an open mind. Consideration should also be made in how the engagement could benefit the communities themselves, reflecting an honest desire to serve the needs, hopes and aspirations of Indigenous peoples.

“Having experienced their process and their predeterminations of how much they know and the assumption that they know more than Knowledge Keepers, they need to come with open minds in sincerity.”

Knowledge Keeper Katherine Whitecloud

B. CHAMPIONING THE ROLE OF THE KNOWLEDGE KEEPERS

“How do we get one or two to champion what we have to offer? We already know what is wrong with their system. We need someone to champion the voice of Indigenous Knowledge Keepers.”

Knowledge Keeper Katherine Whitecloud

1. Knowledge Keepers as Leaders of Indigenous Nations and Communities

“How can we strengthen the position of the Elders?”

Knowledge Keeper Dave Courchene

The Knowledge Keepers strongly recommended that any engagement with First Nation communities be initiated and led by traditional Knowledge Keepers and Elders.

Knowledge Keepers and Elders have traditionally been the leaders of Indigenous Nations and communities. A widely accepted cultural norm, their leadership has continued today, despite the relative displacement of the Elders in the last century as a result of colonization. More and more, traditional Indigenous Knowledge Keepers are stepping forward to reclaim what they see as their duty and responsibility within their homeland.

It was Knowledge Keepers who were the leading force behind the signing of Treaties of Indigenous Nations with the Crown, as all decisions were made through ceremony and through the smoking of the sacred pipe, a role designated to Knowledge Keepers.

Recently, On November 24-25th, 2016, a group of Elders and Knowledge Holders from First Nations from all four directions from across Canada met in Ottawa, at the request of the Assembly of First Nations, to discuss First Nation health and wellness broadly, with a specific focus on the Health Accord. The following statement came out of this historic gathering:

“As the free and independent Original People of this land, the sacred pipe has helped us survive. We embrace our past, the positive and the negative.

By acknowledging our traditional teachings and ceremonies we appreciate our present, and empower all youth to be strong in the future.

As First Nation Elders and Knowledge Holders, we acknowledge our responsibility to act in a peacemaking and guiding role for all people in our motherland.

Today we establish ourselves as an independent and non-partisan alliance, grounded in our love for the Earth and her natural laws.

We have a vision for health that reflects a holistic understanding that includes physical, emotional, mental and spiritual wellness. This vision is grounded in our nationhood and guided by the sacred principles gifted to us by our ancestors and the Creator.

We agree that the symbols of our alliance will be the pipe, the tipi and the seven animals representing the seven teachings, which signify our connection to a way of life.

We acknowledge the crisis of suicide and depression that youth are facing across the country, and the importance of all of our roles in helping strengthen the identity of the youth.

We accept to support the movement of return to a way of life based on living in balance with the Earth, and the seven sacred teachings of respect, love, courage, honesty, wisdom, humility, and truth.

We agree to the following defined actions:

We make a commitment to commission a sacred pipe, and position it at the sacred site of Manito Api at the geographic centre of the continent. This pipe will be unveiled at the centre at Turtle Lodge in Sagkeeng, Manitoba, in the New Year.

We make a call across the nation to light sacred fires of prayer on December 20-21, 2016 – the Winter Solstice.

These sacred fires will be a beacon of hope and faith for youth and others who are suffering, as well as a celebration of new children being born and youths who are succeeding in living positive lives.

We commit to gathering in 2017 at Turtle Lodge to meet and discuss ways to improve the health and wellness of the nation.

As Elders and Knowledge Holders, we each commit to bring one youth with us to this gathering, to teach and mentor them in their own identity and leadership.

We make a call to Elders and Knowledge Holders from across the country to join this alliance.

We acknowledge these efforts as a vital part of rebuilding the nation, our young people, our families and our communities.”

Statement of Elders and Knowledge Holders – November 24, 2016, Ottawa⁸

Today, again, after a relative displacement since colonization and christianization, of the traditional Knowledge Keepers as the guiding force and the leadership within Indigenous communities, more Indigenous political leaders are also coming forward to acknowledge and support the Knowledge Keepers in their leadership.

“The AMC sees this group of ETKH [Elders and Traditional Knowledge Keepers identified at Turtle Lodge] as the true experts and leaders of our Nations. Their knowledge helps in better understanding identities, worldviews and relationships between all living beings, including the environment.”

Grand Chief Derek Nepinak, Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, 2016⁹

The country of Canada has just begun to embrace a celebration of the First Peoples of this land, their unique Indigenous knowledge, and the important contribution Indigenous Knowledge Keepers can make to solving global climate change and ushering in an era of sustainability. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau stated in 2015 that Indigenous peoples have much to teach the world:

“Indigenous peoples have known for thousands of years how to care for the planet. The rest of us have a lot to learn and no time to waste.”

⁸ <http://www.turtlelodge.org/2016/12/indigenous-elders-and-knowledge-holders-from-the-four-directions-make-joint-statement-in-ottawa-november-24-2016/>

⁹ Nepinak at [www...](http://www.turtlelodge.org/)

Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada¹⁰

The leader of the Catholic church, Pope Francis, acknowledged the contribution of Indigenous Peoples when he spoke in Mexico on February 15, 2016. The pontiff highlighted the deep appreciation of Indigenous people for nature and also affirmed the great knowledge carried within the Indigenous community. The Argentine-born pope stated:

“Your peoples, as the bishops of Latin America have recognized, know how to interact harmoniously with nature. And yet, on many occasions, in a systematic and organized way, your people have been misunderstood and excluded from society. Some have considered your values, culture and traditions to be inferior. Others, intoxicated by power, money and market trends, have stolen your lands or contaminated them. How sad this is.”

Pope Francis¹¹

2. Describing the Role, Duties and Responsibilities of the Knowledge Keeper

“Knowledge Keepers are those who have been entrusted with the sacredness of our songs, stories, language, ceremonies, and our knowledge. Our songs and our language are our connection to our ancestors, history, and sacredness as a People. Knowledge Keepers are people who really know what it means to love.”

Knowledge Keeper Katherine Whitecloud

The following is a humble attempt to define the role, duties and responsibilities of a Knowledge Keeper, based on shared Indigenous knowledge. The term Elder is often used interchangeably in communities to designate a Knowledge Keeper.

- Knowledge Keepers have a deep understanding of sacred and natural laws that depict our original languages, ceremonies, traditions, songs and communities;
- This deep understanding comes equally from a lifetime of learning and a lifetime of earning teachings.

¹⁰ Justin trudeau

¹¹ pope francis

- Earning is about experience; and because experience comes with age, all “old people¹²” are respected for their knowledge...but not all “old people” are Knowledge Keepers.
- From this lifetime of learning and earning, Knowledge Keepers connect their individual spirit-given gifts to an area of expertise. As such, Knowledge Keepers are diverse. Every Knowledge Keeper has expertise in different areas of sacred teachings (i.e. ceremonial, women’s teachings, animal teachings etc.)
- Knowledge Keepers give their knowledge (in their area of expertise) back to the community through teachings, ceremonies, etc.
 - This is a reciprocal relationship with community learners, with learners care-taking the teachers so that the Indigenous knowledge transfer can continue.
 - Knowledge Keepers offer support as independent advisors to a process of engagement and dialogue.
- In this cycle of learning and giving of knowledge, the Knowledge Keepers become leaders and provide a spirit-led vision to communities.

From all of these actions, the Knowledge Keepers become clear to the community. The community “knows” the Knowledge Keepers. This “knowing” comes not from human law or on a physical plane, but from a clear cultural identity governed by spiritual law.

3. Qualified Knowledge Keepers as Identified by Communities

“The people decide who the Knowledge Keepers and spiritual leaders are going to be.”

Knowledge Keeper Dave Courchene

The Knowledge Keepers assembled at Turtle Lodge spoke of selecting the “right qualified Knowledge Keepers” as integral to the integrity of Indigenous knowledge transmission. Considered integral to the role of Knowledge Keepers was the ability to speak their original languages, deemed vital for the proper conduct of ceremony, a strong and living understanding of ceremony and traditional teachings and songs, and a connection to the communities and land.

¹² Old people is a term used by many Indigenous people to describe seniors. It is a term of respect. For example: “the old people would share stories of how we used to live.”

"We need Native-controlled content and delivery. There is currently an Indigenous governance course taught at the University of Manitoba – the content [and delivery] is controlled by the University. We cannot have that.

The Elders have different levels of knowledge. There are also Elders who want to be Knowledge Keepers. We have to have the right qualified Elders teaching the content."

Knowledge Keeper Harry Bone

The Knowledge Keepers spoke very strongly against "giving Indigenous knowledge to the educational institutions" for their delivery under a Western paradigm by those not qualified to share it.

"You cannot just learn it from a book. You are not going to have Indigenous anything unless we [Knowledge Keepers] are part of it. Everything for them [the university] has to be about accreditation, which begs the question for them who is qualified to be an instructor."

Knowledge Keeper Katherine Whitecloud

Indigenous knowledge is considered sacred, and there are individuals among the people who are given the honour and responsibility of sharing it in order that it may be transmitted properly.

The Knowledge Keepers shared that in some cases the knowledge is being withheld, for its protection, if the Knowledge Keepers feel that it would not be respected, received or shared in sacred way, following proper cultural protocols.

"Because our words are so sacred, they are always in the universe. People's word does not mean anything anymore in front of your judiciary because there is no understanding of respect. We [Knowledge Keepers/Elders] will not testify anymore [in the Canadian courts] because we are not being respected. Their knowledge and integrity is called into question.

My auntie was not sharing the sacred songs she carried anymore because she felt those songs and that knowledge was not being respected. No one respects the meaning of the songs. No one is going to take care of them.

And she was the last one to carry those songs. When we share our knowledge it is because we trust it will be taken care of."

Knowledge Keeper Katherine Whitecloud

4. Knowledge Keepers in an Independent Leadership Advisory Role

"We are here in an advisory role, as free thinkers. We are not here to impose, and it is up to the institution to accept what we have to offer. We see an opportunity here where we can effect change that would benefit all. I see us coming in with a well-defined vision."

Knowledge Keeper Dave Courchene

The Knowledge Keepers assembled spoke at length, discussing their role and the support they felt they could provide to the Faculty of Health Sciences as an independent and non-partisan advisory body.

"They need to come to us, not us being an employee of an institution."

Knowledge Keeper Harry Bone

The Knowledge Keepers emphasized that their role would be the same as what it is within the Indigenous community: to act in a leadership and role as independent and autonomous free thinkers, in an advisory capacity to the Faculty of Health Sciences. As Knowledge Keepers, their role would never be one of imposition, rather one of welcome, invitation and sharing, offering an equal Indigenous partnership, perspective and approach that would be up to the University of Manitoba to accept.

"Our way is to share. Our way is never to force."

Knowledge Keeper Harry Bone

"We never impose that on our children and grandchildren, they come on their own."

Knowledge Keeper Florence Paynter

"We don't want to impose anything on anyone. We know what that feels like, so we resist imposition."

Knowledge Keeper Dave Courchene

5. Knowledge Keeper Role in Providing a Vision

"Through the participation of the University and the Elders, we will reach a higher level of understanding – a vision – a vision of life. The vision has the true understanding of our humanity. We will work together in our uniqueness to reach a collective understanding and effect on wellness, using that experience to create a better world."

Knowledge Keeper Dave Courchene

The Knowledge Keepers agreed that the process of working together must start with a vision. Providing a vision was seen as a key role of the Knowledge Keepers.

"They have a vision but they are not including us. Health is universal. We want to share our vision of health. We can help with the co-creation of a new vision for the faculty."

Knowledge Keeper Harry Bone

"I depend on dreams and visions. That's one thing we do as people."

Knowledge Keeper Mary Maytwayashing

Traditionally, Indigenous people depended on dreams and visions to provide guidance in life. When a young boy would reach the age of twelve, he would go out on the land, to seek a vision or dream that would show him his purpose. This experience of communing with the Earth would initiate him into manhood.

"An Elder said to a young boy, 'You want to learn about what life is? Come with me to the land.' When a boy gives of himself and goes on his Vision Quest, he is going to hear things, to start to see things he's never seen before."

Knowledge Keeper Dave Courchene

The following described the Knowledge Keepers' vision for this process of engagement:

"In our vision we acknowledge that the only thing that is going to heal us is the Earth. We have to speak on behalf of the land and be a voice for the children."

Knowledge Keeper Dave Courchene

"Our vision is life. Our vision is a good way of life."

Knowledge Keeper Harry Bone

"The vision is a leadership which is not about control. It is about following spiritual and natural laws."

Knowledge Keeper Dave Courchene

The Knowledge Keepers wished to follow a foundation as defined by the **Turtle Lodge Treaty on Indigenous Education "Our Way of Life"** to support a vision of health education for all that is based on Indigenous knowledge and ways of learning.

6. Knowledge Keeper Role in Implementation of the Vision

The implementation of the vision provided by the Knowledge Keepers would ultimately ensure that Indigenous knowledge and ways of learning are understood and considered of equal priority in all aspects of the Faculty of Health Science's delivery of education, through the practical application of the **Turtle Lodge Treaty on Indigenous Education "Our Way of Life"**.

"We need to start with our vision. The goal is to support and reinforce a strong identity for youth. We have to ask ourselves how to best achieve that. Can that be done within the context of the current system? Or do we need to think of another approach, following our own ways?"

Knowledge Keeper Dave Courchene

The means by which the Treaty is to be implemented could be further discussed through ongoing engagement and dialogue with the Knowledge Keepers.

7. Knowledge Keeper Role in Building Bridges and Relationships

A key role of the Knowledge Keepers is to ensure values and sacred principles are adhered to in any process of engagement and relationship, and that a Nation to Nation partnership is respected.

“Our role is to ensure the safeguarding of a strong partnership.”

Knowledge Keeper Dave Courchene

8. Instructional and Educational Role

The Knowledge Keepers offered themselves in an instructional and educational capacity to share their knowledge with the Faculty of Health Sciences students and staff.

They stated that Indigenous educational curriculum and programming could be designed by the Knowledge Keepers working with Faculty of Health Sciences leadership, and set up on site at Turtle Lodge for Faculty of Health Sciences learners. This would require appropriate resourcing for curriculum development and implementation.

“Let the Knowledge Keepers lead; let the Turtle Lodge, our largest Indigenous sacred lodge in Manitoba, our centre of excellence in education, lead the way.”

Knowledge Keeper Harry Bone

9. Knowledge Keeper Role in Traditional Healing

Many Knowledge Keepers have a gift of healing, whether it is through traditional ceremony, counselling or knowledge of healing medicines from the land.

Traditional healing is another area that could be explored where Knowledge Keepers could play a role in offering an Indigenous-founded wellness approach both in the actual healing of, as well as the education of health educators, students and patients served by the Faculty of Health Sciences.

The Knowledge Keepers recommended that the Faculty of Health Sciences establish a relationship with the Giigewigamig First Nation Health Authority, a local collaboration of four First Nations who are often served by Winnipeg hospitals – Hollow Water, Black River, Sagkeeng and Bloodvein First Nations.

Giigewigamig is led by community Knowledge Keepers, selected by their Chiefs and Councils, who are grounded in their languages, ceremonies, cultural teachings and traditions. Some are traditional healers themselves. The Knowledge Keepers are supported by Band Council Resolutions from each of the communities' Chief and Council, to have full autonomy in making decisions for the Giigewigamig Traditional Healing Centre. Giigewigamig meets biweekly to monthly, to discuss the development of initiatives related to the Giigewigamig Traditional Healing Centre at Pine Falls Hospital, and related health initiatives in the communities.

10. Knowledge Keeper Role in Leading Community Models of Wellness

The Knowledge Keepers at Turtle Lodge have an extensive network with other Knowledge Keepers both locally and across the country who they will turn to for specific expertise. They advised that in order to best serve the Faculty of Health Sciences' stated goals of implementing the TRC Recommendations, that the community – represented by the Knowledge Keepers – always be included in discussions about health. There are already evolving community initiatives and models of wellness that they recommend the Faculty of Health Sciences begin to engage with and support.

The Turtle Lodge engages in a number of initiatives throughout the year that support wellness from an Indigenous perspective. The Knowledge Keepers invited the Faculty of Health Sciences to engage with the Turtle Lodge in bringing learners to participate in some of these.

A key initiative is the rites of passage to adulthood conducted on the full moon in May every spring – the Vision Quest for young men and Makoose Ka Win for young women. These rites of passage can provide young people of all cultures (and adults who never experienced their rites of passage) with a foundation of connection to the

land and traditional teachings of values that enhance sense of purpose, a personal understanding of one's gifts and strengths, and duties and responsibilities to oneself, one's community and nation. The rites of passage build self-confidence, self-esteem, and a sense of purpose and identity that serves as an important beginning to education for any learner. More information on the rites of passage is found in **Appendix F**.

Working with the Giigewigamig First Nation Health Authority, which serves Indigenous community members and patients from local First Nation communities who are often transferred to the Winnipeg hospitals, could also represent an important step to developing traditional healing initiatives in collaboration with the Faculty of Health Sciences that could directly benefit both educators and learners at the Faculty as well as Indigenous community members utilizing services provided by the WRHA.

"We have worked with our local communities to start the initiative of Giigewigamig. It took about ten years to convince the RHA we need a place of our own. Elders are taking a lead role. The Chiefs have acknowledged the leadership of our Elders. We say to them, "We will call on you when we need you for political support." When the Elders don't know something they will call on the Spirit. We are introducing the element of water into the schools, working with Grandmother Josephine Mandamin who has walked around the Great Lakes. Water has the power to help in the detoxification that our people need. Maybe that's where the University can help us have a voice, to support these grassroots initiatives the communities are taking responsibility for."

Knowledge Keeper Dave Courchene

Discussions with the Turtle Lodge and Giigewigamig might include those around collaborations that could enhance health education for Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners at the Faculty of Health Sciences, current health care for the Indigenous population, developing collaborative approaches to offering enhanced traditional healing services in Winnipeg and the communities, as well as specific initiatives the communities might like to initiate with the Faculty of Health Sciences and vice versa.

C. DECOLONIZING OUR NOTIONS OF RECONCILIATION

“Reconciliation will not happen if we have senior officials saying “We need to raise you to our standards before we can have reconciliation.” The gaps in education outcomes for our children is a result of your curriculum and your system. It is supposed to be giving them the foundation for their education. We are coming out with children indoctrinated in their system, a system that is failing all children; what good is that?”

Knowledge Keeper Katherine Whitecloud

1. Decolonizing Ourselves

The Knowledge Keepers discussed the concept of reconciliation, and shared their perspective that the goal of decolonization should be a main focus in our search for true reconciliation.

“We need to decolonize our people. The whole Canadian public needs to be decolonized from the systems that are destroying the Earth. The education of our young people must become paramount in our efforts to effect any change for the future. A decolonization education begins with Spirit.”

Knowledge Keeper Dave Courchene

The Knowledge Keepers said that the colonial mentality had been damaging not only to Indigenous people but to everyone, and that in order to change direction, the non-Indigenous people had to begin seeing things from an Indigenous perspective.

“We have walked your road for so long. For us to reconcile, you have to walk ours.”

Knowledge Keeper Katherine Whitecloud

“Not only has walking your road not benefited us, it is not benefited the world itself.”

Knowledge Keeper Dave Courchene

Today more young people in the academic environment have begun to recognize the signs of assimilation – one of the effects of colonization. Recently an Indigenous young person at the university shared her perspective with one of the Knowledge Keepers:

“She said, ‘As young people entering the university, if we don’t reach out to our own Elders and traditions, and learn about our true identity, we are the generation that will fast-track the total assimilation of our people.’

She was correct.”

Knowledge Holder Harry Bone

The Knowledge Keepers highlighted a relationship between colonized thinking and ill health, describing many of the current symptoms of disease and ill health faced by Indigenous people as “*symptoms of colonization*”.

“Our current health care system is one of judgement and condemnation. People don’t know us, and they associate us with the symptoms of poverty that have created our current reality. Today is the result of what our people have gone through. We have survived because we have a belief system, our languages and prayers. They are relying on ignorance, defining Indigenous people as those living on streets or by the symptoms that they are facing, which are often symptoms of colonization.”

Knowledge Keeper Dave Courchene

The Knowledge Keepers attributed the root cause of ill health in the Indigenous population, and perhaps indeed the whole population, to a “*disconnection from the land and a spiritual way of life.*”

They agreed that the way to both decolonize and to restore health was to reconnect to the land and spirit.

“[The Elder] said the only way we are going to heal as when we, our people, pick up those sacred bundles that were outlawed.

"This sacred place that Dave had the vision to build [Turtle Lodge] has helped people. This is how we decolonize ourselves."

Knowledge Keeper Margaret Lavallee (Faculty of Health Sciences)

2. Rejecting Concepts of Integration and Assimilation

"We should be considered an equal part of education. We need to crush that integration concept. Whenever I listen to presentations and proposed action plans, I ask, what is this? Is it integration or continued assimilation or is it something that will support real partnership, which we need to do. We talk about Nation to Nation. We are not going to have nationhood if we have continued participation in integration. It is not going to happen. If we are going to really empower the First Peoples, they need to see that they are treated as equal partners."

Knowledge Keeper Dave Courchene

The Knowledge Keepers spoke about the impossibility and also the danger of "integrating" Indigenous knowledge into the western educational paradigm, because they feel that the western system operates under a different value system under which it is not possible to effectively teach Indigenous knowledge. Without having the ability to properly and effectively share Indigenous knowledge under its own paradigm, following Indigenous cultural protocols, the Knowledge Keepers warned that Indigenous students would be subjected to ongoing assimilation.

"If you don't know the traditions, you will be perpetuating western traditions."

Knowledge Keeper Harry Bone

"They are trying to indigenize education, trying to make the institutions 'Aboriginal', and fighting for dollars doing it. We need to get away from the concepts of 'integration' of the Pipe and Bible, and 'indigenizing' education while they are imposing their own values and systems on us."

In that system, our youth are still experiencing racism. Experiencing racism freezes you, makes you immobile, so strong it hits you in the gut."

The first time a child experiences it, it has a long-lasting effect. The youth are trying to please the teacher, and believe everything they say, otherwise they are made to feel racism.

It is time for us to say, 'This is what we want,' because we are losing our culture. The process of assimilation is still happening very strongly today."

Knowledge Keeper Chris Harper, St. Theresa Point First Nation (At Turtle Lodge, March 2, 2016)

D. THE INDIGENOUS CONTRIBUTION TO HEALTH EDUCATION

1. Changing the Paradigm of Education

“We tell our children to get an education, and for what? So they can be an instrument of the corporate world, an instrument of the pipelines that are destroying our world?

We are a people rich in values. We need to build a new economy, based on sustainability. We need to teach them how to be good parents and to take care of each other. We need to train our young people to build a peaceful society, and become caretakers and stewards of the land.

“We can set a whole new narrative for this country, a whole new national identity that includes our contribution.”

Knowledge Keeper Dave Courchene

The Knowledge Keepers spoke about the need to completely change the paradigm of education, in order to bring Indigenous knowledge into the forefront.

“We must set up our own higher places of learning led by our Knowledge Keepers.

We must design a completely new economy – one that is grounded in a vision of peace, sacred values, representing our leadership, and respecting the contribution of the uniqueness and diversity of cultures that have arrived on our homelands.

This new economy we design must be inspired through the guidance and direction of the Spirit, and based on stewardship and love for the land. The new economy will be about supporting the home, the community and the Nation. We must implement in our infrastructure a total traditional education immersed in the language. We must restore the sacred lodges in all our communities, places of higher learning and spiritual connection.

We must maximize the opportunities for our children to be on the land with Mother Earth, making an annual journey to the sacred sites to restore and strengthen our spirit as a Nation.”

Knowledge Keeper Dave Courchene

Sonnet L'Abbé, award-winning poet, culture critic and CBC contributor, recently acknowledged that the creation of a new Canadian identity could become based upon the country learning from and developing a new relationship with Indigenous people.

"Perhaps it was my state of mind having just come from Saskatoon, or maybe it was just that Elder Gary Dano was that good a performer, but the song he sang moved me to tears. Something about his voice and the ancient syllables of prayer reverberating against the limestone walls of English and French colonialists' "gateway to the West," made me aware of breathing the same air as everyone in the room. Each elder who has spoken at the #Canada150 conferences has emphasized honouring the water, land and air as nourishing us and nourishing our future. Dano made it seem possible that our very Canadian identity could become an honouring of those things.¹³"

Sonnet L'Abbe, Canadian poet and CBC contributor

Currently the paradigm of education as it is taught at university might be described as an education of critical thinking and conceptual thought, with an underlying economic focus. The following is the stated mission, vision and values of the University of Manitoba:

Our Mission, Vision and Values

MISSION

To create, preserve, communicate and apply knowledge, contributing to the cultural, social and economic well-being of the people of Manitoba, Canada and the world.

VISION

To take our place among leading universities through a commitment to transformative research and scholarship, and to innovative teaching and learning - uniquely strengthened by Indigenous knowledge and perspectives.

VALUES

To achieve our vision, we require a commitment to a common

¹³ L'Abbe, Sonnet, Winnipeg: Where Language, Culture and History Meet. Posted at: <http://cbcrblog.com/people/winnipeg-2017/?lang=en>

set of ideals. The University of Manitoba values: Academic Freedom, Accountability, Collegiality, Equity and Inclusion, Excellence, Innovation, Integrity, Respect, and Sustainability.

Mission Statement of the University of Manitoba¹⁴

As noble as the ideals and mission sound in terms of making a contribution to society, the Knowledge Keepers pointed out that ultimately many students entering university are doing so with an economic motivation and goal of receiving an education that they hope will provide them with a job, and the ability to be productive and achieve economic success in the current Canadian workforce. There is also the attraction of prestige and becoming “one of the elite” in our current society, through receiving a university education.

There is also concern of an underlying economic motive in the commercialization of university education through a system of partially publicly funded universities to develop products and viable businesses and services that make the country as a whole more productive and competitive internationally, as opposed to being a simply neutral educational party that is pursuing the goal of education in and of itself.

“There is a danger of commercializing higher education when we ask colleges and universities to turn their attention to commercial development of their inventions. This commercialization has the potential to erode the central mission of creating prepared minds by distracting administration and faculty into pursuing commercial goals to the exclusion of the higher purpose. The pressure to succeed in creating products and viable businesses with the funds entrusted to the institution may cause (and in some cases has caused) erosion of trust by the general public and by industry and businesses, of the university as a neutral party that should be pursuing the higher goal of education rather than competing in business.”¹⁵

Andres Fortino, Partner, Paradigm Research International

¹⁴ <http://umanitoba.ca/about/mission.html>

¹⁵ Andres Fortino, Partner, Paradigm Research International, “The Purpose of Higher Education: To Create Prepared Minds” in <https://evollution.com/opinions/the-purpose-of-higher-education-to-create-prepared-minds/>

The Knowledge Keepers challenged the values of the western paradigm, where the goals of western education and the measures of success and productivity are gauged in economic and egotistical terms, pointing out that operating with an acceptance of the current economic paradigm and value system is neither wise, sustainable, nor self-determining, not only for Indigenous but also non-Indigenous people.

The Knowledge Keepers suggested that driving message and vision of education needed to be changed. There was a suggestion for the adoption of a metaphor of a rite of passage for the education being offered to and received by students. Within that metaphor, the Knowledge Keepers at Turtle Lodge could offer an Indigenous knowledge contribution and values-based foundation that would provide a strong balance for the academic knowledge and critical thinking skills developed by the university curriculum.

“Walk in kindness. The teaching I learned from my mother and my grandmother.”

Knowledge Keeper Dave Courchene

2. Defining Indigenous Education – A Foundation for All Students

“An Indigenous education could benefit every student. What is an Indigenous education? What is the main thing you teach a child? Respect. How to be a good human being. An Indigenous education is about strengthening one’s identity as a human being. Becoming strong in who you are. Taking care of your spirit. Knowing your responsibilities in life.”

Knowledge Keeper Dave Courchene

Redefining health and offering a more diverse model, reflecting the Indigenous contribution to education, was seen as possible through the implementation of the Turtle Lodge Treaty on Education.

In defining education, for anyone, the Knowledge Keepers describe laying a foundation, which can support the unique spirit or identity of each youth, as an integral first step to creating responsible citizens of communities, nations and the

world.

"We need to take the lead in using Aboriginal ways of knowing, in how we are going to proceed in the education of our people and also the people we are going to work with."

Knowledge Keeper Chris Harper (At Turtle Lodge, March 2, 2016)

The Knowledge Keepers acknowledged the failure of education for so many young Indigenous people, in many of whom there has been a loss of connection to their identity and damage to the spirit, through practices of assimilation and colonization. There is a resulting lack of solid identity in many Indigenous youth entering the post-secondary education system, and the need for reconnection is great.

From an Indigenous perspective, the goal of education is based on Indigenous concepts of *Maya kiizhay ottiziwin* (how to be a kind human being) and *Maya chikendun abinoojii* (the child has to know its spirit). The process of education from an Indigenous perspective necessitates forming relationships with living beings in one's environment, including the living and breathing Earth itself.

Indigenous knowledge, according to the Knowledge Keepers, can provide a holistic foundation for education for all students, not just Indigenous students, as it enhances the self-confidence, moral fibre and unique identities of individual students.

"In our understanding, education is the planting of a seed. The focus needs to be on young people and the future. We must think about the positive things that are going to build and strengthen the self-esteem of our young people. The light has to be lit in each of the students. All the applied and conceptual knowledge they learn in college and university is secondary. You can do anything once that light is lit. There are rippling effects of confidence that we can instil. It is about teaching them our roles and responsibilities within our communities. When we do this right, our youth will become calm and good parents. They will show concern for the climate."

Knowledge Keeper Gerald Courchene, Sagkeeng First Nation (At Turtle Lodge, March 2, 2016)

In 1972, the National Indian Brotherhood, now known as the Assembly of First Nations, stated in its *Indian Control of Indian Education: Policy Paper*:

*"Unless a child learns about the forces which shape him: the history of his people, their values and customs, their language, he will never really know himself or his potential as a human being. Indian culture and values have a unique place in the history of mankind."*¹⁶

The Knowledge Keepers warned that the pitfalls of *not* getting an Indigenous education were the perpetuation of colonization and furthering of assimilation.

The Knowledge Keepers discussed the importance of taking the lead in delivering Indigenous education.

"We have the right to high-quality [health] care. We have the right to define what that means."

Knowledge Keeper Harry Bone

3. Ensuring Integrity and Protection of Indigenous Knowledge - The Importance of Place and the Knowledge Keepers in the Delivery of Indigenous Knowledge

"Somehow the knowledge has to be protected under Knowledge Keepers. A priority for us is protecting Indigenous knowledge. Indigenous knowledge cannot be shared from their [academic] perspective but from our [traditional Knowledge Keepers'] perspective."

Knowledge Keeper Harry Bone

For the Knowledge Keepers, protection of Indigenous knowledge is a priority. Ensuring integrity in the delivery of Indigenous knowledge transmission is integral to its protection.

¹⁶ National Indian Brotherhood/Assembly of First Nations, *Indian Control of Indian Education: Policy Paper*, 1972, pg. 2.

"When we are in your buildings on campus is, there is no life there. The life is here, where are you were going to learn from. You need to be on the land to remember who you are or you will lose contact with yourself."

Knowledge Keeper Harry Bone

How Indigenous knowledge is delivered, both in terms of who is delivering it, and the place where it is delivered, are of foundational importance. Sacred space matters in the sharing of Indigenous knowledge. Indigenous knowledge is traditionally shared on the land or in the sacred lodges, by the Knowledge Keepers who have been given the authority to share it, and the protocols of sharing and delivery are equally, if not more important, than the knowledge itself, as it is always a process guided ceremonially.

"Sacred knowledge needs to be taught in our sacred lodges or on the land, and by our Knowledge Keepers."

Knowledge Keeper Harry Bone

"We need to define the higher understanding we have of life. This is an educational process for them and we need to create an environment for this educational process."

Knowledge Keeper Dave Courchene

"Ceremonies cannot go into their institutions."

Katherine Whitecloud

"It is difficult to do our side. Some professors are hard grade."

Knowledge Keeper Harry Bone

We Elders should be there to help you out so teachings are not compromised. We are partners, not advisors or consultants.

We have a place we can come – the Turtle Lodge – a safe environment.

Knowledge Keeper Mary Wilson, Faculty of Health Sciences

The Knowledge Keepers reiterated that the current academic environment of the Faculty of Health Science would not be sufficient in sharing important lessons to support and reinforce identity.

“How do we ensure that the space we share our knowledge is sacred; that it is not confined in textbooks?”

Knowledge Keeper Katherine Whitecloud

“Gatherings have to be in our environments, in the sacred lodges, outside the system. For Manitoba this [the Turtle Lodge] is the largest teaching Lodge we've got.”

Knowledge Keeper Harry Bone

4. Cultural Safety and the Issue of Racism

“They are looking at safety in a very different aspect. For them safety is making sure that if a fire drill went, how to alert people. For us, safety is for people to feel safe enough to share and to be protected in what they are going to be sharing.”

Knowledge Keeper Florence Paynter

The concept of cultural safety was discussed as an important priority.

Research was presented by representatives of the Faculty of Health Sciences, revealing that one hundred percent of Indigenous students within the Faculty had expressed that they had experienced racism in their education at the University of Manitoba.

“100% of Indigenous students [at the University of Manitoba's Faculty of Health Sciences] experienced racism in their training or have witnessed racism in clinical environments. This has created a situation that is unsafe for Indigenous students and also in the curriculum. They say, “We see it, and we are afraid of what to do next.” They are afraid of blowback from preceptors and doctors even though they are trained to confront it. We need a mechanism to make sure that the environment is safer for Indigenous students, learners, and colleagues. How do we start a

conversation to have a mechanism to deal with this? If a provider is repeatedly breaching patient safety, they ask us, “How do you have my back?”

Ian, University of Manitoba

The Knowledge Keepers provided some feedback.

“I understand what racism is. I have heard someone say to me ‘go back to where you belong.’ Before you have any relationship, you have to have respect. It is hurtful to hear that every student has experienced racism. If you don't feel respect, you don't feel welcome, you don't feel wanted, and you're not going to have the kind of outcomes you want to see.”

Knowledge Keeper Katherine Whitecloud

When I heard that 100% of our people still experience racism, I found that really astounding. They need to be invited into the cultural environments – right into our lodges – to experience our way of life. It is very difficult to do that within the system. I work in the system in the city; when we try to share our knowledge, where on the receiving end they have no understanding, it is very frustrating.

Knowledge Keeper Mary Maytwayashing

The question was asked of the Knowledge Keepers:

How can the University set some example for how to deal with racism?

The next sections will elaborate upon the Knowledge Keepers' response to this question.

4. Education in Identity

“Identity is paramount in education. Who you are, your history and knowing your spirit – that identifies your identity.”

Knowledge Keeper Dave Courchene

Paramount as a first step in any education, according to the Knowledge Keepers, was finding and knowing one's own identity. This is essentially a deeply personal and individual process. The Knowledge Keepers shared that their strength lies in supporting the individual in helping connect with one's true spirit, using ancient ceremony, land-based techniques as well as shared teachings and values. They offered Indigenous approaches to finding identity to students of all cultures as a gift and an option in setting a foundation for their education.

"If individuals self-identify as Indian, Métis, or Inuit, do they really know who they are? The issue is one of identity. One way [the truth and reconciliation process] has helped me is to speak my truth and live my truth. To be free to be who we are. To accept that freely. We don't need validation. One of the main issues of the young people is acceptance of themselves."

Melanie McKinnon, University of Manitoba

5. Knowing One's Duties and Responsibilities

The importance of teaching about responsibilities was highlighted many times in the discussion. Responsibilities were described by the Knowledge Keepers in the context of:

1. Responsibilities to the self – learning about one's cultural identity that includes one's ancestral teachings and values, and learning about one's unique gifts and purpose;
2. Responsibilities to one's family,
3. Responsibilities to one's community,
4. Responsibilities to the nation,
5. Responsibilities to the Earth.

In our uniqueness, every one of us has responsibilities. Health and wellness begins when a child is conceived. Our gifts from the Creator, our responsibilities as men and women, begin before they are born and until they are 11, to teach them everything they need to know to be well. If there is any physical health issue, that means something is lacking from that period of time, spiritually, mentally, emotionally. Cradleboards carried children on our back until the age of 3, then they were carried in shawls

until they were placed on the Earth. Then, for boys, the father began to teach them. For girls it was the mother, aunties and women.

Part of a healthy life is knowing what your role and responsibility is in life. We carry our children, touch them, and hold them when they are young. If children are not nourished in the right way, they become broken children. There is a failure to thrive if a child is not loved or provided for. Sometimes the Creator takes them back – such as with SIDS.

Winnipeg has the worst gang situation, worst homelessness, and worst child prostitution. We have failed 12,000 children in our care in Manitoba. 80% are afflicted with FAE, something totally preventable.

If something has happened with one child, we as adults have all failed. Each of you is also responsible when you stand by and don't do anything. That is when you have a sick society.

There are cancer clusters in my father's community – I believe because of farm chemicals in the water. We live in a drive through world. My mother asked us not to have anymore children, unless you can guarantee they will have a good life.

For Knowledge Keepers, knowledge is given to us as a gift to share. You have to teach them more than what's in a book about responsibility. Our children go through rites of passage – they learn through their connection to the Creator, prayer, fasting, learn what they are to give back to life after what has been prepared for them. It's in the sharing and gifting of those who help you that you receive the life that's given to you. Our cures all come from nature because Mother Nature gives us all what we need to have a good life. Nature is still out of balance, animals are doing unnatural things.

Reconciliation will not happen if we have senior officials saying "we need to raise you to our standards before we can have reconciliation."

When you come and visit our communities and see a rich, vibrant, beautiful people, still singing our songs. We never died; we went underground. That is what drives us because we have commitment – and it requires a personal commitment, for all children to have wellness. When we share our knowledge, we pass on the knowledge of our family and generations.

Knowledge Keeper Katherine Whitecloud

We talk about some of the issues that face our people in our communities, province and reserve. The elders made sure the young people held up the responsibilities. We lived with natural law. There were times for medicine picking. We did not have electricity. In the winter time, people left their doors open, always had a pot of tea, lots of bannock, blueberries, strawberries, so if anyone was walking down the street, there was always an open house in this community. It was a joyful time, full of energy, full of love. Then something happened. Kids started to disappear, the dam was built, hydro and welfare appeared. My father said that one day the hydro was going to kill people and there is going to be so much erosion that we won't be able to drink the water. He and our family began to boycott the hydro. We did not have electricity for a long time. This was the best reserve. I was happy here, I loved living here. I love our people.

Knowledge Keeper Margaret Lavallee

6. Returning to the Beginning: Education Begins with the Mother, the Grandmothers & the Earth

“Education must begin with the mothers, the grandmothers and the Earth itself, as it is the women who are deeply connected to the Earth. A boy cannot become a man until he has been initiated by woman – first his mother, and then when he comes of age, he seeks his connection, purpose and guidance from the Earth herself on his vision quest. Education must begin with the Grandmothers, the Mothers, the Woman and the Earth. We need to create environments, based around the 13 moons and 4 seasons, for the Grandmothers to sing the songs of connection, to work with those who want to learn. The Grandmothers need to be put back into their rightful place of influence to lead and guide this process, sing the songs and lead the ceremonies.”

Knowledge Keeper Dave Courchene

The Knowledge Keepers spoke about “returning to the beginning” to regain a land-based, spiritual knowledge and values of survival.

'Creation stories are very important.'

Knowledge Keeper Dave Courchene

In understanding education, the Knowledge Keepers go back to the beginning of where learning begins – to the moment of conception itself. They emphasize the role of the parents, and for the early years, particularly the role of the mothers, grandmothers and the Earth itself in providing a foundation for learning.

"A child's education means that from the moment of conception till that child leaves their home as an adult, the mother is responsible for that child's teachings. We haven't prepared them for entry into this world with teachings. Mothers and babies are medicated from the moment of birth or before. They are exposed to unnatural foods - formula instead of mother's milk. There are ceremonies for them as they save the umbilical cord; we put it away for them. A little boy learns how to respect a woman by how father treats his mother. Sacred rites of passage to womanhood help guide our young women to an understanding of who they are."

Knowledge Keeper Katherine Whitecloud

They emphasized creating Indigenous environments based around natural elements of time such as the thirteen moons and four seasons, in which the Grandmothers and Knowledge Keepers are put back in their rightful place of influence and leadership.

7. Language

Language was seen by the Knowledge Keepers as a vital vehicle for Indigenous knowledge transmission.

"Language is very important and part of what the Creator has given us. You have to believe in what the Creator has given to you, if you believe, you will have a healthy life."

Knowledge Keeper Harry Bone

The Knowledge Keepers spoke in support of the languages being taught in the sacred lodges, following Indigenous methods of language transmission, including the use of Indigenous cultural tools of ceremony, the drum, sacred songs and land-based activities for the education of cultural knowledge which goes hand in hand with the learning of language.

8. The Seven Sacred Teachings and Bringing in the Turtle

“Our recovery is based on a laying a foundation of the Seven Teachings.”

Knowledge Keeper Dave Courchene

The Turtle was seen as a special symbol of Indigenous education.

In Indigenous traditions, the Turtle represents the teaching of Truth, which, according to the Knowledge Keepers, means living all Seven Sacred Teachings of ***Respect, Love, Courage, Honesty, Wisdom, Humility and Truth.***

“The teaching of Truth is represented by the Grandmother Turtle. Our Nationhood is living the Truth, by having the Seven Laws as the foundation. Our Nationhood means living in the spirit of Respect, Love, Courage, Honesty, Wisdom, Humility and Truth.

It is within our sacred lodges that the Seven Laws of our Nationhood are lived and modeled, and that Nationhood can be practised in our daily lives, no matter where we find ourselves.”

Knowledge Keeper Dave Courchene

The Knowledge Keepers were in agreement with using the symbol of the Turtle to represent the holistic designing a curriculum that was founded upon Truth – essentially founded upon the Seven Sacred Teachings.

“When you have a foundation of the seven teachings then the child will be able to learn whatever they want to learn.”

Knowledge Keeper Mary Maytwayashing

Through a recent ceremony conducted by Elder Clifford Skead in Treaty #3 territory, the Turtle Lodge Knowledge Keepers Council were guided to “bring in spirit of the Turtle” in their relationship with the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, in order to share the beauty of Indigenous knowledge and an ancient way of life, imbued with values that by their very essence, support respect for human rights.

9. Values, Spirituality and Land Connection

“If they had some of our values, that [experience of racism in health care system] would not have happened. Being respectful how you get up in the morning, walk on Earth, teach our children, talk nicely to one another, to listen, to think about what does your neighbour feel right now.”

Knowledge Keeper Mary Wilson

Introducing Indigenous values and spirituality with view to creating greater compassion, understanding and respect was seen as something that would be beneficial to the health care system.

The introduction and education of Indigenous values within the health care system was seen as helpful way to support reconciling with the truth of racism in the health care system.

“One of the biggest challenges faced by our people entering your system is the issue of racism.

“[Former Prime Minister of Canada] Paul Martin asked me one time, ‘How can we change the continued public image Canadians have about Aboriginal people?’

“I answered, ‘The answer is simple. Give us your children. We will teach your children.’

Knowledge Keeper Dave Courchene

The Knowledge Keepers described Indigenous knowledge as a living knowledge, connected to the land and ceremonies, holistic, and related to knowing our place, connections and relationships with other living beings and the Earth.

“Our family includes not just our human family, but just as much the animals, the birds, the fish, the plants and the trees, the sun, the water the air and the land – which all form part of the great interdependent web of life.”

It is the land we live on that truly defines our identities, sustains our families and Communities, and provides us with the knowledge of how to live.”

Knowledge Keeper Dave Courchene

Indigenous cosmology is very connected to the Earth, based on an understanding that the Earth gives us everything, and that nature is a vital part of healing.

“We have lost the connection to the Earth for the most part. She is so much older than us. Being human beings has given us the part of the mind that is filled with ego, so we think that we have the right to know more. We are part of the whole. It is the Earth that gives us energy. She has her own soul. The trees have their own soul. Healing is reaching understanding between all of life that has a spirit. If we take the time to contemplate who has the real knowledge, it is something that has a spirit - the Earth itself.”

Knowledge Keeper Mary Wilson

Examples were brought forward reflecting respect and consideration of both cultural and individual perspectives on death and dying:

“My father recently passed away from cancer. He said, I don't want the doctor telling me how long I have to live because that's only the Creator that can tell you that. The doctor told him first thing, you have three months to live. We were floored. I was so angry with a doctor. My father gave up that day, when he heard that. I think it would have been very different if the doctor hadn't shared that with my dad.”

Knowledge Keeper Mary Maytwayashing

“We always manage to bring so many people into one room when our people are sick or about to pass.”

Knowledge Keeper Florence Paynter

Humour is very much a part of all our Indigenous cultures. It is a common cultural practice to see humour used in all situations, to help raise the spirit and also to lift people out of sadness.

"The doctor says you're very sick; he's going to give you three shots. He is going to shoot you three times."

Knowledge Keeper Margaret Lavallee (Translated from Anishnabemowin)

"A non-Native person was putting flowers on the grave and beside him a Native person was putting a bowl of food in front of a grave."

The non-Native person couldn't hold it in anymore and said, "When will your relative come up to eat the food?"

The Native person answered quickly without missing a beat, "The same time yours comes up to smell the flowers."

Knowledge Keeper Florence Paynter

10. Cultural Education and Awareness Training

"We need to create an awareness among youth and staff, not necessarily for them to be converted to our ways, just an awareness. Where there is understanding there may be respect."

Knowledge Keeper Harry Bone

Cultural awareness training for students, staff and governance was seen as a priority by the Knowledge Keepers in order to achieve cultural safety for all Indigenous students and staff within the Faculty of Health Science setting.

The Knowledge Keepers acknowledged that not only most non-Indigenous students and faculty, but also many Indigenous students and faculty may have limited to no knowledge of the history, culture, language, ceremonies, teachings and values of Indigenous people here in their homeland. This lack of knowledge and denial have

served to undermine the very identity of Indigenous youth, and led to unresolved grief, shame, low self-esteem and anger.

“They are missing that sense of pride in themselves – a sense of belonging. They are feeling a sense of shame - they don't want to be quite Indian yet.”

Knowledge Keeper Harry Bone

The Knowledge Keepers felt that the best place to share cultural knowledge was in a cultural setting, such as the Turtle Lodge.

11. “Sacred and Cultural Knowledge” – The Backbone of Indigenous Education

An education about the “sacred and cultural knowledge” of Indigenous people was seen as a vital part of the transmission of Indigenous knowledge, in order to provide a fuller context of understanding Indigenous history pre-contact, Indigenous worldviews, values and perspectives which inform and continue to shape Indigenous cultures today.

An integral part of education, according to the Knowledge Keepers, is sharing the truth of the history of the First Peoples here in their homeland. They stressed the importance of introducing universal values carried by Indigenous people.

“Truth does not start with residential schools; it starts much further back, with our identity as a People found in our beautiful history, right from the beginning. Before those boats landed, we lived within complex societies. Our true history is not reflected in the [current] institutions. It has to be taught.”

Knowledge Keeper Gerald Courchene (At Turtle Lodge, March 1, 2016)

Learning about Indigenous history since the time of contact with Europeans and Treaty, without an education of the sacred and cultural knowledge and teachings is considered an incomplete education. The Knowledge Keepers emphasized that it is the cultural sharing of sacred knowledge, teachings and values that provides the backbone, the foundation of strength of spirit and character, identity, and self-esteem that is required not only for Indigenous, but also non-Indigenous learners, to

receive full benefit of whatever further education and training they are going to be pursuing.

An authentic and high quality education of sacred and cultural knowledge is one that the Knowledge Keepers felt could only legitimately be offered by qualified Knowledge Keepers themselves, within their own cultural environments.

The Knowledge Keepers supported providing the opportunity for all learners – both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, including those ascribing to various different religious belief systems – to gain a knowledge of universal Indigenous teachings, values, ceremonies, languages and culture.

12. An Education of Correct Contact and Post-Contact History

“The current environment of Indigenous people means we are under a system of subjugation and domination. We do not have the freedom to be that free people we once were since the arrival of the new people from all over the world. There have been some incredible casualties. Despite everything that has happened, we survived and it has made us stronger.”

Knowledge Keeper Dave Courchene

The Knowledge Keepers supported the role of Indigenous academics and faculty in providing some aspects of an education of correct history to students at the Faculty of Health Sciences – mainly the education of history of what has happened through contact and post-contact.

The Knowledge Keepers reflected that the current education system’s failure to share the truth about the real history of the First Peoples, both before and within the context of the arrival of the Europeans and other immigrants from all over the world, has meant that many people in this country are unaware and even in denial of the facts of history.

The manner in which this information is shared has to be carefully considered, which can be done in consultation with the Knowledge Keepers.

"It is important in institutions and schools share the truth of what happened to us – a lot of people are still in denial. How do we tell our youth because they could get angry?"

Knowledge Keeper Chris Harper (At Turtle Lodge, March 2, 2016)

The Knowledge Keepers emphasized that the truth of contact history must include a thorough examination and disclosure of the papal bulls, papal edicts from the 1400s from which nations including Spain and Portugal derived authority for their invasion and genocide of Indigenous peoples in the Americas.

In the papal edict Dum Diversas of 1452, as one example, Pope Nicholas V authorized King Alfonso of Portugal, or his representatives, to sail to non-Christian lands, and "to invade, capture, vanquish, and subdue, all Saracens, pagans, and other enemies of Christ, to reduce their persons to perpetual slavery, and to take away all their possessions and property."

The king was further instructed to "convert" the lands of the non-Christians. In legal terms, the word "convert" can mean "to unlawfully or wrongfully take away that which rightfully belongs to another." Accordingly, Pope Nicholas V then declared the king's actions against the non-Christians to be "just and lawful."

The above quoted terminology (invade, capture, vanquish, subdue, reduce to slavery, and convert the lands and property of the non-Christians) not only declared war on the non-Christian world. It also created a framework or paradigm of DOMINATION that continues to operate in plain sight while generally going unnoticed and unnamed.¹⁷

The whole premise of Canadian and American nationhood and law today are still founded upon the doctrine of discovery and notions of domination. To this day court rulings in Canada and the USA that refuse to acknowledge the inherent rights of Indigenous peoples are still upheld based upon the doctrine of discovery codified in the papal bulls, which to this day have not been rescinded.

Part of the concern raised by the Knowledge Keepers was that for true reconciliation to occur, any relationship with Indigenous peoples in their homeland

¹⁷Newcomb, Steven. *Pope Francis takes first step toward revoking papal bulls*. Printed online at: <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/07/13/pope-francis-takes-first-step-toward-revoking-papal-bulls>

must support breaking free from that idea of domination found in the doctrine of discovery, in recognition of the free and independent Original Nations of this land.

13. Healing for Students as a Component of Education

Healing the wounds of the past was seen as part of the goal of education.

“Once we focus on truth, then true reconciliation and healing will take place.”

Knowledge Keeper Florence Paynter

The Knowledge Keepers spoke about the challenge of revealing historical information that could be painful for learners to hear about. Many communities have not engaged or have just begun the healing process from the painful wounds of colonization, including the experience of the residential schools. Many students have family members who have directly experienced trauma related to racism, colonial and genocidal practices, or have experienced intergenerational effects. The Knowledge Keepers warned that one cannot begin with descriptions of genocide that occurred; that if care is not taken to share the history in a healing environment, we would lose a lot of our learners.

Sharing the sometimes painful truth of history must be supportive of the spirit of the individual, grounded in an understanding of a positive identity and positive history of a people pre-contact, which sets the foundation of a strong identity and history to be proud of.

Youth need to know that they come from a beautiful people, before they hear about a post-contact history that has been devastating.

“I work with girls at a residential center. The children's spirits are broken. That's what I see every day that I go in there. But what really helps is our ceremonies. I speak to them about how beautiful they are and how to respect.”

Grandmother Mary Maytwayashing

Sharing the history in the sacred lodges was seen as a way to prevent harm from occurring, and ensuring the simultaneous strengthening of identity and healing of the spirit that is needed in the educational process.

14. Closing the Gap

The Faculty of Health Sciences representatives asked the Knowledge Keepers for guidance on how to “close the gap” in bringing in a more proportionate number of Indigenous students to access a university education. They alluded to the 30 to 40% gap in funding First Nations communities' education, which is an obvious barrier, but also asked:

“What we haven't done is ask what kind of physicians do you want? We haven't done this work. What qualities and characteristics should we be looking for in doctors, etc., peers, colleagues. How do we ensure that the policies do not represent any unnecessary barriers to Indigenous learners?”

Dr. Marcia Anderson, Faculty of Health Sciences

In addressing closing the gap issue, the Knowledge Keepers responded that the education must not only be made more accessible in terms of physical barriers such as lack of funding, but also more relevant to Indigenous students. A change in paradigm, which in practical terms could look like a partnership between Turtle Lodge and the Faculty of Health Sciences, and the subsequent development of curriculum and a foundation of Indigenous education led by Knowledge Keepers in their own environment, could benefit all students, Indigenous and non-Indigenous.

“We must go deeper than having Indigenous students access a flawed education. We must rethink the entire paradigm of education.”

Knowledge Keeper Katherine Whitecloud

Knowledge Keepers indicated that assessment should reflect an Indigenous perspective. In evaluating “readiness” for university education, positive or beneficial qualities and strengths carried through experience within Indigenous cultural paradigms should be considered as valuable contributions an Indigenous student can bring to the university community.

"You ask us about closing the gap. We have thousands of students who want to go to university who do not have the money to go or the access.

I have experience in assessment and evaluation and ask you to take into consideration the special gifts that our students have that others don't have. For example, my 10-year-old grandson had his first moose when he was seven. How do we assess that – how fast the animal moves, which direction how to point his firearm? They have infinite amounts of knowledge from their parents, grandparents, and ancestors.

A lot of times the university's messaging is 'success looks like this' and success looks like them. We need to define success as being around life, all of our knowledge being equal."

Knowledge Keeper Katherine Whitecloud

The Knowledge Keepers pointed out flaws and other barriers in the current health care delivery system itself, that need to be addressed at a more foundational level.

"I have experienced the work you do in the hospitals as doctors and nurses, and I am disappointed in how you treat people. I recognize that you don't have the time to listen, but even taking a few minutes would make a difference."

Knowledge Keeper Harry Bone

The Knowledge Keepers emphasized that their role as Indigenous educators, as well as role of Indigenous students, should not be one of passive recipients or vehicles for the implementation of a western system, rather that Indigenous educators and students should take full leadership in the transmission and sharing of an ancient and beautiful Indigenous system of knowledge.

"There is a misconception about Indigenous people as recipients of western knowledge and help."

Knowledge Keeper Harry Bone

The Knowledge Keepers spoke strongly about the importance of cultural connection for Indigenous learners.

*"They need to learn and feel natural law, our ways, our protocols.
Connecting with your own spirit is so important."*

Knowledge Keeper Florence Paynter

"I saw this young girl who went into the medical field [who was having a hard time]. I have to be in ceremony all the time for my spirit to be rejuvenated. For me it goes back to the children, the rites of passage, teaching them. A lot of those people who go into those fields do not have that foundation. Equipping them with the knowledge from the lodges and the elders. Even though we have a cultural room in the city, it is not the same as in the lodges."

Knowledge Keeper Mary Maytwayashing

"The healing system is very harmful to them. Elders need to be there to support Indigenous doctors and students. To help them replenish their spirits."

Knowledge Keeper Mary Wilson

15. Traditional Healing

"They also had special gifts. Really gifted with the medicines. I was designated to seek out that knowledge, and I share that knowledge very freely."

Knowledge Keeper Florence Paynter

The Knowledge Keepers shared their willingness to partner with the University in providing an Indigenous education, within their own environment (Turtle Lodge), to enhance and broaden the offering of education, which may also provide a more attractive option to Indigenous students interested in learning more about their traditional ways as they apply to health and healing. Many Knowledge Keepers are also traditional healers, and a partnership with Turtle Lodge and the Giigewigamig First Nation Health Authority could support the development of Indigenous curriculum developed and led by the Knowledge Keepers.

“Traditional healing has taken many generations of teachings and apprenticeship. It starts when a gift is seen in a child, and it is nurtured from when he was a baby. It is a lifelong path.”

Knowledge Keeper Katherine Whitecloud

A knowledge of traditional healing, which includes knowledge of the ceremonial, land connection, medicines of the land, counselling and listening skills, could also help broaden the education of health and wellness, and understanding of the root causes of disease.

“We knew the sacredness of life. Our elders tell us when it is a white man’s disease and they also tell us when it is one of our own. They know the medicines from the land because they have observed for a long time. Isn’t that what research is? To observe for a long time.”

Knowledge Keeper Florence Paynter

The Knowledge Keepers shared certain elements of traditional healing that could support an individual who is suffering.

“The drum is very healing. It helps us feel and nurtures the spirit. The drum wakes up the memory in each of us, the memory of the mother’s womb. Feeling the spirit and energy of that drum does more than human intelligence can comprehend.”

Knowledge Keeper Dave Courchene

“When I was a baby I was very sick, vomiting, they took me to my grandmother. They made a brine from shavings from a tree, put it into a baby bottle, and I drink all of it. By that afternoon I was better.

“Before they even took that medicine off the land, they took tobacco. When you have a baby, always have to make sure that its gums don’t get cold or its ears, or it can get an infection. We were told to always protect the head, not only that, but protect that top part, the soft spot. When they are teething, the gums can get very swollen, and pussy. When they swallow it

causes them to have diarrhea, you cut it quickly and it releases that pus, and allows the teeth to come in more quickly.”

Knowledge Keeper Mary Maytwayashing

There are protocols to sharing and receiving knowledge about traditional healing, which need to be followed if the University does decide to pursue a partnership with Knowledge Keepers with view to enhancing an understanding of traditional medicine. The Knowledge Keepers are very careful and strict with these protocols, which ensure a respect and protection of the medicines and way of life.

“There are those amongst us who have been offered millions of dollars to share our medicines and they have not, because of the integrity of the medicine.”

Knowledge Keeper Florence Paynter

16. Indigenous Methods of Accreditation

In order to keep the spirit of empowerment within the Indigenous Communities, the Knowledge Keepers agreed that any accreditation for Indigenous knowledge acquisition would need to come from the Indigenous Knowledge Keepers from within the Indigenous Communities themselves, and that accreditation would take place in accordance with Indigenous cultural protocols.

“We would have to do accreditation, not the university. In order to keep that spirit of empowerment within ourselves, we need to accredit in our own way.”

Knowledge Keeper Dave Courchene

Indigenous accreditation precedents have already been set by the Turtle Lodge. For example, the Turtle Lodge worked through a Partnership Agreement with the Canadian Museum for Human Rights to have full autonomy over the design of the Indigenous Mikinak-Keya Spirit Tour, and autonomy over the subsequent hiring and training of *Ankanootamagate* (Messengers of the Tour/Tour guides), who were accredited by the Turtle Lodge following an intensive training program with the Knowledge Keepers. These individuals are now authorized according to Indigenous

protocols to share the Indigenous knowledge imparted to them by the Knowledge Keepers, wherever they go in their life journeys.

Another example of high level Indigenous accreditation has occurred at the Ogimakamik Leadership Gathering, through which the Turtle Lodge has honoured individuals, selected by Indigenous Communities, for their leadership in Earth stewardship and modeling leadership behaviour in supporting the Spiritual and Natural Laws of the Nation.

“The Turtle Lodge has been a leader in offering an example of our people honouring the leadership of our Knowledge Keepers, through the Ogimakamik Leadership Honouring. These individuals represent the best of who we are.”

Knowledge Keeper Katherine Whitecloud

17. Curriculum Development by the Turtle Lodge Knowledge Keepers

The Knowledge Keepers recommended that curricula be prepared and led by the Knowledge Keepers themselves, for students and faculty in the Faculty of Health Science, introducing them to concepts of Indigenous knowledge, culture, history and healing. Knowledge Keepers should have the freedom and resources made available to hire and train their own faculty.

The curriculum would begin with the development of foundational, introductory sessions at Turtle Lodge for faculty and students.

It would also include a textbook, authorized according to cultural protocols to be shared in the university setting. This text would serve to inspire and bridge students to come to the Indigenous sacred lodges for further education, developing the themes introduced in the textbook, in a cultural setting that could spiritually awaken them to receive a fuller understanding of Indigenous knowledge.

They recommended that the Turtle Lodge Knowledge Keepers be given the resources to develop curricula and resources in collaboration and partnership with the Faculty of Health Sciences.

CONCLUDING STATEMENT

Knowledge Keepers from the Turtle Lodge were engaged by the Faculty of Health Sciences, within their own Indigenous sacred place, the Turtle Lodge, reflective of their nationhood.

The purpose of the engagement was for qualified Knowledge Keepers from the local traditional territory, identified as being connected to their original languages, ceremonies, traditions, teachings, songs and communities, to provide the Faculty of Health Sciences with direction on how to implement a reconciliation agenda with Indigenous people, in response to the recent Truth and Reconciliation health-related Calls to Action.

The Knowledge Keepers encouraged following the spirit of a Nation to Nation framework, based on principles of equal partnership and respect, as reflected in the signed Treaties. They encouraged the Faculty of Health Sciences to continue to make efforts to come into Indigenous environments, the sacred lodges and the land being significant places where Indigenous knowledge could be shared with integrity and authenticity, rather than attempting to integrate Indigenous knowledge within the university institution. The Knowledge Keepers acknowledged the Turtle Lodge as the largest respected sacred lodge in the province, and an ideal venue for future education and relationship-building.

The Knowledge Keepers recommended that any engagement with First Nation communities be initiated with and led by qualified traditional Knowledge Keepers and Elders. They encouraged the Faculty of Health Sciences to champion the role, voice and message of the Knowledge Keepers as the best spokespeople for the values, needs, aspirations and solutions for Indigenous communities, and the appropriate representatives of Indigenous leadership in the Nation to Nation partnership. Community engagement through direct relationship with qualified respected traditional Knowledge Keepers, was felt to be of benefit because working with Elders and Knowledge Keepers would offset political challenges sometimes involved in working with Indigenous communities and organizations.

They described the various roles, duties and responsibilities held by the Knowledge Keepers within Indigenous Nations, the most important being the provision of a vision for all relatives within their homeland, and also including roles in peacemaking and building relationship, an educational role, a role as healers, and a role in bridging community models of wellness.

The Knowledge Keepers encouraged the adoption of the Turtle Lodge Treaty on

Education “Our Way of Life” as a guiding document for future engagement and Indigenous education.

A focus on a decolonizing education, for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous faculty and students, was seen as the path to reconciliation. A decolonization education necessarily includes following an Indigenous cultural approach to education, taught by the Knowledge Keepers, in their environments.

Providing an Indigenous education, based on ancient sacred values and principles, was seen as having the potential to lay a foundation for any student as a support for one’s unique spirit and identity, and as an integral first step to creating responsible citizens of communities, nations and the world, as well as expanding the western concept of health.

The Knowledge Keepers offered an approach to ensuring cultural safety and addressing racism within the Faculty of Health Sciences, based on introducing Indigenous knowledge within the environment of the Turtle Lodge, to ensure an authentic, positive and healing experience of the education, accredited by the Turtle Lodge itself. They shared integral concepts of what would be included in the teachings and experiences they would be sharing. The Knowledge Keepers emphasized the need for students and faculty to come voluntarily to learn, rather than the education being imposed upon them.

A summary of numbered recommendations, next steps and engagement priorities discussed in this engagement is found at the beginning of this document.

APPENDIX A: Letter from National Chief, Assembly of First Nations

OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL CHIEF

Assembly of First Nations

BUREAU DU CHEF NATIONAL

Assemblée des Premières Nations



August 5, 2015

Elder David Courchene
Turtle Lodge
Sagkeeng First Nation
PO Box 1267
Pine Falls, Manitoba ROE 1M0

Dear Dave:

Re: Letter of support for the Elders/ Youth gathering and on-going work of Turtle Lodge.

It is my sincere pleasure to provide this letter in support for your tremendous and tireless work in fulfilling your continuing vision to Turtle Lodge, Anishnabe Mikinack, Kinamakamik, Inc., Sagkeeng First Nation, Manitoba.

The Turtle Lodge in Sagkeeng First Nation built in 2002, is a testimonial to your unwavering vision to restore the sacred balance to life for our people and all people. Through your spiritual land-based teachings, Turtle Lodge unites all races and nations under the Seven Sacred Laws, and the Eight Paths of Life, along with the ancient universal values of the Anishnabe People of Turtle Island, North America.

Through your many demonstrated successes, the Turtle Lodge continually supports gatherings, teachings, ceremonies and endless supports for the achievement of a balanced state of well-being and culturally positive reinforcements for our children, youth, men, women and Elders. I can personally attest to this outstanding work in my recent visit to Turtle Lodge on June 5, 2015. Following your kind invitation I was provided the opportunity to bestow my praise, recognition and support to the many leaders being honoured at this gathering; in addition to the opportunity to travel to Lake Winnipeg to give our love, respect and blessings to the sacred waters. I was very touched and honoured to have observed the coming out ceremony for the Youth Rites of Passage and to bear witness to the rebirthing of our nations in this vital support of our youth.

For this and many more reasons, the Turtle Lodge's on-going vision towards building a positive and well balanced state of being for the Earth, for First Nations and for all peoples cannot be achieved unless agencies, foundations and all individuals recognise and give generously toward the aim of securing strong sustainable financial support for all of the integral and on-going activities of the Turtle Lodge.

.../2

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- 2 -

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate my continuing support for the extraordinary work that you do on behalf of Turtle Lodge; and it is my desire that others too will be inspired by your vision and give wholeheartedly in the aim of uniting all peoples in the spirit of unity, healing and peace.

Sincerely,



Perry Bellegarde
National Chief

*Office of the National Chief
Bureau du chef national*



*Assembly of First Nations
Assemblée des Premières Nations*

APPENDIX B: Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, General Assembly Resolution

**ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA CHIEFS
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
LONG PLAIN FIRST NATION
JANUARY 14, 15 & 16, 2003**

CERTIFIED RESOLUTION

JAN-03.13

Moved by:

Chief Garry Swampy
Sagkeeng First Nation

Seconded By:

Chief Ron Evans
Norway House Cree Nation

MOTION CARRIED

In Favour: 27
Opposed: 0
Abstention: 0

**RE: TURTLE LODGE CENTRE FOR LEARNING AND HEALING
(ANISHNABE MIKINACK KINAMAKAMIK)**

WHEREAS, Turtle Lodge is a centre for spiritual land-based traditional learning and healing which has been initiated at Sagkeeng First Nation; and

WHEREAS, Turtle Lodge programs will introduce youth to traditional healing concepts and values based upon the seven sacred laws and eight paths of the medicine wheel concept; and

WHEREAS, the Turtle Lodge Elders Council is seeking partnerships and funding support to develop further traditional healing and wellness programs for youth and others; and

WHEREAS, many First Nations citizens are seeking the knowledge of traditional teachings, values and approaches to healing and wellness.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Chiefs-in-Assembly support Turtle Lodge efforts to forge partnerships in support of a traditional learning and healing centre; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED, that the Grand Chief of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs support the Turtle Lodge in pursuing federal and provincial partnerships for the Turtle Lodge Centre for Learning and Healing.

CERTIFIED COPY

of a Resolution Adopted on

January 14, 15, & 16, 2003

LONG PLAIN FIRST NATION, Manitoba


Grand Chief Dennis White Bird

APPENDIX C:
Past Events Hosted at Turtle Lodge

| Title | Date | URL |
|--|------------------------|---|
| Indigenous Knowledge Transmission Gatherings | | |
| <i>International Leadership Gatherings</i> | | |
| <i>International Roundtables Supporting Ancient Indigenous Knowledge</i> | | |
| Third International Roundtable Supporting Ancient Indigenous Knowledge | April 29 – May 2, 2011 | |
| Second International Roundtable Supporting Ancient Indigenous Knowledge | September 7-8, 2010 | http://goo.gl/ulf8K3 |
| First International Roundtable Supporting Ancient Indigenous Knowledge | May 14-17, 2010 | http://goo.gl/GR170I |
| <i>Ogimakamik Leadership Gatherings</i> | | |
| Ogimakamik – The Leadership Gathering | June 4 and 5, 2015 | http://goo.gl/HLQHXU |
| Ogimakamik Lodge of Leadership | September 8-11, 2014 | http://goo.gl/jL1BFN |
| Ogimakamik Lodge of Leadership | May 14-17, 2014 | http://goo.gl/0wel9r |
| David Suzuki and Ovide Mercredi Honoured for their Leadership | October 24, 2014 | http://goo.gl/1PvxR4 |
| Turtle Lodge Hosts International Indigenous Librarians Forum | August 7, 2015 | |
| Turtle Lodge Hosts Conference of International Association of Genocide Scholars | July 16, 2014. | http://goo.gl/03aGfH |
| Rite of Passage to Leadership Gathering | July 17-20, 2013 | http://goo.gl/gq9FjD |
| Signing of Turtle Lodge Treaty on Indigenous Education | May 27, 2013 | http://goo.gl/9gU72t |
| Revealing of the Birch Bark Scrolls | January 26, 2013 | http://goo.gl/Zaxo2N |
| A Gathering of the Wisdom Keepers of Indigenous Peoples of the Americas | May 24-27, 2012 | http://goo.gl/vLUiBG |
| <i>Language Gatherings</i> | | |
| Free Ojibway and Cree Language Camp | | http://goo.gl/rruunA |
| <i>Annual Igniting the Fire Gathering (2006 to 2015)</i> | | |
| PASSING THE FLAME OF LEADERSHIP: 10th Annual Igniting the Fire – Turtle Lodge | September 8-11, 2015 | http://goo.gl/TR9Qx0 |

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| Igniting the Fire 2014 – Traditional Parenting | | http://goo.gl/cVfUt0 |
| 5th Annual Igniting The Fire (2010) | | |
| 4th Annual Igniting The Fire (2009) | | |
| <i>Nationhood Gatherings</i> | | |
| Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs Presents: Notions of Nationhood – Tea and Bannock Dialogues | February 10 & 11, 2016 | http://goo.gl/n7zHhW |
| <i>Water Gatherings</i> | | |
| Nibi Water Gathering, | June 4 and 5, 2015 | http://goo.gl/zqntj9 |
| The Walrus Talks Water | May 25, 2015 | http://goo.gl/zqntj9 |
| Nibi – Water is Life Gathering | July 17-18, 2014 | http://goo.gl/hWxmBD |
| <i>Health and Traditional Healing Gatherings</i> | | |
| Giigewigamig Traditional Healing Centre – Community Engagement meetings at rotating locations (Sagkeeng Turtle Lodge, Black River, Hollow Water First Nations, etc.) | Monthly | |
| Giigewigamig Community Events | | |
| Pine Falls – Celebration of Traditional Healing Centre at Pine Falls Hospital | | http://goo.gl/xfclCN |
| Roundtable on Health at Turtle Lodge | August 17-18, 2013 | http://goo.gl/o0emXw |
| <i>Grandmother Gatherings (Focus on Children, Families & Traditional Parenting)</i> | | |
| Rebuilding Our Families – A Gathering at Turtle Lodge for Child & Family Services & Support Services for Children in Care | January 12-13, 2016 | http://goo.gl/Svsvqy |
| Train the Trainer – Traditional Family Parenting | | http://goo.gl/GJlZJp |
| Nookoomuk Ogichitakwewak Grandmother-Women's Gathering | March 5-6, 2015 | http://goo.gl/YzWpsb |
| Ogitchitakwewak Gathering – Grandmothers' & Women's Gathering | June 28 and 29, 2015 | |
| Ogitchitakwewak Gathering – Grandmothers' & Women's Gathering | February 7-8, 2014 | http://goo.gl/g0glXA |

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| Kokum Dibaadjimowinan – Grandmothers' Gathering | December 20-21, 2013 | http://goo.gl/OaP6qY |
| <i>Food Sovereignty Gatherings (Annual, 2012 to date)</i> | | |
| <i>Celebration of Giving (Annual Event (2007 to date, in Partnership with Winnipeg Harvest and other food banks)</i> | | |
| Celebration of Giving | 2010 | http://goo.gl/U8duaM |
| Celebration of Giving | 2009 | http://goo.gl/ocN8V0 |
| <i>Mikinak-Keya Spirit Tour Events (A Partnership with the Turtle Lodge and Canadian Museum for Human Rights)</i> | | |
| Celebration of Mikinak-Keya – The Spirit Tour at Canadian Museum for Human Rights, | June 17, 2015 | http://goo.gl/4p33yp |
| Elders partner with Museum to launch Mikinak-Keya (The Spirit Tour) | December 10, 2014 | http://goo.gl/fIEKbG |
| <i>Film Premieres (Films Produced in Partnership with Turtle Lodge)</i> | | |
| Winnipeg Premiere of <i>Mikinakay: Trail of the Turtle</i> | March 11, 2015 | http://goo.gl/GLQ0iq |
| Winnipeg Premiere of <i>BridgeWalkers: Winnipeg Art Gallery</i> | May 30, 2014 | http://goo.gl/mx0QJJ |
| Winnipeg Premiere of <i>Manitou Api – Where the Sun Rises</i> | 2010 | |
| Winnipeg Premiere of <i>The 8th Fire</i> | 2008 | |
| Traditional Ceremonies | | |
| Sundances | (1990 to date, annual) | http://goo.gl/MwsZhU |
| Full Moon Ceremony Program | 2013 to date, monthly | |
| Chii By (Ancestors) Dance | 1990 to date, annual | http://goo.gl/g6Lz4y |
| Windigokon (Contrary) Ceremony | 1990 to date, annual | http://goo.gl/YWF8kd |
| Winter Solstice | 1990 to date, annual | http://goo.gl/Xu1YaH |
| Youth Rites of Passage and Leadership Gatherings | | |
| Makoose Ka Win Rites of Passage for Girls to Womanhood | 2011 – 2016, Annual | |

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|--|------------------------|---|
| Vision Quest Rites of Passage for Boys to Manhood | 2011 – 2016, Annual | http://goo.gl/0Dp8Nj |
| Oshkopimatizeek Youth Mentorship Gathering | December 19 – 22, 2012 | http://goo.gl/rJV2Sq |
| Initiatives with the Federal Court of Canada | | |
| Hosted Multiple Elder-Judge-Lawyer forums with National Elder Council to discuss issues around oral history testimony | 2005 to present | |
| Hosted Federal Court of Canada Justices, including Chief Justice, in multiple judicial education forums led by Elders, coordinated with National Judicial Institute | 2005 to present | |
| Initiatives with Educational Institutions | | |
| Red River College - Turtle Lodge invited to provide Knowledge Keepers Council that would guide the development of an Indigenous contribution to education | 2016 | |
| Hosted final drafting and ceremonial signing of Turtle Lodge Treaty on Education, co-signatories include multiple First Nations and First Nation organizations across North America | 2013 | |
| Work in Giigewigamig First Nation Health Authority/Giigewigamig Traditional Healing Centre | | |
| Turtle Lodge provided the original vision of this \$12 million Community-led capital project approved by Manitoba Health in 2010, currently under construction at the Pine Falls Hospital, to be completed in 2016 | | |
| Turtle Lodge and Elder Dave Courchene lead the collaboration of 3 First Nation Communities (Hollow Water, Black River and Sagkeeng First Nations) in the current development of the Giigewigamig Traditional Healing Centre | | |

APPENDIX D:
Turtle Lodge Partners and Supporters

| Supporter | Description |
|---|--|
| Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs | Have been attending and partnering on Turtle Lodge Roundtables and Programs since Turtle Lodge inception 2003. History of partnership includes Elders gatherings, annual Food sovereignty and Health Roundtables involving First Nations from across Manitoba, large Winnipeg-based population. General Assembly Resolution was passed unanimously by all the Chiefs of Manitoba in 2003, endorsing Turtle Lodge as a centre for Indigenous education and committing to ongoing support. |
| Assembly of First Nations | Turtle Lodge has had an ongoing partnership with the AFN. Our Knowledge Keepers are frequently called upon to speak at national and international events. E.g. Elder Dave Courchene asked to represent First Nations of Canada at HRH Prince Charles' visit to Canada (2011), Crown-First Nation Gathering in Ottawa (2011), to speak on University of Winnipeg Ka Na Ta Conversations panel on Culture and Identity (2011) with/by AFN Chief Shawn Atleo, and numerous others. |
| Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba | The TRCM has a long history of working in partnership with the Turtle Lodge. In 2011, the TRCM partnered with the Turtle Lodge's 6 th Annual Igniting the Fire Gathering. TRCM brought our new Treaty Education Kit to the gathering, where Elders from across North America had been brought together, to seek their support, ratification and blessing for our initiative. Turtle Lodge Elder Dave Courchene is on the TRCM Speaker's Bureau, and through this relationship, many schools in Winnipeg have been requesting Turtle Lodge programs. |
| Canadians for a New Partnership | Turtle Lodge Elder Dave Courchene is on the Board and Elder Advisor to this group of prominent |

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| | Canadians which includes past Prime Ministers and Premiers, politicians, current and past First Nation leaders, philanthropists, and media who have come together with the aim of bettering the relationship between Canadians and First Peoples, and ameliorating the living conditions First Peoples face. |
| Canadian Interfaith Conversation | Elder Courchene represents the First Nations voice on this group of Canadian religious and spiritual leaders. Turtle Lodge was asked to host the Opening Ceremony of the G8 World Religions Summit held in Winnipeg June 2010, and provide guidance to the leaders from an Indigenous perspective. |
| Survivorman Les Stroud | This famous TV personality has spoken at Turtle Lodge gatherings and done pro-bono fundraisers for us in the past. |
| Institute for Traditional Medicine | This Toronto-based organization has supported Turtle Lodge since its inception, and organized fundraisers on our behalf. |
| Debwewin | This USA-based charitable organization is dedicated to the protection and sharing of Indigenous knowledge. After its 2014 AGM Debwewin announced that it would officially partner with Turtle Lodge, and has support from the University of Green Bay Wisconsin and Oneida Nation Grants office working on applying for USA-based grants and funding. |
| Manitou Foundation, Crestone Colorado | Turtle Lodge has signed a partnership agreement with Manitou Foundation to provide future programming in Earth restoration projects for youth, as the Master Training site in introducing the youth to land connection. Hanne Strong, Founder and Director of Manitou, and wife of former UN General Assembly Under- Secretary General Maurice Strong, has spent much time at Turtle Lodge, and arranged invitations for Turtle Lodge Elders to attend high-profile summits, |

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| | including the Earth Summits in Rio de Janeiro. |
| OneRiver Productions | This production company recently released the film BridgeWalkers, highlighting 4 Knowledge Keepers from Turtle Island, including Manitoba's Dave Courchene (Anishnabe, Turtle Lodge) and Dakota Grandmother Katherine Whitecloud. The film just won Best Film (Cosmic Angel Award) at the 2014 Cosmic Cine Film Festival in Munich, Germany and Zurich, Switzerland, and is being highlighted in film festivals internationally. |
| Good Medicine Media | Have offered to support Turtle Lodge with pro-bono filmmaking to support our programming. |
| Four Worlds International Institute | An online group of which Turtle Lodge is a member. We post our programming and fundraising initiatives there. |
| Manitoba Alternative Food Research Alliance | MAFRA has provided funding support to Turtle Lodge programs in the past. |
| Mennonite Council of Canada | MCC has provided funding support in the past and their membership have continually requested Turtle Lodge programming. |
| Winnipeg Harvest | Partnered on the Celebration of Giving initiative with Turtle Lodge. |
| Blue Quills College | Partnering on initiatives and building a sister Turtle Lodge in their Community of Saddle Lake, Alberta. |
| First Nations University of Canada | Partnering with Turtle Lodge on an initiative to build an Indigenous centre of excellence in spirituality, with Turtle Lodge designated as a host facility. |
| Art Gallery of Hamilton | Has partnered with Turtle Lodge on numerous initiatives including AGH World Film Festival, featuring Turtle Lodge film productions, the SPARK! Igniting Change festival and others. |
| Knowles Centre, Winnipeg | Send their students and staff for programming, and provide in-kind support of staff, accommodation facilities for our programs, loan tipis, van and |

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| | hauling trailers, and give plates, cups, cutlery and food donations. |
| Children of the Earth School, Winnipeg | Send their students, staff and parents for programming. |
| Winnipeg School Division | A large number of Winnipeg Schools have brought students, parents and teachers, and sponsored programming at Turtle Lodge. |
| Aboriginal Educators of Winnipeg | This network of Aboriginal teachers has honoured Turtle Lodge in the past, and continues to seek leadership from Turtle Lodge in Indigenous education. |
| Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Network | Providing Indigenous educational resources to all First Nation Communities in Manitoba, Turtle Lodge hosts many MFNERC educational and leadership gatherings and provides guidance on Indigenous curriculum. |
| Canadian Museum for Human Rights | The museum has a partnership agreement with the Turtle Lodge, in which Turtle Lodge's Elders Circle Seven are the designers of the hallmark tour of the museum – the Spirit Tour. It is expected that those experiencing the tour will want to learn more about Indigenous knowledge, and they will be guided to the Turtle Lodge for this. |
| US Former Congressman and Former Presidential Candidate Dennis Kucinich. | Congressman Kucinich co-chaired the 1 st , 2 nd and 3 rd Turtle Lodge International Roundtable Supporting Ancient Indigenous Knowledge, and hosted the 2 nd Roundtable at the US Capitol Building in Washington DC. His wife Elizabeth Kucinich is also a strong supporter of Turtle Lodge. |
| Rites of Passage/Imagica Pictures | This production company produces Indigenous media content. |
| The Sharing Circle and Tipi Tales | These award-winning First Nation television series were co-created by Turtle Lodge, sharing Indigenous knowledge and guidance as provided by the Lodge over many years. |

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| Grand Council of Treaty 3 | Have funded us in the past. Support the Treaty 3 Drum to attend and for Knowledge Keepers and ceremonial leaders to speaker. |
| Gold Corps | Have funded us in the past and requested programming for their staff. |
| Giigewigamig First Nation Health Authority/Giigewigamig Traditional Health Centre | Turtle Lodge provided the original vision for this \$12 million Community-led capital project approved by Manitoba Health in 2010, currently under construction in the Pine Falls Hospital, to be completed in 2016. |
| Federal Court of Canada | Turtle Lodge has hosted multiple Elder-Judge-Lawyer forums with National Elder Council to discuss issues around oral history testimony. These events have included a gathering with Federal Court of Canada, including the Chief Justice. |
| International Institute for Sustainable Development | Championing and providing sponsorship for the Turtle Lodge's <i>Onjisay-Aki</i> Climate Summit. |



Aboriginal Awareness



APPENDIX F – ABORIGINAL AWARENESS PROGRAM

“Creator gave us many things that can provide a foundation for life. The Drum is still here and the Pipe. The medicine and the laws. The land is still here. If we use these things we will be well.”

Kitty Everson, Knowledge Keeper, Lac Seul First Nation

The Turtle Lodge offers Aboriginal Awareness workshops that share a traditional perspective. The workshops can be designed to accommodate the unique needs of groups, and could be made available to anyone who wants to know more about Aboriginal people and perspectives. These awareness workshops are especially geared to those working in a field offering Aboriginal programming or working with Aboriginal people. We offer:

- Increased awareness of Aboriginal perspectives
- Building bridges and strengthening relationships with Aboriginal people and communities
- Traditional Aboriginal teachings, which are about our relationship to each other and the land, and which inspire us to treat each other and the land in a respectful way
- Experiencing traditional Aboriginal ceremonies for healing, sharing and personal growth
- The environmental crisis and indigenous knowledge that can lay a foundation for greater awareness of our connection to the sacredness of the land

Testimonials

“The experience of this workshop has been an enlightenment of the culture and past experience of the First Nations people. The ceremonial songs and their traditional ways have been shown to be a large part of the identity of its people. I feel that the speeches of the elders and facilitator were given at a very personable level which made it more than a “workshop”. This has been a very positive environment and I would highly recommend it to others.”

“I am very honoured to have been a part of these last two days. I learnt a lot about the culture and the history of Aboriginal people. I plan on passing this information on to my children to help them be better people and to better understand different cultures. I want to be able to bring them out here sometime so they can experience some of the culture themselves. These two days have helped me be a better person.”

“As a government employee, I would very much recommend this experience to anyone in the government and to everyone in general. In fact, I would say that everyone in Indian Affairs should travel here and learn what is being taught. Not just people who work in lower levels, but all the way to the Minister himself, should come to the Turtle Lodge.”



Annually ~ At Turtle Lodge and Manitou Api Sacred Site (Bannock Point), Manitoba

**A call to all young men, women,
and to those seeking meaning & a vision.**

Elder Dave Courchene (Nii Gaani Aki Inini – Leading Earth Man) & the Grandmothers are making a call to all young women, men and to those who yearn a connection to Spirit - who want to find meaning and a vision that will define the purpose of their life.

Makoose Ka Win are rites of passage that are conducted by the Grandmothers, who will provide teachings of how to honour and carry oneself as a Woman.

This will be a time for all Women to recognize and understand the sacredness of Woman. It is time for Women to claim and embrace their rightful positions of honour and responsibility in walking with and leading all people -- men, women & children, back to our sacred way of life.



The Vision Quest enables men and adolescent boys to engage in an ancient ceremony that assists in the transition from one life stage to the next, with purpose and meaning.

As a young boy seeks his vision on a Vision Quest he is initiated by Mother Earth. All Men must be initiated by Woman to understand life's sacredness. We are making a call for young boys and men to participate in a Vision Quest to be initiated by the Earth this coming spring. They will be encouraged and watched over daily by the Elders.



www.turtlelodge.org
Contact: turtlelodge@mts.net

KNOWLEDGE KEEPER AND AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES



Dave Courchene – Nii Gaani Aki Inini (Leading Earth Man) – is a respected Elder and Knowledge Keeper of the Anishinabe Nation. In 2002, he founded Turtle Lodge International Centre for Indigenous Education and Wellness based on a vision he received over 35 years ago. Dave Courchene has initiated many projects and facilitated gatherings regionally, nationally and

internationally, to promote the sharing and protection of the traditional ancestral knowledge of the First Peoples.

Dave Courchene is known internationally for his leadership and for sharing messages of hope and peace, having shared the stage numerous times with spiritual leaders that include the Dalai Lama. In recognition of his work, he has received several prestigious awards including the National Aboriginal Achievement (INDSPIRE) Award in Culture, Heritage and Spirituality in 2010, the Volunteer Manitoba Award for Outstanding Community Leadership in 2012; the International Award of Excellence (2015) and Cosmic Angel Award for Best Film (Audience Choice) in 2014 for *Bridgewalkers*, the Golden Parent's Choice Award in 2003 and 2006 for *Tipi Tales*, the Polar Bear Award at the Manitoba Film Festival in 2003 for *The Harold Hatcher Project*, a major documentary, TV series, and short film he co-created; and multiple awards from the Indigenous Communities including the International Indigenous Leadership Award in 2012, the Aboriginal Circle of Educators Award in 2006, and being recognized as an Anishnaabe Achiever of the Treaty #3 First Nation.

Katherine Whitecloud, Mother and Grandmother, is Community leader and knowledge keeper from Wipazoka Wakpa Dakota Nation. Chosen at the age of 16 to represent her people, Katherine has been a spokesperson for her Nation for over 30 years. She has worked for the Community for over thirty years in several roles, including Chief, Director of Education, CEO for the Assembly of First Nations, Director of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, and Regional Chief of the Assembly of First Nations. Her work lies in ensuring the life and teachings articulated and envisioned by her forefathers is honoured and protected.



Dr. Harry Bone – Giizih-Inini – is from the Keeseekoowenin Ojibway Nation. Elder Bone has worked tirelessly throughout his life to bolster Indigenous rights. He has served extensive terms in many fulfilling roles such as Chief and Director of Education.



He also served as a CEO at the West Region Tribal Council, a Director of the Manitoba Indian Education Authority, he is a graduate student in political studies at University of Manitoba, he was a Student Advisor and Lecturer. He was a Director of Native Programs for the Federal Government, a Vice-President of Aboriginal Cultural Centres of Canada and currently sits as Chairperson of the

TRCM Council of Elders.

Elder Bone is experienced in First Nations Governance, He has led delegations that have met with all levels of government while being instrumental in projects such as the Oral History Project and the Historical Atlas of First Nations in Manitoba. Elder Bone and Elder Doris Pratt co-authored Untuwe Pi Kin He – Who We are: Treaty Elders' Teachings, Like Elder Bone, the book aims to inspire people through compassion, reason, humility and human dignity.

His distinguished achievements in leadership, scholarship and public service have been recognized by many individuals and communities who have touched by his work. The University of Manitoba honoured Elder Bone with an Honorary Doctor of Law degree for his trendsetting work that continues to advance Aboriginal education in Canada.

Florence Paynter, from Sandy Bay First Nation and a band member of Norway House Cree Nation. She is a third degree Mide Anishinabekwe and holds a Master's Degree in Education from the University of Manitoba.

Florence speaks Anishinabe fluently and has been involved in many language and cultural initiatives and ceremonies. She helps teach the cultural and spiritual knowledge and traditions of the Anishinabe people. Florence attended residential school and works hard to teach about the history of our people, the legacy of Indian residential schools, and its impact on us as people. She believes that we can be proud of who we are by learning about our own families, our own histories and our own languages.



Mary Maytwayashing, (Zoongi Gabawi Ozawa Kinew Ikwe, Strong Standing Golden Eagle Woman) is from the Lake Manitoba First Nation (Animozibeeng – Dog Creek).

Mary is an Anishinaabe Grandmother who leads Traditional Ceremonies. Mary's western educational background is Social Work. Mary's professional career has been in the areas of Addictions/Substance Abuse, Corrections, Child Welfare and Education.



Mary's greatest learning has come from the Traditional Knowledge and Wisdom Holders with whom, she has had the privilege of working with. Mary has had the fortune of working with people from all walks of life. Mary's passion continues to be in assisting and educating people about the Original and Ancient ways of the First People to these lands. Mary has facilitated along side Grandmothers and Elders teaching young girls and women on the Rites of Passage teachings, Makoose Ka Win (Little Bear Teachings). Mary's inspiration comes from experiencing and seeing the smiles on people's faces when they learn the Teachings of their people. Mary believes that we are all born and gifted with a purpose. As humans we need to find what our purpose is. This can be done through our ceremonies and teachings. Mary continues to live her purpose by honouring and facilitating the teachings and sharing with the people.

Editor Bio: Sabina Ijaz, MD CCFP (Punjabi; Adopted by Dakota, Miq'maw and Blackfoot (Piegan) Nations). A proud mother of one son,



Dr. Ijaz obtained her medical degree at McMaster University in 2000, followed by a residency in family medicine and postdoctoral degree in Aboriginal Health at Queen's University. Sabina Ijaz has been furthering her education by learning from Indigenous Knowledge Keepers since the early 1990s. Dr. Ijaz has been volunteering at the Turtle Lodge since it was built in 2002, as well as working for many years as a hospitalist, family and emergency physician in a number of Manitoba hospitals and First Nation community health centres. Her medical practice is currently based at the Pine Falls Hospital, where she served as Chief of Staff in 2008.

Dr. Ijaz's interest lies in supporting the advancement of peace, Earth stewardship, healthy individuals and strong communities.

"It is more than coming to the Turtle Lodge for one day, it is about living and breathing an Indigenous way of life."

Knowledge Keeper Dave Courchene

"They need to bring the governance and staff to Turtle Lodge."

Knowledge Keeper Katherine Whitecloud

"Let us put our minds together and see what life we can make for our children."

Sitting Bull