

Terms of Reference: COPPUL Indigenous Knowledges Standing Committee

Welcome

COPPUL institutions are guests on the territories and homelands of many First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples. COPPUL commits to being a better guest on Indigenous lands. As IKSC members, we are similarly guests on this committee, and strive to work together to have an ongoing commitment to engage with, learn from, and collaborate with Indigenous communities.

Purpose

The COPPUL Indigenous Knowledges Standing Committee facilitates communication among COPPUL institutions, identifies and fosters opportunities for collaborative action and advises COPPUL staff and Board of Directors in support of COPPUL's [strategic priorities](#), including:

- In relationship with First Nations, Inuit, Métis and other Indigenous Peoples, ensure that respectful and culturally responsive care for culturally sensitive knowledges is upheld.
- Cultivate respectful and reciprocal relationships with First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples to inform the work of decolonization and reconciliation.
- Support and coordinate practices that advance decolonization and reconciliation.

Responsibilities & Deliverables

The Indigenous Knowledges Standing Committee:

- Develops and facilitates Indigenous cultural awareness opportunities for library workers at COPPUL institutions to promote understanding and competencies;
- Identifies and shares models and resources to use in decolonizing library practices;
- Explores support opportunities for Indigenous library and archives students and early-career workers;
- Seeks to foster relations between COPPUL institutions and Indigenous communities based on principles of reciprocity, cooperation and mutual understanding;
- Identifies opportunities for collaboration, when appropriate, between Indigenous communities and post-secondary institutions in areas that may be of mutual interest and benefit;
- Participates in COPPUL strategic planning;
- Collaborates with other COPPUL committees and allied organizations;
- Develops an annual work plan aligned with COPPUL's strategic priorities; and
- Submits an annual report to COPPUL Directors.

Membership

Composition

- **Four (4) to eight (8) members from full and affiliate COPPUL member institutions, including one Council representative (i.e. “COPPUL Director”).** Members should have experience and/or a keen interest in working within Indigenous communities or knowledge traditions. To the greatest extent possible, membership should represent the different COPPUL regions, institution sizes and mandates (e.g. teaching-focused vs. research universities), and reflect a range of professional experience and career stages. The Director member brings an administrative perspective to committee discussions and represents the Standing Committee at COPPUL Directors’ meetings.
- **One (1) Indigenous student intern.** In recognition of the growing number of internships for Indigenous students in COPPUL libraries, and the importance of mentoring and learning from current students of library and archival studies, the IKSC holds space for a graduate student intern member enrolled in a master’s program in library or archival studies and working as a librarian intern in a COPPUL library. For avoidance of doubt, the student intern member holds the same voice and vote on the committee as other members. Due to variances in availability and capacity of student interns in COPPUL libraries, the student intern member position on the IKSC may be unfilled at times.
- **Indigenous Knowledges Coordinator (ex officio).** The Indigenous Knowledges Coordinator schedules meetings, circulates relevant materials in advance of the meeting, ensures minutes are recorded and retained, and orients new members to the work of the Standing Committee. The Coordinator provides regular updates to, and seeks direction from, the Standing Committee on relevant activities and initiatives. In collaboration with Standing Committee chairs / co-chairs and members, the Coordinator develops meeting agendas, annual work plans, and reports.
- **COPPUL Executive Director (ex officio).** The Executive Director liaises between the Standing Committee and the COPPUL Board of Directors, receiving Indigenous expertise from Committee members and providing leadership and advice on Committee priorities and initiatives as required.

Appointment Process

Nominations for membership are coordinated by the COPPUL Executive Director. The COPPUL Board of Directors approves appointments of nominees to the Standing Committee. When there are more nominations than available positions on the Committee, preference will be given to Indigenous nominees.

Term

Membership term is two years (renewable), running August 1st to July 31st, and should ideally be staggered to ensure committee continuity.

Chair or Co-Chairs

Whenever possible, the Standing Committee will be chaired by two co-chairs with staggered two-year terms. Co-chairs are selected by current Standing Committee members after a nomination process

(including self-nomination). At least one co-chair must be Indigenous. Chairs / Co-chairs work with the Indigenous Knowledges Coordinator to draft meeting agendas, lead regular meetings of the Standing Committee, and guide the development of annual work plans and reports.

Authority, Accountability & Reporting

The Indigenous Knowledges Standing Committee is appointed by the COPPUL Board of Directors and subject to [COPPUL bylaws](#) (Section 6.2). Standing Committee work plans are subject to Board approval and should be presented to COPPUL Directors for feedback at the Fall meeting each year. Standing Committee annual reports should be presented to COPPUL Directors at the Spring meeting each year. The Executive Director provides updates on committee activities to the Board between meetings of the COPPUL Directors. Meeting minutes are posted to COPPUL's virtual workspace for Committee members. When appropriate, discussion and decisions are communicated more widely within COPPUL.

The Indigenous Knowledges Standing Committee and the COPPUL Board acknowledge that Indigenous lifeways, worldviews, and approaches guide the governance and actions of the Committee and at times take precedence over standard COPPUL processes. The work of the Committee emphasizes shared learning, flattened hierarchies, and relational ways of being.

The Indigenous Knowledges Standing Committee and the Board aspire to relational accountability. Should the need arise to refocus or dissolve the Committee, mutually respectful steps will be taken to realize changes.

Meetings

Virtual meetings will be held monthly or as needed to advance the work of the Standing Committee. Committee members reach agreement by consensus. Guests may be invited to meetings.

The Indigenous Knowledges Standing Committee values diverse perspectives and fosters a welcoming and inclusive environment where all members are treated with dignity and respect.

Sub-Committees & Working Groups

The Standing Committee may constitute and dissolve sub-committees and working groups on an as-needed basis, subject to approval of the COPPUL Board. Sub-committees carry out ongoing work while working groups are formed ad hoc to address time-limited issues. At least one member of each sub-committee must also be a member of the Standing Committee. COPPUL member representatives (including affiliate member libraries) other than those sitting on the Standing Committee may be members of sub-committees, including serving as sub-committee chairs or co-chairs.

Resources

Service on the Indigenous Knowledges Standing Committee is non-remunerative. The administrative work of the Committee is supported by the Indigenous Knowledges Coordinator. In the event that an

in-person meeting is organized, travel and other meeting expenses are normally the responsibility of the Committee members' home institutions.

Terms of Reference Review

Indigenous Knowledges Standing Committee terms of reference should be reviewed by the Committee every three to five years. Revisions are subject to approval by the COPPUL Board of Directors.

Approved by: COPPUL Board of Directors

Approved on: 19 September, 2025