

Vancouver Island University – Cowichan Place Campus
MINUTES OF MEETING WITH FIRST NATIONS REPRESENTATIVES
Held at: Cowichan Campus, Duncan, BC
June 30, 2009

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ATTENDING:

Cowichan Tribes Representatives

Ric Kelm, Executive Director, Facilities & Campus Development	RK	Ric.Kelm@viu.ca
Maria Lauridsen, Principal of Cowichan Campus	ML	Maria.Lauridsen@viu.ca
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Subject

Summary of Comments from Meeting

- Create a sense of space rather than just a new institution
- Purpose of the meeting is to search for a philosophical basis of the building

Ceremonial Space

- Good visibility
- Incorporate existing totem poles and rhododendron bushes
- Reflect the architecture of Cowichan Tribes - big beams
- Bring the river to the new campus (symbolically): display Vision Quest canoe when not in use, possibly suspended or on elevated platform
- Reflect the history of Cowichan Tribes with art, artifacts, photographic displays

- Green building
 - Mix natural materials: stone, glass, cedar...
 - "The land will be basis that will give shape to the building." - SKG
 - Outdoor / indoor building
 - Arbour design that can provide temporary shelter for ceremonies
 - GAI will create a Master Plan with all desired elements including future program elements not currently included in budget

- Harmonize ceremonial use with learning commons and service commons

- Features of ceremonial space:
 - North - south axis, face east for all ceremonies
 - 4 posts (indoor), not necessarily load bearing, square or rectangular layout
 - Can apply to BC Arts Council for carving of posts and beams
 - Ceremonial entrance should face east; could be separate from everyday entrance(s)
 - Multiple use area as in traditional home: everyday common space – feasts - ceremonial

- Spiritually prepared for ceremonial use
- Outdoor ceremonial and multi-use space
 - Traditionally a large cleared area
 - Could have galleries or lean-to's to support canoe(s) and for 'seltuk' (potlatch) ceremony
- Refer to examples in museum archives
- Adequate change areas required for groups for ceremonies
 - Could be locker rooms, not just public washroom
 - Need wide doors or entrances for regalia
- Seating areas
 - Traditional long houses with wide terraced steps
 - Family and visitor groups traditionally had defined and well known places to sit
- Importance of a fire
 - Only a traditional home has dirt floor with an opening in the roof. Fire typically not included in modern facilities and can live without
 - Fire outdoor only in good weather
 - Will revive some ceremonies such as Salmon ceremony and cook on it
- Sechelt (smaller version of Bellingham)
 - One ceremony needs fire, but it will not be held at VIU
- Year end celebration
 - No longer held
 - Fire will give home coming, home spirit, home feeling
 - UVic house of learning has that. VIU will have it
 - Each tribe has their own traditional ceremonies
 - Space decorated like their home
 - Concrete floor typical in modern buildings
 - Decorative carvings on post and beams
- Aboriginal learners' perspective:
 - Welcoming, comforting, logical
 - Open spaces with computers set up at varying levels
 - Make it more accessible
 - Less formal

- Pod type organization with central open space
- Identify places in First Nations' languages
 - Associated with activities and history
 - Environmental design
 - Service Commons
- Get students involved in campus planning - suggest small student focus group
- VIU demographic for the region
 - 13% of high school students – will grow to 20%
 - 50% of first nations' below 25 years of age
- Welcoming, comforting, logical
- Cafeteria visible and accessible directly from outside
 - Use Aboriginal design
 - Functional planning important
- Outdoor Seating – Amphitheatre
 - Community focus
- Multi-purpose room to be multi cultural and include First Nations, performances and ceremonies
 - Can have multiple entrances
 - Meeting house entrance for ceremonial use only, face east
 - Allow for special screen(s) including at main entrance
 - Ceremonies take place in centre of space
 - Not normally on a stage but useful for flexibility – could be portable stage
- Reflect the history of Cowichan Tribes with art, artifacts, photographic displays (large)
 - Design features should be integrated not superficial
 - E.g. Lino pattern designs (animals, fish)
 - Carved beams and posts
- K-12 students
 - Process of connecting students to VIU
- Site orientation
 - Traditionally towards sun rise
 - Different villages orient homes in response to site specifics e.g. river or ocean, where people would come from
 - Relationship with rest of valley...?
 - Site closer to Quamichan than Somenos Lake
 - (Cowichan Tribes created by Indian Affairs from a number of villages)

- Entrance
 - Traditionally a carved entrance depicting history of family
 - Frog, bear, thunderbird, sisiult
 - Healing carvings
 - Welcoming figures at doorstep with open arms – greetings
- Spiritual cleansing
 - E.g. for new road in Esquimalt to promote safety
 - Ceremonial burning to appease the ancestors, to acknowledge they are here and will always be here. Like putting a table out for them
- About students:
 - Student services/faculty/elder connection
 - Services commons
 - Separate student services for First Nations in smaller group gathering
 - Grant McKinnon – general space with offices for elders, etc.

ec: Maria to distribute to Cowichan Tribes Representatives
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All efforts have been made to present the mentioned items as an accurate record of the discussions at the meeting. Should there be any discrepancies, please contact our office.