First Nations Leadership Steering Committee Terms of Reference

Section 1 - Establishment

(1) The First Nations Leadership Steering Committee is established under Part 3 Section 19 (1) of the Charles Darwin University Act 2003.

(2) The First Nations Leadership Steering Committee is established as a steering committee reporting directly to the Vice Chancellor. It will be constituted as a permanent fixture of the Charles Darwin University (CDU) organisational structure and appear on the CDU Organisational Chart.

Section 2 - Functions and Responsibilities

(3) The First Nations Leadership Steering Committee is a formal steering committee of the University. The purpose of the Committee is to oversee the implementation of the University's First Nations Leadership Core Plan through the establishment and monitoring of key performance indicators (as relevant) for each initiative.

(4) The First Nations Leadership Steering Committee will monitor and provide guidance and advice to the Vice Chancellor and the University in relation to matters including but not limited to:

a. overseeing the ongoing development and implementation of the University's First Nations Leadership Core Plan;
b. relationships between the University, government, education providers, and industry;
c. aligning existing strategies to develop holistic industry and community engagement across the University;
d. participating in relevant meetings and events to help promote the First Nations Leadership Core Plan and related initiatives;
e. developing, implementing and reviewing the University's strategic goals for First Nations tertiary education as outlined in the CDU Strategic Plan 2021-2026 and the CDU First Nations Leadership Core Plan;
f. developing and implementing First Nations research objectives within the University's research strategy;
g. participation of staff in the University's First Nations cultural competency programs;
h. admission, progression, and graduation of currently enrolled First Nations students and increasing the number of future successful First Nations students; and
i. integrating First Nations Australian Studies across CDU courses.

Guiding Principles

(5) In performing its functions and responsibilities, the guiding principles of the First Nations Leadership Steering Committee are to:

a. place First Nations students and their communities at the centre of decisions;
b. promote First Nations-led, multidisciplinary and thorough consultative processes;
c. provide evidence-informed recommendations based on best practice and expert consensus;
d. consider dual sector education context and system implications;

e. respond to the needs of First Nations students and communities;
f. align to CDU strategic objectives;
g. respect perspectives and value contributions from all stakeholders; and
h. support CDU staff and teams to deliver teaching and research excellence.

Establishment of Working Parties or Sub-Groups

(6) The First Nations Leadership Steering Committee may, as it deems appropriate or desirable, establish working parties to undertake particular tasks in relation to a nominated function. A working party may include persons other than members of the First Nations Leadership Steering Committee.

(7) The role of such working party or sub-group is advisory. Such bodies have no delegation to make any decisions which are binding upon the First Nations Leadership Steering Committee.

Referral of Matters

(8) The Committee may refer matters to the Vice Chancellor and President or relevant Deputy Vice Chancellors, Pro Vice Chancellors, Directors, Pro Vice-Chancellors, Heads of Schools, or other leadership positions for discussion and/or action.

Section 3 - Membership

(9) The membership of the First Nations Leadership Steering Committee shall be comprised of:

a. Deputy Vice-Chancellor First Nations Leadership, ex officio;
b. Provost, ex officio;
c. Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and Community Connection, ex officio;
d. Senior Advisor to the Vice-Chancellor (Development of Health & Medical Workforce in North Australia), ex officio;
e. Associate Vice Chancellor Central Australia, ex officio;
f. Associate Vice Chancellor Katherine; ex officio;
g. Associate Vice Chancellor East Arnhem; ex officio;
h. two First Nations student representatives from the University; and
i. two First Nations staff representatives from the University, including one Professional staff member and one Academic staff member.

(10) Membership may be reviewed from time to time as deemed necessary by the Committee.

Rights of Audience and Debate

(11) The First Nations Leadership Steering Committee may invite any person, whether from within or external to the University, to attend specific meetings or for specific items within a meeting to assist the First Nations Leadership Steering Committee in its deliberations and to achieve wider community engagement.

Section 4 - Chair

(12) The Chair shall be the Deputy Vice Chancellor First Nations Leadership.

(13) The Chair for the First Nations Leadership Steering Committee will be appointed from the members on the Committee and will be reviewed biennially.

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Section 5 - Secretary

(14) The Manager Business Operations, Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor First Nations Leadership (or nominee) shall act as secretary for the First Nations Leadership Steering Committee.

Section 6 - Terms of Office

(15) Members of the First Nations Leadership Steering Committee (other than ex officio members) shall serve for terms consistent with their tenure in their respective substantive positions. On departure from their professional appointments, the successor or replacement to their substantive positions will become members of the First Nations Leadership Steering Committee.

(16) A student member will hold office only while enrolled as a Charles Darwin University student. A student member will be co-opted by the Committee.

Section 7 - Quorum

(17) The quorum for meetings of the Committee shall be five members, including one student representative and one staff representative.

Section 8 - Meetings

(18) The First Nations Leadership Steering Committee will meet at least four times each year, twice in each semester and where practical, meetings will alternate between the various regions of the Northern Territory. The First Nations Leadership Steering Committee will determine if more meetings are required to fulfil its responsibilities and may therefore call extraordinary meetings, resources permitting.

(19) The First Nations Leadership Steering Committee Chair shall meet with the Deputy Vice Chancellor First Nations Leadership and/or the Vice Chancellor as required.

Section 9 - Resolutions

(20) Matters requiring a resolution by the First Nations Leadership Steering Committee are to be determined by consensus of the members present. The Chair shall have a deliberative and casting vote should a vote be required to determine a matter where consensus has not been achieved.

Section 10 - Agenda

(21) The agenda is to be distributed with supporting documentation normally at least seven days prior to the meeting date.

Section 11 - Minutes

(22) Meeting minutes will be taken and distributed within two weeks of the meeting.

Section 12 - Reporting

(23) The First Nations Leadership Steering Committee will report to the Vice Chancellor via the Vice Chancellor's Advisory Committee regularly by way of a report.

(24) The Committee is required to participate in the reporting requirements of the First Nations Leadership Core Plan. This includes but is not limited to: a. progress against the relevant key performance indicators set for each initiative; and b. providing updates on the progress of Committee action items.

Section 13 - Conflicts of Interest

(25) Where a member has an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest regarding an agenda item, they must declare this to the Chair at the commencement of discussion of the item, and be prepared to excuse themselves from the discussion, or the room, if required, as per the terms of the Conflicts of Interest Policy.

Section 14 - Non-compliance

(26) Non-compliance with Governance Documents is considered a breach of the Code of Conduct – Staff or the Code of Conduct – Students, as applicable, and is treated seriously by the University. Reports of concerns about non-compliance will be managed in accordance with the applicable disciplinary procedures outlined in the Charles Darwin University and Union Enterprise Agreement 2025 and the Code of Conduct – Students.

(27) Complaints may be raised in accordance with the Code of Conduct – Staff and Code of Conduct - Students.

(28) All staff members have an individual responsibility to raise any suspicion, allegation or report of fraud or corruption in accordance with the Fraud and Corruption Control Policy and Whistleblower Reporting (Improper Conduct) Procedure.

Status and Details

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