Thompson Rivers University

Smudging Protocol

May 20, 2011

**Smudging**

Smudging involves the burning of substances such as sweet grass, cedar and sage during Aboriginal events. This practice is based on traditional beliefs that the smoke produced is a means of purification and to create a positive mindset for those involved in the activities. The smoke and scent produced during a smudge is minimal and often dissipates quickly.

Types of events in which smudging may occur:

* Aboriginal Student Club Events
* Teaching or Services for Aboriginal Students Events
* University sponsored Aboriginal talks, gatherings, or theatrical productions.

Under the Tobacco Control Act of BC (1996) accommodations are made for the burning of tobacco and other substances for ceremonial purposes in traditional aboriginal cultural activities (section 2).

**Procedure**

Approval for the use of smudging during an event or ceremony must be received through Services for Aboriginal Students. The request form for smudging is available on the Services for Aboriginal Students Website which will identify a list of rooms where smudging may occur and general guidelines of size and duration of smudge. The request should be received at least one week prior to the event. Smudging in other locations will require permission of both Services for Aboriginal Services and TRU Facilities as it may require the short-term disengagement of fire alarm systems and will require the form to be submitted two weeks prior to the event. All costs relating to the temporary impairment and subsequent restoration of fire detection services shall be borne by the applicant, including additional labour (ie. Fire Watch) that may be necessary during the fire detection system impairment.

Once the event/activity has received approval to hold a smudge, Services for Aboriginal Students (or designate) will take steps to ensure that those within the area of the smudge are forewarned of the smudging. This is to ensure that those who may be adversely affected by the smoke may avoid the area. This warning also provides assurance that those smelling smoke are not alarmed. This notification may be made through e-mail or phone calls to those within the building the smudging is to occur. Sponsor(s) of the event are to ensure written notices be posted on the door(s) of the room(s) where the smudge is to take place and on the building exits nearest the room. These notices may be accessed through the TRU Services for Aboriginal Students website and should be typically posted 24 hours before the smudge/event.

For events held in classrooms, considerations should be made to hold these in rooms near exits and at the end of buildings, not in the center of a building. In circumstances where the desire is to smudge a public space, this should only occur during hours when classes are not in session and when the building can be well ventilated directly following the event (e.g., cleansing a public area following a negative experience on campus).

**The following information will be provided by Services for Aboriginal Students to groups planning to smudge.**

Areas considered appropriate to hold smudging include:

* TRU Gymnasium
* The Irving K. Barber British Columbia Centre
* Panorama Room
* Clock Tower Alumni Theatre
* Culinary Arts Dining Room
* COPE/MECA Classroom

To avoid problems with subsequent users, consideration must be given to those who have booked the same space following the smudge and whether there is sufficient time between events for the affects to dissipate.

Other locations will be considered upon request but may require special preparation to accommodate the smudge.

TBA: Guidelines for smudging on campus to be determined by Services for Aboriginal Students in consultation with OH&S and Facilities.

*Note: Thompson Rivers University is charged $500.00 for each instance that the Kamloops Fire Department is called out for a false alarm. In situations where a group or individual has not received appropriate permission to hold a smudge or exceeds the recommended guidelines for a smudge on campus, the fine shall be levied on the group or individual responsible for triggering the false alarm.*