



## Constitution of the World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium

### WINHEC

Updated: February 2021  
Proposed Changes: July 2021  
Proposed Ratification: WINHEC AGM 2021

Final approval actioned: Approved and Ratified at the WINHEC AGM 2021, July 2021

The name of the consortium shall be:

**“World Indigenous Nations Higher\* Education Consortium – WINHEC”**

### Vision and Purpose

We gather as Indigenous Peoples of our respective nations recognising and reaffirming the sovereignty and the educational rights of all Indigenous Peoples. We share the vision of all Indigenous Peoples of the world, united in the collective synergy of self-determination through control of higher education. We are committed to building partnerships that strengthen Indigenous sovereignty through restoring and retaining Indigenous spirituality, cultures and languages, homelands, social systems, economic systems, self-determination and self-management.

*Based on the Declaration on Indigenous Peoples Higher Education, 5 August 2002, Kananaskis, Alberta, Canada.*

### Fullest Understanding of “Higher Education”

*\* Originally, WINHEC was designed for “Higher Education”, postsecondary or tertiary education. Originally, WINHEC accepted a specific Western concept from the mainstream education system. As Indigenous peoples we recognize that “education” is a lifelong process and occurs across time, space, and place and within relationships. As Indigenous peoples we also recognize the cycle of education as elders pass knowledge to those younger and the younger learn from all of creation through a lifetime of learning and sharing. During WINHEC’s early years, we made space for P-12 and community programs that cross all ages. WINHEC has embraced like-minded Indigenous peoples in our journey to remember, share, and relearn our respective teachings. In doing so, we have been humbled by the depths and heights of knowledge held in our languages, songs, stories, and ceremonies. We now*



*understand “Higher Education” as that which opens our Indigenous minds to all that has been given to us by Creator and challenges us to be who we were intended to be as Indigenous peoples. We must remember and take our place in this world and seek to stand on our highest ground, with our clearest Indigenous minds, hearts, spirit and body, reaching for Indigenous Higher Education.*

### **Mission and Goals**

WINHEC provides an international forum and support for Indigenous Peoples to pursue common goals through Indigenous education, including but not limited to:

1. Recognising the significance of Indigenous education and the educational rights of Indigenous Peoples;
2. Accelerating the articulation of Indigenous epistemologies (ways of knowing, education, philosophy and research);
3. Protecting and enhancing Indigenous spiritual beliefs, cultures and languages through higher education;
4. Advancing the social, economic and political status of Indigenous Peoples that contribute to the well-being of Indigenous communities through higher education;
5. Protecting and sustaining Indigenous lands, water and environments through education and research;
6. Maintaining an accreditation body for Indigenous education initiatives and systems that identify values, practices and principles by which Indigenous Peoples live;
7. Creating a global network for sharing of knowledges through exchange forums through innovative practices;
8. Protecting, preserving and advocating Indigenous cultural and intellectual property rights, in particular the reaffirming and observance of the Mataatua Declaration on Cultural and Intellectual Property Rights of Indigenous Peoples, (June 1993);
9. Promoting the maintenance, retention and advancement of traditional Indigenous bodies of knowledge;
10. Supporting and profiling Indigenous academic and research scholarship;
11. Promoting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; and
12. Supporting the World Indigenous Peoples Conference on Education (WIPC:E).



## **WINHEC Founding Philosophy and Principles**

This World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium was founded on the philosophy and principles outlined in the following Articles of the 2007 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples:

Article #12: Indigenous Peoples have the right to manifest, practice, develop and teach their spiritual and religious traditions, customs and ceremonies; the right to maintain, protect, and have access in privacy to their religious and cultural sites; the right to the use and control of ceremonial objects; and the right to the repatriation of human remains.

Article #13 Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons.

Article #14 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. Indigenous individuals, particularly children, have the right to all levels and forms of education of the State without discrimination. 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.

Article #15 Indigenous peoples have the right to the dignity and diversity of their cultures, traditions, histories and aspirations which shall be appropriately reflected in education and public information. States shall take effective measures, in consultation and cooperation with the Indigenous peoples concerned, to combat prejudice and eliminate discrimination and to promote tolerance, understanding and good relations among Indigenous peoples and all other segments of society.

In addition, the Consortium supports the Coolangatta Statement on Indigenous Rights in Education (1999) in the belief that Indigenous people have the right to be Indigenous.

## **Powers**

To further the above, WINHEC has the following powers:



- (a) To arrange conferences for members of WINHEC and other interested persons for the general dissemination and critical discussion of matters pertaining to WINHECs goals;
- (b) To facilitate the exchange of ideas, staff, structures and programmes between the members of WINHEC;
- (c) To act as a proponent and voice for Indigenous peoples on issues pertaining to higher education;
- (d) To arrange meetings of an educational character for the benefit of and to be attended by Indigenous Peoples and/or people entering the field of Indigenous Peoples higher education research;
- (e) World Indigenous Nations University (WINU) to promote higher education amongst the Indigenous Peoples of the world;
- (f) Global Indigenous Elders Alliance, a Global Indigenous Youth Alliance and a World Indigenous Research Alliance;
- (g) To confer on the advice for the Executive Board, the WINHEC Circle of Honours:  
*(Refer to the WINHEC Practice Handbook for details).*
  - ❖ CHIEFS OF INDIGENOUS LEADERSHIP
  - ❖ ELDERS OF INDIGENOUS WISDOM
  - ❖ SCHOLARS OF INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE
  - ❖ SERVICE TO INDIGENOUS EDUCATION
- (h) To secure and accept funds from appropriate bodies to support Indigenous peoples' higher education research, programmes and related activities under WINHEC;
- (i) To promote Indigenous methodologies of research, in particular the ownership, control, access and possession of such research;
- (j) To hold meetings of the WINHEC Executive and Executive Board; and
- (k) To publish appropriate materials that promotes WINHEC's Vision, Objectives, Mission and Goals.

## Membership

Membership may be attained as an individual or through an institution/organization. Members must support the WINHEC Vision, Objectives, Principles, Mission and Goals, align with a WINHEC member Country/Nation Region, and pay annual membership fees accordingly.

WINHEC member Country/Nation Regions include Hawaii, Alaska, New



Zealand/Aotearoa, Australia, Saamiland, Taiwan, Canada, and the mainland United States of America.

Members are generally associated with:

- (a) Indigenous higher education and tertiary institutions;
- (b) Associations of Indigenous higher education and tertiary institutions;
- (c) Indigenous divisions of western higher education and tertiary institutions; and
- (d) Any other persons or institutions as agreed by the respective Country/Nation Region Representative and Executive Board.

Members in good standing may hold positions of responsibility. A description of categories and annual fee payments are defined in the WINHEC Practice Handbook.

The role of members is to uphold the WINHEC Vision, Objectives, Principles, Mission and Goals by:

- (a) Attaining membership as an individual or through a member institution;
- (b) Maintaining membership in good standing;
- (c) Electing their Country/Nation Region representatives (Full members only);
- (d) Attending meetings;
- (e) Working productively; and
- (f) Accepting additional roles and responsibilities.

Members are to support and further the work related to the WINHEC Vision, Objectives, Principles, Mission and Goals and to provide an international forum and support for Indigenous Peoples to pursue common goals through education.

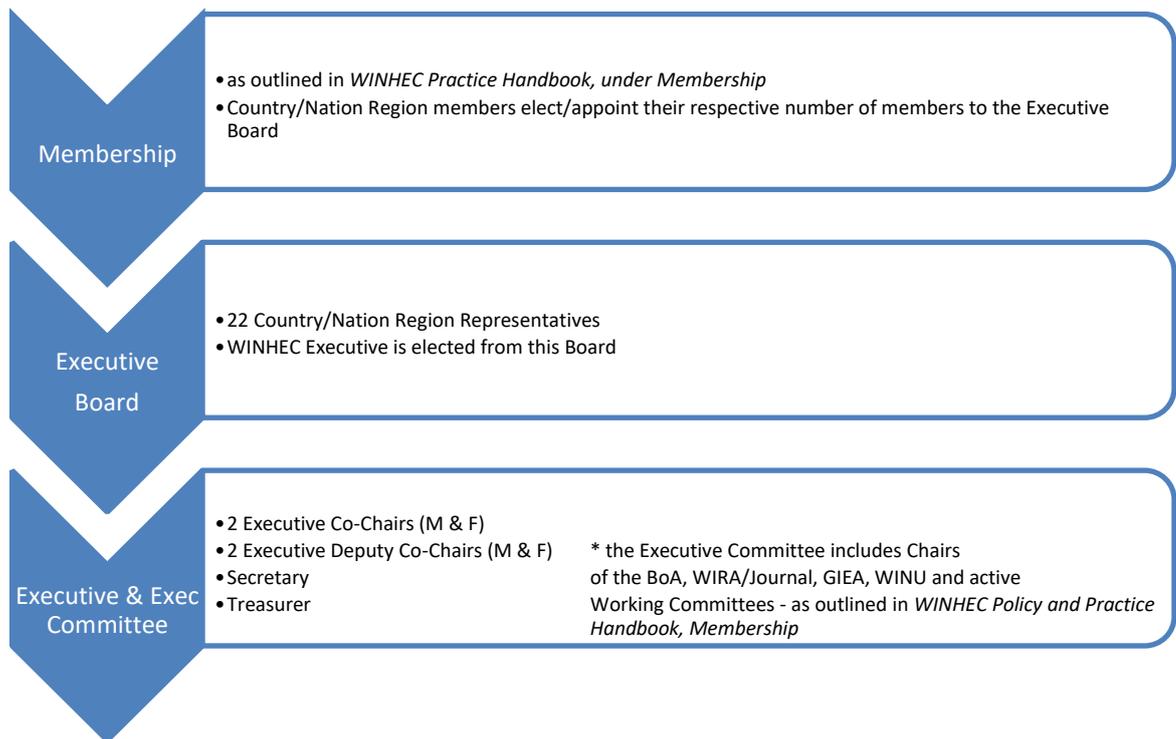
## **WINHEC Structure, Representation, Leadership, Election Process and Responsibilities**

The WINHEC Practice Handbook serves as the operational policy to the constitution and details WINHEC's leadership and governance structure.

The detailed process to identify WINHEC Country/Nation Region Representatives, and the membership of the Executive Committees and Executive Board are found in the



*WINHEC Practice Handbook: WINHEC Structure, Representation, Leadership, Election Process and Responsibilities.*



### WINHEC 3 Year AGM Cycle

Year 1 – AGM + Election of Executive + Celebrating Community and Youth (5 days)

Year 2 – AGM + WIPC:E (2.5 days)

Year 3 – AGM + WIRA (2.5 + 2.5 days)

Detailed overviews are in the WINHEC Practice Handbook.

### Annual General Meeting (AGM)

#### Core Agenda

The WINHEC AGM is called by the Executive Co-Chairs. While the agenda will vary the basic core agenda will include:

- (a) Welcome by the hosts and spiritual blessings;
- (b) Reply by the Executive Co-Chairs and others;
- (c) Annual Report of the Executive Co-Chairs;



- (d) Financial Report;
- (e) Country/Nation Region Reports;
- (f) Other appropriate Reports;
- (g) Election Matters;
- (h) Meeting of Boards and Working Committees; and (i) Other general matters.

The agenda may be delivered as Part 1 at the beginning, and Part 2 at the end.

### **Voting Rights**

Each member in good standing shall have the right to vote at AGM's on:

- (a) Their Country/Nation Region Representative/s voted to sit on the Executive Board;
- (b) Motions from the floor; and (c) General business.

Each Executive Board Member shall have the right to vote on:

- (a) Executive positions; and
- (b) Business of the Executive Board.

Each Accredited Institution/Organization shall have the right to vote on the Board of Accreditation.

### **Annual Meeting of the Executive Board**

The Executive Board shall meet annually -

The day prior to the AGM and the last day of the AGM.

### **Quorum for Executive Board**

The quorum for an Executive Board meeting shall be no less than 50% of the Country/Nation Region's Executive Board members.

### **Executive Power to Appoint**

- (a) The Executive shall have the power to co-opt members, as it sees fit;
- (b) The Executive shall have the power to appoint temporary members of the Executive Body;
- (c) The Executive shall have the power to set up working committees or other such groups in furtherance of WINHEC's objective and goals; and
- (d) The Executive Co-Chairs shall appoint and engage additional managerial administrative and policy support positions as required.

**Head office:** <https://winhec.org/>



**Physical Address:** Defined by sitting Executive Co-Chairs

### **Finance**

The financial year of WINHEC shall end 31<sup>st</sup> of December. The institution in which accounts are held shall be required to present a general report together with an audited account of the income and expenditures of WINHEC to the Executive CoChairs by February 28<sup>th</sup>.

### **Amendment to Constitution**

- (a) Each proposed change in this Constitution shall be notified to the Executive CoChairs in writing at least four months before any meeting of the Executive Board. The Executive Co-Chairs shall notify the Executive Board of the proposed changes at least three months prior to the WINHEC Annual General Meeting. Executive Board Members are responsible for the dissemination of the proposed changes to their respective Country/Nation Region members for feedback. They are to compile responses and forward to the Executive Co-Chairs within a month prior to the AGM. The proposed change(s) must have support, in writing of 4 Executive Board members.
- (b) Consent of seventy-five per cent (75%) of the Executive Board in attendance is required to change the Constitution.
- (c) No amendment shall be made to the WINHEC Mission and Goals.

### **Dissolution**

WINHEC shall be dissolved if a petition for dissolution is approved by seventy-five (75%) per cent of the Executive Board members at an annual meeting of the Executive Board.

In the event of dissolutions, surplus funds, property, and assets shall be distributed to recognised charitable education institutions or associations with common or similar goals to WINHEC as decided by the Executive Board.

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