

Thursday NEIHR Meeting: Meeting Minutes

Thursday June 23 2022

Suzanne: I wanted one of the priorities today to be to provide feedback on the conference in Saskatoon, because next year, we have to host and so I want some feedback.

Sabina: I can take minutes; so I can go first. I judged 10 student presentations over two days and I'm not sure how I felt about the judging. I also think some of the research and academic rigour of the research being done needs to be discussed more so. I did think the Faculty panel was nice to be able to hear how far people have come and it was good for students who are at the start of their careers to hear those insights from Faculty.

Clay: Everyone was talking about culture and ceremony but no one was really doing it. Hearing Francois Paulette speak was amazing, hearing elders speak on the panel was amazing but giving them 10 minutes each to speak is not enough time. That's like an opening. We need a strategy to get people away from their tables and mingle with others. Everyone was kind of in their silos and mingling together rather than branching out.

Mikaela: I thought it was a good event overall but it probably would have been a much better event if there was a larger cultural focus. Luana smudged and that was really great but there should have been more ceremony and elder talks to ground the focus of the event. A lot of back-to-back panels can become tiring. There was a lot of tears and pain that surfaced when people were sharing their work. There should have been an elder room or some support for the young people who were there. I think it was good overall but those types of things would have made it a more spectacular event.

Sarah: I will echo some previous points but just having more opportunity to connect with people that might align with a research interest. Maybe a panel or a discussion group that goes with different themes, experts in those areas. Mental health versus other research, for example. There was game night but then those should have continued throughout the day too. I had a really good time so not many notes.

Sabina: I also found the opportunities to mix and mingle with people was made better when we met in places like the back auditorium to take the big picture of everyone. That's where I spoke to a lot of people and met new people and conversations took place, on the land, conversations that weren't necessarily taking place in the academic setting.

Clay: Oh yeah, something just came to me. I went to a homeless conference pre-covid, they had it in Edmonton and they had a sunrise ceremony in the tepee, everyone was invited, they had a pipe ceremony and everyone got up at the crack of dawn. It was really something to see and I thought yeah maybe having a sunrise ceremony was something to have. Maybe we can have that. Maybe we couldn't have a ceremonial or cultural aspect because there was a bar. The ceremony stuff is important and need to be there more so. A lot of the research too has been done like 2 years ago, I was talking to Luana about it and it's just something we talked about. There were some really interesting ones, there was a Cree doctor who does

plastic surgery and I didn't know this, but he has specialities and he is doing that research. I really enjoyed listening to him talk and he was so passionate.

Sarah: I have one more thought, I was thinking like more workshops would be good, like the data analysis one you guys did a while ago would be good. Maybe even a little certificate to give people the credentials for completing a workshop.

Mikaela: I think the panels weren't as well organized. They kind of shoved me on a panel and didn't even really tell me what I was supposed to talk about.

Michael: As a recap, if I may, because I was not there. I have gathered that there needed to be culture at the centre of everything, while breaking up the academic seriousness of everything. People also wanted more support with their academic work, which can often be more personal and full of pain. Sarah also suggested maybe having research themes and interest, so having people to mingle and interact more, also having a certificate or something tangible to take away. Does that sound like a good summary?

Suzanne: I agree with everything largely. I think we have organized a lot of conferences over the years. The conference should be culturally and spiritually based in all aspects and it should also be a little more clearly organized. The whole conference should be organized 6 months before the date of the actual conference, not like a week before. That is just my take away from it. My dream, there are places in Yellowknife that are actual land camps and where it's like Hart House but even more land based because there is no electricity up there or anything like that. I think going to a place like that, would be really great. Spending 3 days on the land like that would be great, having students talk in talking circles. We do things more cutting edge than everyone else does and so it might be too out there.

Insights for Next Conference (Hosted by our NEIHR team):

- Elders need to be given more time to speak
- Student presentations being judged (maybe everyone gets a prize)
- How can we get people to branch out from their silos
- More ceremonial or cultural aspects must be included moving forward
- There needs to be elder support for students as people share their pain/trauma
- Maybe we could have a sunrise ceremony before the conference
- We should try to have a more land based conference in Yellow Knife
- Conference needs to be organized 6 months in advance of the date (everything)
- We need to have more talking circles with the students, faculty and elders