

**Mash Koh
Wee Kah
Pooh Win**

**Standing
Strong
Task Force**

Community Conversation Toolkit

**Ryerson
University**



Contents

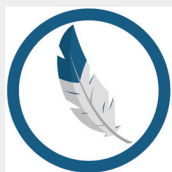
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Welcome!

The Standing Strong (Mash Koh Wee Kah Pooh Win) Task Force is honoured to embark on a journey to learn from community members about what the university can do to reconcile the history of Egerton Ryerson. The engagement process is open to all community members including students, faculty, staff, alumni and neighbours. Your input on how the university should approach commemoration is critical to the Task Force moving forward with its work.

We know that there have been ongoing conversations regarding the statue of Egerton Ryerson and around commemoration in general. Commemoration is a way we honour and remember a person or events. We believe that these conversations are a valuable way to share with one another and provide a great opportunity to collectively come up with new ideas. The Task Force is turning to you as a community member to continue these conversations to generate feedback to our core questions.

Please consider this toolkit is a starting point to encourage community members like you to host and guide conversations with participants of your choice. Enclosed you will find suggestions about guidelines, conversation topics, and resources so that you feel supported to lead a conversation in a way that is engaging, relevant, and meaningful



The work of the Standing Strong Task Force (Mash Koh WeeKah Pooh Win) is represented as a circle with no one above, no one below, no one ahead and no one behind. Regardless of age, stage, or position, everyone has an equally valued voice. Within the circle, an eagle feather honours the truth and bravery brought into this work by all of the community members who join us in our process.

Acknowledgement of Territory

Acknowledging and understanding the land where we live, work, and spend time is foundational to the Task Force and the community conversations the Task Force is encouraging. The Task Force is mindful of the ongoing colonial impacts felt by Indigenous communities and is committed to actively taking steps towards reconciliation. In 2014, Ryerson's Aboriginal Education Council (AEC) developed the following Land Acknowledgement Statement for the University:

Toronto is in the 'Dish With One Spoon Territory'. The Dish With One Spoon is a treaty between the Anishinaabe, Mississaugas and Haudenosaunee that bound them to share the territory and protect the land. Subsequent Indigenous Nations and peoples, Europeans and all newcomers have been invited into this treaty in the spirit of peace, friendship and respect."

The "Dish", or sometimes it is called the "Bowl", represents what is now southern Ontario, from the Great Lakes to Quebec and from Lake Simcoe into the United States. We all eat out of the Dish, all of us that share this territory, with only one spoon. That means we have to share the responsibility of ensuring the dish is never empty, which includes taking care of the land and the creatures we share it with. Importantly, there are no knives at the table, representing that we must keep the peace.

This was a treaty made between the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee after the French and Indian War. Newcomers were then incorporated into it over the years, notably in 1764 with The Royal Proclamation/The Treaty of Niagara.

Introduction

About this toolkit

This toolkit has been designed to support you in planning and leading a community conversation. Consider this as a starting point to help you develop your own unique conversation that is tailored to your community.

How to use this toolkit

Community conversations are an important part of this engagement process. Here are a few suggestions on how to use this toolkit:

- > **Reach out:** Get in touch with your friends, family, academic programs, student organizations or colleagues who are interested in this topic. Let them know you're planning a community conversation and attach the poster included in this toolkit. Reach out early and follow up as needed.
- > **Learn and reflect:** Familiarize yourself with the Task Force, engagement process, and conversation starters, making note of ideas, questions, and topics that you think will resonate with your community. Don't hesitate to get in touch with the Task Force Engagement Manager if you have comments or questions!
- > **Make it your own:** Review the guidelines and considerations and develop a plan for your own community conversation that takes into account the needs of your community in terms of: conversation format, timing, meeting platform, and any other factors.
- > **Get connected:** Visit our website/online engagement platform at standingstrong.civilspace.io to fill out the survey. You can also learn more about the engagement process, see what others are saying, and how your conversation fits into broader dialogue.
- > **Share what you heard:** Use the Resources section to take notes, collect feedback, and document what you heard. We look forward to hearing from you!

Why are we having these conversations?

Community-led conversations are an important part of engagement. We recognize that many community members and leaders are familiar with the topic of the statue of Egerton Ryerson and may have had these conversations before. With deep respect, we ask community members to share with us how the Ryerson University community can take steps towards reconciliation through dialogue, reflection, and commemoration. We see these conversations as part of a journey of collective listening and learning and we hope to hear directly from community members and leaders like you.

The information and learnings shared in the engagement process will be used to inform the Task Force in making recommendations to the President's office about considerations and principles to guide commemoration on campus for now and into the future.



Standing Strong (Mash Koh Wee Kah Pooh Win) Task Force

What is the Task Force?

The Standing Strong (Mash Koh Wee Kah Pooh Win) Task Force is an independent body created to develop recommendations to reconcile the history of Egerton Ryerson. The Task Force is also guiding research into this history, and an engagement program to hear from the community.

Our name, Mash Koh Wee Kah Pooh Win, is the Cree Spirit Name for “Standing Strong.” Co-Chair Joanne Dallaire, a Cree pipe carrier gifted with the ability to seek out Spirit Names, sought out a Spirit Name for the Task Force. This name is in recognition of our ancestors and spirit helpers that are invited to join this process to help guide us.

The Task Force is responsible for submitting recommendations to the President regarding what the university can do to reconcile the legacy of Egerton Ryerson and approach commemoration in the future. Community engagement and in-depth research will inform the recommend actions and principles that the Task Force puts forward. Please know that we do not approach our responsibility lightly.

Who is on the Task Force?

The Task Force is made up of 14 representatives from Ryerson, local universities and community members. Ryerson’s Joanne Dallaire and Catherine Ellis serve as Co-chairs.

Joanne is Elder (Ke Shay Hayo) and Senior Advisor Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation for Ryerson University, chair of the Ryerson Aboriginal Education Council, and co-chair of the Truth and Reconciliation directive.

Catherine is Chair and associate professor in the Department of History at Ryerson University and a faculty member on the Board of Governors.

Our Task Force consists of members from the Ryerson community (faculty, staff, student, alumni) and external members with expertise in human rights, history, public art, law and other fields. You can read more about the members of the [Task Force website](#).

Planning your community conversation

Guidelines for hosting a community conversation

Here are a few guidelines to help you plan your community conversation, manage Q&As and collect input from all participants.

Prepare for your conversation

- > Develop an agenda for the event if you think that might help you. Please see Appendix C for a sample agenda.
- > Plan your set up - review the tips for organizers included in Appendix D.
- > Review this guide before you host your conversation. Do not feel like you need to know everything. This process is one of dialogue and ongoing learning.
- > Develop an agenda for the event if you that might help you.
- > Orient yourself with the Task Force and engagement process.
- > Review the conversation starters and adjust them as you need to enter the event feeling prepared and empowered to facilitate a good conversation.

Make space for all voices

- > Your role as a host is to make space and be an active listener. Listen carefully to what people are saying so you can help guide and encourage discussion.
- > If the conversation feels stuck, try using probing questions to encourage discussion rather than closed yes/no questions.
- > Be comfortable with pauses and silence. These topics are complex and nuanced, and reflection is part of the process of conversation.
- > Make sure if multiple people are participating, everyone gets an opportunity to provide input. If someone is not participating, you can say *"I need to make sure we hear from everyone; is there anything you would like to add to the list?"*
- > If some people are dominating the conversation, try something like *"Those are interesting views. Let's see what other people think?"*

Strive to remain neutral

- > Try to stay impartial if there are disagreements. Your role is to further discussion and draw out the different viewpoints – whether positive, negative or somewhere in between – rather than to take sides.
- > When faced with difficult and/or emotional questions, try to seek additional information by asking clarifying or probing questions.
- > If one or more participants are becoming disruptive, consider moving them into a breakout room on the virtual platform you are using and having a conversation to address the disruption.
- > Try not to endorse participant views, or insert your own views into the discussion.
- > State and restate as needed that all perspectives are valid – including uncertainty or neutrality – and that there is space for them.

Considerations

You know your communities best. We are looking to you to plan and lead conversations in a way that is relevant and meaningful for participants. To assist with your planning we've provided a few suggestions that may be helpful as you develop your conversation guides:

What is the best virtual tool to convene a conversation that feels welcome, inclusive and accessible?

- How will you set up your virtual space? (e.g. plenary room, break-out rooms)
- What kind of cultural protocol is important to your participants (e.g. opening and closing the session)?
- If participants do not have internet access, can you offer the option to phone in?

What are the roles and responsibilities needed to run a virtual conversation?

- Who will facilitate?
- Who will take notes?
- Is there a need for technical support?

When is the best time to host your conversation and how long should it be?

- What are your participants' schedules and daily responsibilities?
- Do you need to ask participants beforehand their preference for dates and times? (e.g. Doodle, Google Forms)
- How long should your session be?
- Do you need to build in time for breaks?

What materials will you need to send participants before the conversation?

- Will they need to see the conversation starters beforehand?
- What information do they already have, and what information do they need?
- Do you need a Code of Conduct? If so, is this something you can co-create with the group so that it is relevant and resonates with participants?

How many people should be invited and how will you invite them?

- Is there a maximum group size to ensure that the space feels welcoming and safe?
- How will you invite people? (e.g. phone, email, e-newsletter, social media, leveraging online community networks)
- How will you manage RSVPs? (e.g. email management, Eventbrite, Google Forms)

What tools and techniques will ensure a positive and productive conversation?

- What conversation styles do you already use with this group?
- How can you adapt these to a virtual space?
- How will you accommodate different communication styles and preferences? (e.g. sharing in a large group, sharing in a small group, verbal, written, listening and reflecting)
- What type of facilitation allows for sharing a range of views on complex questions?

What accessibility supports will allow everyone to participate wholly (e.g. closed captioning, language translation, ASL, etc.)?

- Do you have access to these supports?
- If not, how can Ryerson help you in making these supports available?

Are you hosting a conversation with Indigenous peoples?

- Please contact the Engagement Manager to discuss options for incorporating protocol and reciprocity into the engagement process.

Can community conversation participants also submit responses to the survey?

- Yes! In fact, please encourage everyone to submit personal responses at standingstrong.civilspace.io

Ideas for virtual engagement

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the engagement must be conducted virtually. As you make plans to engage community members, it is important to remember that different participants have different needs and preferences to provide their feedback. While we encourage you to plan engagement in a way that you think will work best for the community you are meeting with, we've provided a few ideas here to get you started:



A) Virtual meetings on Google Meets or Zoom

Both platforms offer a relatively accessible means of bringing community together to discuss. Consider planning an open discussion, or a world café style event using [Google Jamboard](#) to gather feedback.



B) Telephone townhall

Despite a lot of folks using virtual meeting platforms over the past year, we know that not everyone is comfortable or has the same access. As an alternative, please consider hosting a group discussion through teleconference where participants can dial in over phone to discuss the scenarios with you and share their feedback.



C) Interviews

When a group setting isn't the best way to meet with community members, consider holding small group conversations to gather feedback. These could be hosted over a virtual meeting platform (like Zoom or Google Meets) or phone. This may be a more appropriate way to meet with folks who are less comfortable online or who would otherwise face barriers to participating in a group setting. Consider meeting people where they are: for example, if a group already meets at a certain time, consider holding a small group interview during that time.

Please consider these formats as suggestions and use your judgment and experience to plan engagement events that work best for those involved.

Tips for positive and constructive conversations

- > Draft a one-page **Code of Conduct**, share it with participants beforehand, and invite people to add their ideas. Please see Appendix A for an example
- > Commit to co-creating a **brave space for discussion**
- > Make space for **silence, reflection and discomfort** – these are all parts of our collective learning
- > **Practice active listening** that is grounded in empathy, e.g. use statements of acknowledgment, like *“I hear you, what you're sharing is important, that viewpoint is valid”*
- > Accommodate different communication styles and preferences
- > **Read the (virtual) room** and know when to step in and step back

Conversation guide

It's up to you as to how you'd like to plan and facilitate your community conversation. We know that the matter at hand is highly nuanced and may be sensitive. Bearing that in mind, we've included suggested conversation starters to frame your discussion. Please contact the Engagement Manager if you have questions or concerns about any of these topics.

Conversation starters

Question 1 - Statue

We know that there have been ongoing conversations regarding the statue of Egerton Ryerson and around commemoration in general. Commemoration is a way we honour and remember a person or events. **What are your thoughts and ideas about the statue of Egerton Ryerson?**

Question 2 - Commemoration

The Task Force is studying Egerton Ryerson's relationship with Indigenous Peoples. We are also looking at his connection to the education system in Ontario and Indigenous education in Canada. **Given what you may know of Egerton Ryerson's legacy, how does that affect your view of commemoration today?**

Question 3 - Principles

In Fall 2021 the Task Force will present recommendations on commemoration to the University President. In order to do this, the Task Force is developing principles that will build on the [vision](#) and [values](#) of the university (please click on the links if you would like to read more).

Please tell us what you think of the draft principles below for future decision-making about commemoration. What do you like, what should be changed, what else would you like to see included?

- > **Reconciliation:** we have a responsibility to better meet the needs of Indigenous peoples by examining our education system and how we can do things differently
- > **Transparency:** in the spirit of trust-building, we must be open about our decision making
- > **Impact:** we must consider harm and achievement as critical factors for decisions on commemoration
- > **Equity and inclusion:** we are deliberate in our pursuit to advance institutional equity for sovereignty-seeking Indigenous peoples, as well as equity-deserving groups including Black and People of Colour communities
- > **Humility:** we humble ourselves to acknowledge that we are part of a greater whole, and we must take responsibility when we have erred
- > **Integrity:** we embody these principles with intention and advance them with courage

Question 4 - Reconciliation

Given the University's commitment to reconciliation, what ideas do you have to address the legacy of Egerton Ryerson?

Question 5 - Open-ended

Is there anything else about the work of the Task Force you'd like to share with us?

Resources

The Task Force is committed to supporting community conversations with culturally relevant and appropriate resources. These include supports for planning and facilitating your conversation, as well as resources to make your virtual meeting accessible to participants.

Community support

As you plan your community conversation, think about what kinds of supports you can offer to participants to ensure that everyone feels welcomed and has the tools they need to take part in the conversation. If you would like additional supports not listed below, please reach out to the Engagement Manager to discuss options.

| Accessibility support | Resource |
|-----------------------|----------|
|-----------------------|----------|

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|---|---|
| Meeting facilitation, ASL interpretation, note-taking, paper survey | Please contact the engagement manager if you need help with appropriate supports. |
|---|---|

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| Translation | Some meeting platforms offer options for live translation (e.g. Zoom , Google Meet). Please contact the Engagement Manager if you have specific live translation needs for your conversation. |
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| Closed captioning and transcription in-meeting | Some meeting platforms offer closed captioning services, which you can turn on in the 'meeting settings.' This will include a text caption for audio and video content. You can also enable live transcription service to show a transcript on the side panel in-meeting. Please contact the Engagement Manager if you would like help accessing these services. |
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| Paper survey | If your conversation participants prefer to fill in a paper copy of the survey, please contact the Engagement Manager to discuss options to print, distribute and collect paper surveys. |
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Task Force contact information

If you have any questions please contact us via email:
standingstrong@ryerson.ca

Rachel DiSaia, Engagement Manager
Standing Strong (Mash Koh Wee Kah Pooh Win) Task Force

Reporting back

Once you've led your community conversation, we want to make sure you have the resources you need to report back – this is an important step to ensure that your contributions are reflected in the broader engagement process. You will have until May 16th, 2021 to gather and submit your results. You can also report back using the Standing Strong Task Force engagement portal at standingstrong.civilspace.io or by completing the reporting template included in Appendix B. Please get in touch if you need any help with this process.

Here are a few tools and ideas that can help you take notes, collect feedback and share it back.



Tips for summarizing your conversation:

- > You can use the template in Appendix B for note taking. We would suggest filling this out shortly after your conversation while the discussions are fresh in your mind.
- > Keep it short and high level, including the key themes, questions, and points to bring forward for ongoing conversations.
- > We recommend 3-4 pages for conversations summaries, but this can be a bit longer or shorter depending on how long your session is and the number of participants.
- > Please use a consistent style and formatting for your summary (e.g. heading for each conversation starter and subheading for themes). You can use the sample template below to summarize each of the conversation starters.
- > Please get in touch with our Engagement Coordinator if you would like support for note-taking.



Parking lot technique:

To respectfully direct conversation back to the main topics, try using a 'parking lot' to park ideas to revisit later. This is a space to collect ideas that can be considered later, outside of this conversation. It can help keep your conversation on track while showing participants that you hear and acknowledge their idea. Here is a [two-minute video](#) that explains how to set up a 'parking lot'.



Capturing feedback:

If conversation participants wish to share more input, please direct them to the engagement portal: standingstrong.civilspace.io. If you have a smaller group, you can build in some time in the agenda to visit the online survey and move participants through the process of filling out the survey.

Appendix A: Sample code of conduct

A code of conduct will emphasize mutual respect to establish and maintain a safe and inclusive space. This Code of Conduct will be presented during the conversation and shared with all participants before the conversation.

- > Safe spaces aren't assumed – they are created. We need to all be active participants in creating a space that feels safe for all.
- > [Step in/step back/step out](#): we trust that you will participate at a level that feels comfortable for you. Please know that you can take a break or leave the session at any time.
- > Do not discuss folks (by name or identifying characteristics) who are not present without explicit consent from them before you do so. Please tell your own, or generically stated, stories.
- > Use respectful language as best as you can while communicating. If there are terms people are using that you do not recognize, please ask!
- > Please engage in our space with the spirit of generous interpretation and charitable listening.
- > There is a zero-tolerance policy for harmful statements. Participants who make such statements will be placed into a breakout room with our Moderator for a discussion to address their comment.
- > Please mute your audio when you are not speaking to minimize audio disruption.
- > Because this is an audio-based meeting, your voice acts as your physical presence. Be thoughtful when you speak. Be courteous, and don't interrupt the speaker.

Appendix B: Reporting template

Please start by letting us know when your conversation took place and who participated, using this template:

Date

Number of participants

Format

Any other notes

Question 1 - Statue

What are your thoughts and ideas about the statue of Egerton Ryerson?

Responses (general ideas or direct quotes)

Questions from participants

Question 2 - Commemoration

Given what you may know of Egerton Ryerson’s legacy, how does that affect your view of commemoration today?

Responses (general ideas or direct quotes)

Questions from participants

Question 3 - Principles

Please tell us what you think of the draft principles below for future decision-making about commemoration. What do you like, what should be changed, what else would you like to see included?

Responses (general ideas or direct quotes)

Questions from participants

Question 4 - Reconciliation

Given the University’s commitment to reconciliation, what ideas do you have to address the legacy of Egerton Ryerson?

Responses (general ideas or direct quotes)

Questions from participants

Appendix C: Sample agenda

Please use this sample agenda as a starting point for your conversation.

- > Welcome
- > Land Acknowledgment
- > Brief overview of Task Force
- > Code of conduct
- > Engagement questions
- > Open discussion
- > Closing

Appendix D: Tips for organizers

When hosting a community conversation, don't forget to take care of yourself! Below are some ways to make sure you have what you need.

Co-hosting

- > Find someone you feel comfortable co-hosting with. This can ease the stress, help capture notes, and support trouble shooting if there are any technical issues.

Meeting facilitation

- > Get familiar with the technology you need ahead of time.
- > If you plan to use visuals or presentation slides, practice sharing your screen ahead of time.
- > Write yourself a script if that will help you to remember everything you want to share.
- > Create an agenda, even if it's just for yourself, to help you cover everything that you intend to.

Note taking

- > Document the information from conversations, without capturing the names of attendees.
- > If someone asks that their comments are not included in the notes, omit them from your reporting.
- > Ask someone ahead of time if they can take notes so that you can focus on facilitating.

Arrange your space

- > Your environment will affect how you look and sound.
- > Find a comfortable place to sit for the period of time you will be facilitating.
- > For the best audio, call in from a laptop or desktop computer, not your cellphone.
- > To prevent sounding like you're in a tunnel, set yourself up in a quite space with good sound absorption (carpets, blankets, pillows).
- > If you're using your webcam, create a neutral background, and have sufficient lighting.
- > Make sure that your face is illuminated and that light isn't shining from behind you.
- > Have a glass of water handy and tissues nearby.

Appendix E: Poster

The online survey is an important mechanism for community members to learn and share their input. You can use this poster to direct participants to the online survey, which will be open from March 16 to May 16, 2021.

**Mash Koh
Wee Kah
Pooh Win** / **Standing
Strong
Task Force**

How can Ryerson University reconcile the history of Egerton Ryerson?

Share your feedback today!

Online Survey
March 16 to May 16, 2021

**Ryerson
University**

To learn more, please visit
standingstrong.civilspace.io

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Pooh Win**



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