

# Campus Smudging Procedure

## I. Procedure Statement

Oregon Institute of Technology (University) is committed to diversity and to an inclusive, respectful campus for all people. Religious and spiritual practices are an important part of life for many people in the University community, and the University accommodates both students and employees who wish to express their faith and/or spirituality.

In support of the spiritual lives of Native American/Alaska Native peoples, the University will allow the spiritual, sacred, and/or ceremonial use of sage, sweet grass, tobacco, and cedar, when its use is for the purpose of purification and prayer, consistent with time-honored cultural, traditional, and spiritual observances and complies with the protocols outlined in this document.

## II. History, Tradition, and Context

Ancient traditions concerning the use of plants abound within every Native American tribal culture and all those who practice similar traditions. The uses of these plants address a variety of medicinal and spiritual purposes. Long before Europeans arrived to the Americas, hosts of sacred plants were used in spiritual and ceremonial contexts. However, in the United States the spiritual practices of Native Americans were outlawed for many generations. In 1978, that changed with the passing of the American Indian/Alaska Native Religious Freedom Act which explicitly protects Native Americans' rights to religious practice. Today, well-established sacred patterns of plant use continue to be a part of tribal and intertribal ceremonial traditions. The University recognizes sage, tobacco, cedar, sweet grass and other herbs and plants as traditional Native American medicines and essential elements of sacred ceremony. The University is committed to providing a pathway for students and employees on campus who wish to practice ceremonial smudging.

## III. Reason/Purpose for Procedure

The University is located on the ancestral homelands of Native Americans, and the University recognizes the deep connection that many Native people have to the land. The University is committed to supporting Native American students, staff, and faculty by facilitating the continuation of their religious and spiritual traditions while they pursue and work in higher education. The University has established the Campus Smudging Procedure (Procedure) in order to provide students with specific protocols to practice ceremonial smudging on the Klamath Falls campus.

#### **IV. Applicability**

The University is a smoke free campus, this Procedure serves as a limited exception to the smoke free campus policy. It is also consistent with University's Statement on Diversity, Affirmative Action, and Equal Opportunity. Students/employees who wish to engage in a practice of burning herbs or other material other than the ones listed in this Procedure on campus may request a religious accommodation by contacting the Dean of Students for students or Human Resources for employees to engage in an interactive process.

#### **V. Definitions**

1. **Smudging** is a practice that is common to many Native American religions and spiritual practices. While smudging, a person produces smoke by burning a small amount of sacred herbs. Typically, the smoke lasts only a brief duration of time.
2. **Sacred Herbs** are herbs that are burned during Native American smudging rituals and vary according to tradition. They may include sage, sweet grass, tobacco, and cedar—as well as other herbs or plants.
3. **Facilitators** are officials who have been approved by the Director of Emergency Management from the Environmental Health and Safety Office (EHS) and who are approved to provide training to parties on appropriate means of smudging on-campus.
4. **Ceremonial Use Exemption Form** is the first step in requesting permission to smudge on campus in any areas or spaces not already approved by EHS.
5. **Initial Meeting** occurs when a requesting party meets with a Facilitator. The Initial Meeting will be scheduled to take place in a timely fashion (within two weeks, if possible) after the requesting party submits a completed Ceremonial Use Exemption Form.

#### **VI. Training**

EHS and Multicultural Life (a component of Campus Life) will work together to develop training to ensure safety during smudging practices, cultural responsiveness, and to provide an equity perspective to the oversight of the practice.

#### **VII. Campus Safety Features**

Smudging may occur in any pre-approved spaces in accordance with the safety training guidelines when the space is open for use. Parties may request to smudge in an outside area or in a space not previously approved for the practice through the steps outlined in this Procedure.