

## **University of Wisconsin-Superior Campus Smudging Policy**

**September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

### **University Diversity Statement**

Diversity and inclusion are integral to the educational mission of the University of Wisconsin-Superior. As a community we commit to recognize, include and value inherent worth and dignity of each person; foster tolerance, sensitivity, understanding, mutual respect, and justice among its members; and encourage each individual to strive to reach their own potential. The institution recognizes that these experiences are crucial for developing the requisite skills to thrive as a member of a pluralistic society and as a responsible global citizen.

In pursuit of its goal of inclusive excellence, the University actively seeks to attract students, faculty, and staff from diverse backgrounds and life experiences, including but are not limited to: race, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, socio-economic background, cognitive ability, physical ability, religion and spirituality, value system, national origin, immigration or refugee status, veteran status, and political beliefs.

The University believes that diversity among its members strengthens the institution, stimulates creativity, promotes the exchange of ideas, and enriches campus life. The University of Wisconsin-Superior views, evaluates, and treats each person in any University related activity or circumstance in which they may be involved, solely as unique individuals.

For more information about Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and/or to report bias, discrimination or harassment, please [contact the Department of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion](#).

### **Policy**

The University of Wisconsin-Superior recognizes the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978, and thus acknowledges that smudging, and the non-smoking use of ceremonial tobacco and other medicines are a necessary part of the traditional way of life, well-being, and spiritual practice for many Indigenous people. The medicines described here are permitted on campus when following the procedure outlined below. In this policy the target group, Indigenous People, includes but is not limited to registered and non-registered U.S tribal communities, First Nations peoples, Alaskan Natives, Native Hawaiians/ Pacific Islander, and members of underrepresented Indigenous populations.

Campus Safety or immediate supervisor will inform others as needed, emphasizing the cultural significance and ceremonial use of traditional medicines. Should issues or concerns arise, the First Nations Center will provide appropriate education and training pertaining to smudging practices, policies, and respectful ceremonial considerations.

### **Rationale**

The University of Wisconsin-Superior respectfully acknowledges we are located on Ojibwe land, whose history, language, and culture continues to influence our vibrant community.

The University of Wisconsin-Superior supports and acknowledges Indigenous heritage and history, especially the Anishinaabe People of the Lake Superior region, and is currently working toward indigenizing many of its practices. UWS recognizes and appreciates that Indigenous students, staff, faculty, and community engage in a variety of traditional ceremonies and practices such as smudging. These practices are time-honored Indigenous traditions, passed on from generation to generation. UWS recognizes and welcomes these practices on our campus.

### **Residential Hall Procedure**

1. Complete Ceremonial Use Exemption form and return to the Coordinator of the First Nations Center.
2. If Ceremonial Use Exemption form is approved, meet with the Coordinator of the First Nations Center and the Director of Residential Life to complete a Smudging Notification Plan and receive an “in use” sign.
3. **Prior to any smudging** in the residential halls, students must notify and receive confirmation from a Resident Assistant (RA), Hall Manager (HM), or Assistant Hall Manager (AHM). Notification **MUST** be done in person with an RA, HM, or AHM that is currently in the building.
4. “In use” sign must be placed outside of room in a visible location while smudging.
5. RA, HM, or AHM will then notify Campus Safety.

Note: When smudging at any other approved location on campus, students and guests must notify Campus Safety. Please see Approved Location section.

### **Commuter Student Procedure**

- Complete Ceremonial Use Exemption form and return to First Nations Center Coordinator.
- Prior to smudging, notify Campus Safety.
- Only smudge in approved campus locations.

### **Guest Procedure**

- Complete Ceremonial Use Exemption form and return to First Nations Center Coordinator each time that you want to smudge on campus.
- Prior to smudging, notify Campus Safety.
- Only smudge in approved campus locations.

### **Staff and Faculty Procedure**

- Complete Ceremonial Use Exemption form and return to First Nations Center Coordinator.
- Prior to smudging, notify Campus Safety
- Only smudge in approved campus locations.

### **Approved Campus Locations**

- All Residential Halls.
- All other campus buildings except Yellowjacket Union (YU) and Swenson Hall.
  - The YU and Swenson Hall have fire systems that rely on the use of lasers to detect smoke and heat. The smoke from smudging will disrupt the laser system and set off the fire alarms.
- All outdoor campus spaces must be at least 25 feet from buildings.
- Prior to smudging at any other approved location on campus, students, staff and guests must notify Campus Safety.

### Respectful Ceremonial Considerations

- Residential Life and Campus Safety staff should respectfully refrain from interrupting Indigenous students, staff, faculty, and guests who are observing traditional ceremonies and practices.
- If Residential Life and Campus Safety are unsure about the appropriate use of sacred/ceremonial items, staff members should document the incident in detail, taking care to respect these items by not touching, handling, or confiscating them. Incident in question should then be referred to the First Nations Center Coordinator for resolution.

### Other Considerations

- Switching residential halls, rooms, or roommates requires an updated Ceremonial Use Exemption form.

### Definitions/Medicines and Tools

**Smudging** - Smudging is a purification ceremony where any one or a combination of sacred medicines (some of which are listed below) are lit with a match or lighter. When lit, the burning medicines will produce smoke and a distinct scent is given off. The smoke is drawn over the individual(s) or area to release negative energy, create a positive mindset, and to ground or connect the individual to their teachings and culture. Smudging is always performed voluntarily and may be done in the context of ceremony or for teaching purposes. The smoke and scent produced during a smudge is minimal and often dissipates quickly.

**Tobacco** - Tobacco is used as an offering or a gift. It is used to pray as well as to give thanks to the plants and animals after taking their lives by hunting or picking them. Tobacco is often used in smudging or is placed in a fire, on the ground, or in water. Tobacco can be used on its own for other ceremonies. It is also smoked ceremonially, but that is less common in higher education settings. Traditional tobacco has two different forms in this region; from leaves, such as pipe and cigarette tobacco, and from the bark of red willow trees.



*Natural Pipe Tobacco*



*Tobacco is sometimes put into fabric bundles to use for praying*



*Tobacco leaves as they are drying*



*Red Willow plant*



*Dried Red Willow bark*

**Sage** - Sage is used to cleanse negative energy from people and spaces. It is one of the stronger of the four main medicines that are used in smudging and gives off a very distinct odor when it is burned. Sage is often the main part of the act of smudging but is also used in many ceremonies other than smudging.



*White Sage Plant*



*Dried White Sage Leaves*



*Desert Sage Plant*



*Dried Desert Sage Leaves*

**Sweetgrass** - Sweetgrass is said to be the hair of mother earth and when it is burned it gives off a very sweet smell. Like sage, sweetgrass is also used for cleansing negative energy but because of its sweet smell it also has a calming effect like lavender when it is burned.



*Sweet Grass before it is picked*



*Sweetgrass that is cut and braided*

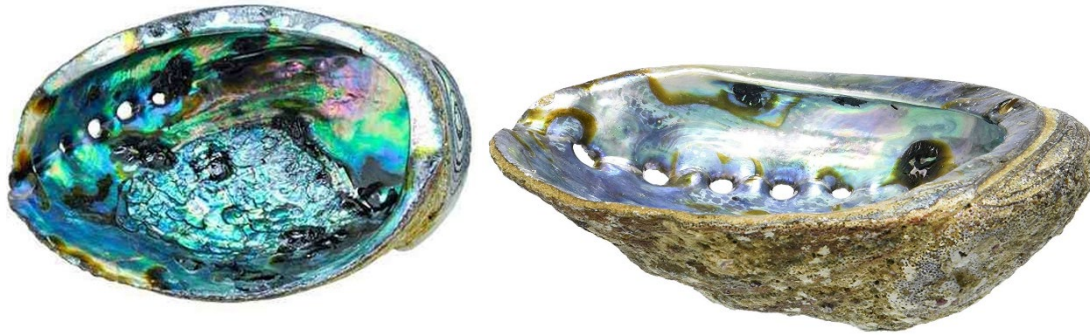
**Cedar** - Cedar is also used for cleansing and purification but it also has many other medicinal uses. Most commonly, if not used for smudging, cedar is often boiled into a tea or put into a bath to help with sickness and to cleanse the body as well. Cedar is also often hung above doorways for protection.



*Northern White Cedar bough*

*Northern White Cedar tree*

**Abalone Shells** - Abalone shells are a thick seashell that usually has a shimmery, iridescent inner surface. Abalone are found worldwide. These shells are sacred to many Indigenous peoples and are used as a vessel for burning traditional medicines.



*Both abalone shells pictured are Paua Green abalone shells*

#### **Other Possible Smudging Medicines**

**Bear Root** - This plant is also commonly known as osha and chuchupate. The tuber-like root is often either used to smudge or made into a tea to help with lung and stomach problems as well as colds, flu, and fevers. This medicine has a very strong odor, much like a spicy celery smell.



*The dried root of the Osha plant*



*The Osha Plant*

**Piñon** - The needles might be burnt in place of cedar. The smoke of piñon smells like a campfire or burning pine.



*Pinon Pine nuts*



*Pinon Pine needles and cones*

**Palo Santo** - Also burned like the other medicines, it is commonly used by Indigenous people from southern Mexico. When burning, it gives off a fresh almost minty, citrus aroma.



*Dried Palo Santo Wood*



*Palo Santo Tree*

**Copal** – A natural tree resin that is also burned for smudging, that has been used by Indigenous Mexican and Mayan peoples for generations to cleanse and purify. It has a sharp, citrus-like scent when burned. It is said to be the blood of the trees and is very sacred. Copal tree may refer to several tree species such as, *Protium copal*, *Hymenaea courbaril*, and *Hymenaea verrucosa*.



*Dried copal tree resin*



*Protium copal tree*



*Copal tree resin before it is dried*

## **Yerba Santa**

Yerba Santa was extensively used as a traditional medicine by many California Indigenous tribes. It is said that the leaves were smoked or chewed to relieve asthma, coughs, colds, headaches, and stomach aches. Yerba Santa has a unique scent and is one of the few plants that smells “mediciney.”

