



UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-Green Bay
UW-Green Bay Policy on Ceremonial Burning

GB-50-21-4

Approved by: Chancellor's Cabinet

Date: 3/15/2022

Michael Alexander, Chancellor

Amended as to Form 9-1-2022

University Diversity Statement

Diversity and inclusion are integral to the educational mission of the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay. UW-Green Bay's commitment to Diversity and Inclusivity is set forth in the [Civility and Inclusivity Statement](#) which sets forth the guiding principles for all programs, organizations and individuals affiliated with the University.

Policy

The University of Wisconsin-Green Bay recognizes the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978, and thus acknowledges that smudging and the non-recreational use of ceremonial tobacco and other medicines are part of the traditions, celebrations, well-being, and spiritual practice for many Indigenous people. The use of spiritual medicines is permitted on campus when following the procedure outlined below. For application of this policy, Indigenous Peoples, include but are 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.

In the application of this policy, University Police will inform operational areas and other community members as needed, emphasizing the cultural significance and ceremonial use of traditional medicines. Should issues or concerns arise, the [Division of University Inclusivity & Student Affairs](#) will provide appropriate education and training pertaining to smudging practices, policies, and respectful ceremonial considerations.

Acknowledgment

We at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay acknowledge the First Nations people who are the original inhabitants of the region. The Ho-Chunk Nation and the Menominee Nation are the original First People of Wisconsin and both Nations have ancient historical and spiritual connections to the land that our institution now resides upon.



Today, Wisconsin is home to 12 First Nations communities including the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin, Forest County Potawatomi, Ojibwe Nation communities, Stockbridge-Munsee Community Band of Mohican Indians, and the Brothertown Indian Nation.

We acknowledge the First Nations Peoples of Wisconsin.

Definitions

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 are minimal and often dissipate 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.

Respectful Ceremonial Considerations

Residential Life, Facilities and University Police will respectfully refrain from interrupting Indigenous students, staff, faculty, and guests who are observing traditional ceremonies and practices.

If any staff 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.

Procedures:

Residential Hall

: The Practitioner shall submit a request for exemption by submitting the request for Exemption to Burn Materials. A list of confirmed practitioners will be provided to the Office Housing and Residential Education Staff through the Office of Inclusivity and Student Affairs. Practitioners shall submit notice via email in advance of the burning to housing@uwgb.edu 24 hours prior to the burning. *If burning occurs with less than 24 hours notice, a telephone call should be made to (920) 465-2040 in advance of the practice.*



Academic Buildings:

- Complete the Requesting Exemption to Burn Materials Form (Appendix A) and return it to the Director of the Center for First Nations Education. Upon initial granting of an exemption by a person at a location is granted, additional ceremonial burning practices will only require advance notice to University Police
- Prior to smudging, notify University Police via email police@uwgb.edu. *If buring occurs with less than 24 hours notice, a telephone call should be made to (920) 465-2300 (#2300) as well as an email as soon as possible prior to the practice .*
- Only smudge in approved campus locations.

Exterior Locations:

- Students, Staff and Community members who wish to engage in ceremonial burning or smudging in exterior locations must follow the process as required with the [Fire Safety Policy](#). Temporary Permits unless otherwise excluded by the Fire Safety Policy.

Regardless of the location of the ceremonial burning, practioners are asked to submit the Exemption for Burning Materials not less than one week prior to the engagement of the practice to ensure adequate time for assessment of the request.



REQUESTING EXEMPTION TO BURN MATERIALS

Requestor Information

Name	Location of Burning:
Email:	Cell Phone #:
Type of Fire: Candle Incense Sage Cedar Sweetgrass Other:	

I certify that my request to burn materials inside a UW-Green Bay Building is required by or consistent with my bona fide, sincerely held religious beliefs. By signing below, I acknowledge and agree that I have read and understand this Agreement and agree to abide by its terms.

Signature _____ Date _____ **STAFF**

USE

Director of the Center for First Nations Education has received the ceremonial burning is appropriate under this policy	Y/N Notes:
"Practitioner is aware of the risks associate with the practice and the safety requirements and how to respond in the event of a fire."	Y/N Notes:
Are there smoke detectors in the immediate area that could be activated?	Y/N Notes:
Notes:	

Received by the Director of the Center for First Nations Education

Signature _____ Date _____

Received by the Division of University Inclusivity and Student Affairs

Signature _____ Date _____

Prior to engagement in the Burning the Practioner shall provide notice via email to the appropriate office;

Residence Life: housing@uwgb.edu *If less than 24 hours, send email and call (920) 465-2040*

Academic Building: police@uwgb.edu *If less than 24 hours, send email and call (920) 465-2300*