

Personal and Institutional Reflections on Indigenizing the Academy

Breakout Group 7 (Senior Administrators 2)

A need to work more closely with all levels

- With good and bad past history institutions have some 'trust building' to do with First Nations communities.

How to indigenize?

- Need a **definition**
- Need to start with **Aboriginal advisors**
- Have a **Learning Place for First Nations**
- First Nations Programming included in the **strategic plan**
- Even if the senior leadership is responsive to indigenization the various departments within institutions i.e.: library, student **services wonder what their role** or place is in the process.
- **There isn't a sense of resistance**, just one of **confusion**; they need a broader sense of what indigenizing means.
- but the systemic barriers need to be acknowledged before they can be changed.
- **Strategic plans**, education plans and the Board need to be on board to provide consistent, open, direct commitment to the Aboriginal common
- **Middle management** struggles if these **senior management leadership elements** are not in place.
- Campus's need to have resident Elders with First Nations involvement and consultation in all activities.
- A tangible description of what Indigenizing means is required so people know what they are expected to change.
- and **funding for gathering places and other programming was a good start**
- Universities (management levels included) should be attending the World and National Indigenous Peoples conference and joining the World Indigenous Accreditation body.
- Institutions need to **recognize what traditional territory they are on** and also understand about the **issues of those that attended residential school** and the **residual effects that residential school stills has on communities**.
- Be careful indigenizing doesn't become institutional culturizing
- Indigenizing isn't about stealing or taking culture but about **having a better understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal people**.

Public Policy

- Having **NVIT** here with us is a great opportunity to share knowledge talk about how to utilize cultural awareness and sensitivity and how to move forward. The government was trying to help

bridge the gap for First Nations students and the Aboriginal Framework and **funding for gathering places and other programming was a good start**

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Strategic Plans, Education Plans

- Strategic plans, education plans and the Board need to be on board to provide consistent, open, direct commitment to the Aboriginal common
- **the Aboriginal Framework**

Hiring and Retention

Issues with turnover and stability

- Hiring and retention of First Nation faculty is also a problem, there can be the perception that because a **First Nations person does not speak loudly during the interviews** that they are not **strong people**.
- Hiring committees also need to be **aware of the culture and protocols** of not only students, but faculty and staff

Student Recruitment and Retention:

- Communities where there are no bands makes the community liaison job difficult. The students do not self-identify as First Nations.

Change

- How do we incorporate Elders/Dancers in the classroom? Some faculty are threatened by change and need the confidence around incorporating culture into the classroom
- Health **programming**: working toward **changing the thinking** from Physician centered to client centred
- Changes have begun in the way of Elders being invited to open ceremonies and community deliveries. Some Advisory committees include Elders from the community but there needs to be a conversation about the difference between First Nations ways of knowing versus the western way.

Funding

Various Departments and Indigenization:

- Programs such as Early Childhood Education need to be grass roots programs, **inclusive of the whole community in the classrooms** This builds confidence and self-esteem in children.

Programming:

- NEC over 45 years has always had **Aboriginal protocols and practices** within their programming
- They have **Welcoming ceremonies** and **cultural graduations**
- College is governed by an **Aboriginal board**
- **Some institutions have Transfer agreements with Aboriginal organizations such as NEC and NVIT**
- Communities ~~such as Coquitlam~~ where there are no bands makes the community liaison job difficult. The students do not self-identify as First Nations. There is an advisory committee to build a better approach to the First Nation program and approaches but the systemic barriers need to be acknowledged before they can be changed.
- Campus's need to have resident Elders with First Nations involvement and consultation in all activities.
- Most programming offerings still cover at the European aspect instead of Indigenous material.

Adaptation

- Students transferring from Aboriginal organization into the larger institution: it is a shock when no characterization of indigeneity exists.
- . This conference is important for those institutions that are here and are in the first stages of thinking about incorporating culture to listen and learn.
- First Nations students may not have a choice other than the Public Post-Secondary if they don't want to leave home.
- Institutions want to make them feel comfortable with no fear or intimidation.

More representation needed at all levels:

- Some faculty are threatened by change and need the confidence around incorporating culture into the classroom
- Campus's need to have resident Elders with First Nations involvement and consultation in all activities.

Issues with turnover and stability

Wish to improve structure and consciousness at all levels

Overwhelmed – Huge job –“

Ignorance among non aboriginals

- Some faculty are threatened by change and need the confidence around incorporating culture into the classroom

- With good and bad past history institutions have some ‘trust building’ to do with First Nations communities.

I am a bridge between two cultures. It is a very uncomfortable place to be

Culture

Culture and Tradition

- Some Advisory committees include **Elders** from the community but there needs to be a conversation about the difference between First Nations ways of knowing versus the western way. **Culture and tradition needs to be ‘a way of being’ rather than an event**
- Most programming offerings still cover at the European aspect instead of Indigenous material.
- how to utilize cultural awareness and sensitivity and how to move forward?

Cross-Cultural training

Educate

politically correct

afraid to offend

so **don’t say anything –remain silent**

the white person’s guilt

Cross cultural training available and resources:

Increasing visibility in the institution; making indigenization a priority

- **Students transferring from Aboriginal organization** into the larger institution it is a shock when no characterization of indigeneity exists
- Some BC institutions embrace the **indigenous effort** and want the **programming** to be a success
- . Installing a ‘little’ culture is not enough the change has to be from all levels of society.
- With good and bad past history institutions have some ‘trust building’ to do with First Nations communities.
- Health **programming**: working toward **changing the thinking** from Physician centered to client centred
- Campus’s need to have resident Elders with First Nations involvement and consultation in all activities.
- Be careful indigenizing doesn’t become **institutional culturizing**

Have higher admin engage as much as possible with the students

comfort zone

a vulnerable place

the generosity of the culture

the experience was transformational.

Community Consultation and Engagement

- Institutes need to learn how to embed values on community engagement.
- Programs such as Early Childhood Education need to be grass roots programs, **inclusive of the whole community in the classrooms**

Barriers, Systemic Barriers

- With good and bad past history institutions have some 'trust building' to do with First Nations communities.
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Elders:

- Changes have begun in the way of Elders being invited to open ceremonies and community deliveries.
- Some Advisory committees include Elders from the community but there needs to be a conversation about the difference between **First Nations ways of knowing versus the western way.**
- Campus's need to have resident Elders with First Nations involvement and consultation in all activities.
- Elders are **the Indigenous scholars** of our people and are needed to be listened to when asked about **sharing Indigenous Knowledge.**
- Institutions need to acknowledge they don't 'own' this knowledge and First Nations can be reluctant to share IK for fear the Universities will take it over.

Ownership of Indigenous Knowledge

- Institutions need to acknowledge they don't 'own' this knowledge and First Nations can be reluctant to share IK for fear the Universities will take it over.

Traditional Knowledge must always be protected by the community

- Some First Nations are reluctant to share their **culture and protocols** for fear **that the institution will take 'ownership'.**
- Elders are the Indigenous scholars of our people and are needed to be listened to when asked about sharing Indigenous Knowledge. Institutions need to acknowledge they don't 'own' this knowledge and **First Nations can be reluctant to share IK for fear the Universities will take it over.**

Decolonization

Trust Building

- Some First Nations are reluctant to share their **culture and protocols** for fear **that the institution will take 'ownership'**.
- With good and bad past history institutions have some 'trust building' to do with First Nations communities.
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Safety and security

- When **students transfer from the Aboriginal organization** into the larger institution it is a shock for them when there is **no characterization of indigeneity**
- First Nations students may not have a choice other than the Public Post-Secondary if they don't want to leave home. **Institutions want to make them feel comfortable with no fear or intimidation.**
- **Indigenization means it's comfortable**

Building Alliances: Networking

Diverse Perspectives

Diverse Perspectives

Share

Difficult topics

- With good and bad past history institutions have some 'trust building' to do with First Nations communities.

Courageous questions

Aboriginal Perspectives

- Campus's need to have resident Elders **with First Nations involvement and consultation** in all activities.
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