

# **INDIGENIZING THE ACADEMY GATHERING**

## **August 26<sup>th</sup>–28<sup>th</sup>, 2012**

### **DAY 1:**

#### **Opening Ceremony with Elders**

### **DAY 2:**

#### **Guest Speaker: Dr. Jo-Ann Episkenew, University of Saskatchewan:**

#### **Gatekeepers as a disconnect and obstacle to indigenization**

- Gatekeepers that are a part of the reason for a disconnection between Indigenous people and the Institution.  
*I.e. -Non-Indigenous people/teachers who think they know all things Indigenous.  
-One Indigenous person making all the decisions that applies to all indigenous students.*

#### **Racism**

- You don't make someone stop being racist by calling them a racist.
- What do we do? We need to go back. We are repairing 500 years of damage. We need to acknowledge what's actually happened and fix it accordingly.

#### **Four R's of Education**

- Education is the practice of freedom.
- The Four R's of what we want from education:  
*Respect, Reciprocity, Relevance, Responsibility*

#### **Elders and Institutionalization**

- We have made the title 'Elder' with a capital 'E'. Yes, in the community we know who our elders are but that is not their title. Was this deemed appropriate by the institution?

#### **Group Breakout Session:**

##### **Finding a voice**

- Having a conversation that needs to be had and is usually cast to the side.
- Bridging the gaps between institutions. Making connections networking with each other, learning from each other.

##### **Spirituality**

- We need to bring the love tradition and spirituality back into the academy, to make it a safe place for everyone.

##### **Conforming**

##### **Assimilating**

##### **Colonizing**

##### **Decolonizing**

- Don't just assume that what we're doing is the right thing. When 'Indigenizing the Academy' we must question what we're doing, don't fall into our own form of assimilation.

- We must be sure we aren't slowly turning to the same methods of the European/Eurocentric mentality and ways. Not to conform.
- Rock the boat... If we're not rocking it then we're assimilating.
- More than just bringing our culture into the academy.
- If it's not uncomfortable then it's not right.
- We must de-colonize first.
- "I think the response to racism is called 'Indigenizing the Academy'"
- Indigenous people have every right to be angry.
- Indian act displaces us, our women.
- Matriarchal? The society here has been displaced and dishonoured.
- 

### **Definition of Indigenization**

- Who determines the definition of Indigenization?
- What is education without love?
- Indigenizing yourself is familiarizing yourself with your locale.

### **Community – Learning and Sharing Knowledge**

- Learn from your community, learn with your community and then take that knowledge and those teachings and share them with other communities and people both First Nations and Non-First Nations.
- How to learn how to forget everything you know to relearn the truth.
- When we come together like we have at this gathering we share the spirit.
- What is knowledge without sharing it?
- Sharing what you have, sharing what you know.
- Knowledge comes from everywhere
- We are family
- It only takes one person to make a difference in our lives; it only takes one (us) to make a difference other people's lives.
- We don't know how we touch people. We are audio and visual people so we may have some small idea on the outside but we don't know how we touch people's hearts.
- Be careful what you say, what you do. You may be hurting somebody
- LOVE.
- 

### **Younger generation having a foot in both cultures/Responsibility of Youth**

- Young people nowadays have double the responsibility. They have to learn culture and they have to pay bills. Young native people nowadays have double the responsibility as well as having to wear two hats. Young native people have to wear one hat to live with their community and one hat to survive outside of it.
- "Pick your head up. Pick your head up and be proud of who you are. Pick your head up but don't pick your head up so high that your nose is in the air." – Steven Point
- What you do in this generation will affect the next seven generations.

- You need to go through the trials and tribulations to make it to the other side stronger and more knowledgeable.
- Never forget self-care.

### **Speakers Session:**

#### **Definitions of Indigenization**

- Indian, First Nations, Aboriginal, Indigenous.... All the names that non-First Nations peoples have labeled us over the years.
- What does 'Indigenous' mean?
- What does 'Indigenizing the Academy' mean? We need to come together and find a common definition before we can move forward.

#### **Humility as a Highly Valued Quality/Weakness**

- As a leader, a great personal quality to have in our culture is to be humble and to have humility. However, in the history books it reads that humbleness and humility is seen as a sign of weakness in the Eurocentric mentality/culture.

#### **Learning First Nations culture and History**

- You need to learn, know and understand First Nations people and/or your own culture and history so you can properly teach others.
- It starts within the faculty.
- Everyone is a genius but if you ask a fish to climb a tree it's an idiot. Everyone has a gift; you just need to find it.
- You can't fit a circle into a box.
- Some of the only people who are taught the truth about our history, the dark parts of our past are Social Workers.
- Reflect on what brought harmony to this land in the past.
- Frank Calder – the first aboriginal person to graduate law school.

#### **Elders**

- We need to open the door to our elders and actually listen.
- Universities/Colleges really need to think about what their role is as an institution, what kind of society are they shaping, what is their contribution to the fate of our future.

#### **Preparing for the Future: You've got to do the Hard Work**

- Story: Coyote is in the forest and loses his needle. Owl comes and asks coyote 'what's wrong'? Coyote tells Owl 'I'm looking for my needle.' Owl says to Coyote 'I'll help you find your needle' and then soars up into the sky and circles the area looking for the needle. He comes back down and tells Coyote 'I didn't find it, so it must not be here because if it were I would have seen it.' Coyote was sad and tells Owl 'I really need my needle...' Owl sees the stress in Coyote's face and asks him 'where did you lose the needle?' Coyote points to a completely different area and says 'I lost it over there behind the bushes.' Owl, looking perplexed asks Coyote 'If you lost it way over there, why are you looking here?' Coyote responds

‘because there’s light over here.’ The point of this story is that we must not do something because it’s easier or not-not do something because it’s harder.

- It took us a long time to get to where we are and it’s going to take along time to get better but it is possible. Hard work, but worth it.
- They don’t teach scientists how to feel, they teach them how not to.
- What do we need to prepare ourselves for the future?
- How to beat the ‘white man’? Get an education. Beat them at their own game.
- If it’s too easy then we’re a part of the problem. If it’s not easy then we may be on our way.
- Change is never easy.

### **DAY 3:**

#### **Guest Speaker: Dr. Lynne Davis, Trent University:**

- 1972 Peace & Friendship treaty
- Marie Baptiste – Cognitive Imperialism
- Ocher 34 Paint colour of the sun.
- Traditional Aboriginal scholar i.e. Edna Manitoba
- Dual scholar: Dan Longboat
- Leanne Simpson - *Research*
- AEC - *Research*
- PhD program in Indigenous studies at Trent University. (Approximately 12 years)
- Alliance as a microcosm of colonization
- Leeroy Little Bear talks about what happens when the worlds views collide
- Place name tours
- The Redman’s burden
- Alliance as a site of pain
- Alliance as a site of sharing and learning
- Trent ethics
- Alliances book
- Zen Master story
- A space of not knowing
- Sam Cook - *Research*

#### **Group Breakout Session:**

- The challenge in listening
- Ensuring indigenous voices within the institutional structure
- Creating our own First Nations institution
- Rock the boat... If we’re not rocking it then we’re assimilating.
- Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT)

- Create a larger network between institutions  
*I.e. Collectives*

### **Speakers Session:**

- Whatever is said on the floor is meant to be said, they are the words of the creator.
- Not to do it because it's your job, do it because you want to.
- Otis Jasper – Chief.
- Come from the heart
- If that relationship is going to be everlasting then we must realize and be willing to put time and work into building it continuously.
- Don't rush. Don't hurry. Be patient. Be here.
- How you reach out may be far more important than what you reach out with.
- Listen more and speak less. This way you gain more knowledge that you can ultimately use when you do decide to speak, so you aren't just speaking for the sake of speaking but instead you are speaking with purpose.

### **Guest Speaker: Eber Hampton – First Nations University:**

- Mother Earth, she is not ours we are hers.
- Every time an Indian breathes its politics.
- Value of the heartbeat.
- You're speaking for everyone that went before you and pave a path for those after you.
- Be a human, just a human for a bit.
- Every breath you breathe in is the universe's gift to you and every breath you breathe out is your gift to the universe.
- You've got to have the positive and the negative... or your car won't start... but careful not to spark it too much or it will catch on fire.
- Resistance is a form of integrity
- Be humble, set your ego aside, you don't know everything.
- Willful blindness (book) ties into another statement, Perverse Ignorance.
- Racism works if we don't know about it.
- We are perfectly imperfect
- This is a life and death situation that we face, that we have come here to talk about at this gathering.
- It is not the 'me' way, it is the 'we' way.
- Western Imperialism
- If I look like an idiot, I hope it's useful to somebody.
- For Whites Only – Book
- We learn about a system, we learn by a system that is based on mind, body and emotion... how do we bring back the teachings of spirit into popular culture that has no room for it.
- Our mouths are too small to talk about GOD.

- I only know the truth as I know it.
- Addictive Organization – Book
- Inviting and accompanying each other to accomplish something as siblings.
- Making family for mutual benefit
- Buffy Saint Marie son ‘God is alive, Magic is afoot’.
- Indian wisdom for white people – Book
- Indigenous people of the world stand up!... Everybody stands up.
- When you’re learning take what is useful to you and set the rest aside.
- Realities are especially diverse.
- Eurocentric way of thinking ‘Either, Or’, the Native way of thinking ‘Both, And’; are either of these right? What about ‘All this and more’.
- The conscious thoughts and words are only a tiny part of our existence.
- Where are we in the professional development of our tenure track to keep this learning going from an Indigenous perspective without losing what we’ve learned so far, so we don’t have to keep starting the process over?
- How do we become inclusive of the primary, secondary institutions into this discussion.
- People really want to carry on what they’ve learned at these conferences but people can get caught up in life... Could we meet like this on a regular basis? As many of us as possible to create and carry on an event like this so we can keep this process going

### **Next Steps Recommendations from the Canadian Federation of Students, National Aboriginal Caucus:**

- **Put Keynotes on the web to create some structure to use as a way to gather more information on the web from others who read it.**
- *CADD - Research*
- Make Indigenizing the Academy meetings a regular event
- All institutions to put out a paper on anthologies on best practices.
- Document and track the professional development of our tenure track to keep this learning going from an Indigenous perspective without losing what we’ve learned so far, so we don’t have to keep starting the process over?
- The Indigenous Scholars Networks.
- **Power points and video of the keynotes.**
- **Create an email network forum online for those interested in indigenizing the Academy.**
- Send out Surveys that every few months to each institution to see if we’re growing from this.
- **Inform graduate students of these findings. These are Ideal master thesis projects. We should inform students out there and work with them to do the necessary research that is needed to move forward.**
- **Involve the youth! Inform them that these support systems are here.**

- Create a committee that commits to supporting the organizations of National Graduates of Indigenous studies.
- Every institution of Canada should integrate into their tenure/promotion process the crediting of Indigenous studies, traditions, ceremonies and/or knowledge.
- **Draft a collective briefing note that lays out some of the recommendations back to the institutions and have a follow up. \*Attach this responsibility to the executive decision makers.**
- **Keep re-telling the stories of what took place here.**
- Send post-secondary professors and students into the elementary schools.
- Have another conference and include more children and their voices.
- We must look to ourselves because we are the ones training and teaching the indigenous and non-indigenous students.
- IT IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY!