

Governance, Partnerships, and Building Alliances

- How do aboriginal groups work with post-secondary institutions?
- How do Indigenous and non-indigenous faculty build alliances to support indigenization?

A need to work more closely

Band funding an issue

- **Academy not always neutral: funding -- goes to community or institution?**

More representation needed at all levels:

- Elders on institutional board;
- Aboriginals working at administrative level
- More aboriginal faculty
- Aboriginal representation on advisory
- Research ethics committee
- Institutional strategic plan includes recruitment and retention of aboriginal faculty, staff and students
- Aboriginal representation must mean that it is a meaningful relationship and not just surface recognition
- There are aboriginal people with credentials that are looking for jobs, so don't let your institution say there isn't anyone suitable out there.

Issues with turnover and stability

Wish to improve structure and consciousness at all levels

- Many of our institutions are led by white males. It is difficult for them to understand the female perspective let alone **the aboriginal perspective.**

Overwhelmed – Huge job –“It feels as though we are just starting”

The alliances and the networking from this conference have re-fueled me.

To speak with colleagues at a conference like this it feeds me. It will carry me through the next few semesters.

Ignorance among non-aboriginals

- Different nations have different protocols;
- Not realistic to lump all nations into one way of doing things
- Non-aboriginal people don't necessarily need to know about the culture but we both need to know how to work across differences
- As a non-aboriginal person working as a coordinator of aboriginal services, colleagues look to me as an expert. It is very difficult to get them to understand that I am not an expert; **I am a bridge between two cultures. It is a very uncomfortable place to be**

- 1) **Cross-Cultural training** needed
- 2) Our responsibility to **educate**
- 3) "We didn't know" is unacceptable
- 4) People want to be **politically correct**
- 5) People **afraid to offend** and so **don't say anything –remain silent**
- 6) I believe sometimes the lack of knowledge is wilful ignorance
- 7) People are afraid to admit they may be part of the problem: "I am a smart, good person. I don't want to go to a place that will show me that I am part of the problem."
- 8) As an aboriginal person I don't want to have to deal with **the white person's guilt**. Take a risk and don't count on others to take care of you.

Cross cultural training available and resources:

- We have a large indigenous library as a resource
- Move forward thorough staff and faculty development
- 2.5 hour workshop for staff called something like Aboriginal 101
Teaches about smudging, 6 nations
 - Anonymous questions asked of Elder (fear of offending, politically correct)
 - Hard to attract faculty
 - Mandatory sessions at new faculty orientation about aboriginal culture
 - Faculty need safe, non-judgemental atmosphere

Increasing visibility in the institution; making indigenization a priority

- Indigenizing competes for time attention and funding with other large issues eg internationalization
- Need to get through to people in administration
- Persistence
- Go to meetings
- Talk about it at every opportunity
- Faculty --Take courses to the First Nations community –powerful for both the students (community) and the instructor

- **Have higher admin engage as much as possible with the students**

Example: We had many admin participate in a 10 day tribal journey that really took them out of their **comfort zone** to a **vulnerable place**. They got to experience **the generosity of the culture**. These aren't things you can experience from your office. These are the administrators that we now **see attending events** and **taking risks**. Many said the **experience was transformational**.

Key Words

comfort zone

a vulnerable place

the generosity of the culture

the experience was transformational.

Community Consultation

- Faculty --Take courses to the First Nations community –powerful for both the students (community) and the instructor
- Although the institution may host a language course and perhaps even develop the curriculum we need to remember that the course itself belongs to the community.
- We have been able to co teach courses with an PhD and community person Funds for this are provided through the institution

Elders:

- Open door policy for elders
- Elders on institutional board
- Advisor council of elders
- Elders are like PhDs and should be acknowledged for this through pay equity
- What is an Elder? It is related not to age but to wisdom and respect from the community.
- Academy can neutralize tension between Elders who are traditional and modern traditional **and IRA system perspective**

Traditional Knowledge must always be protected by the community

- Protection of the knowledge must be guarded through policies and procedures if it is to be part of the institution

Research ethics

- Must be policy around how to conduct research about indigenous people and ways

- Must include how you give back to the community
- These policies exist within our faculty but not institution wide
- Have recently started a research ethics committee – need to ensure that there is aboriginal representation

Decolonization

- Starts in the classroom
- Don't set the classroom up in rows
- If people are having trouble with daycare invite them to bring their children
- Red pen for marking is a negative memory trigger

Safety and security

- Don't set up the classroom in rows
- Don't use red pen for marking

Building Alliances: Networking

- We must build as many **alliances** and possible with people at all levels of the institution and within the communities: we need the **perspectives**.
- We had set up an ongoing group called “**courageous questions**” where a group of us got together and discussed **difficult topics**.

Diverse Perspectives, Difficult Topics

- We need the diverse perspectives. **Share** and ask questions. We must be **open and reciprocal**
- We had set up an ongoing group called “**courageous questions**” where a group of us got together and discussed **difficult topics**.

Aboriginal Perspective