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## Indigenous Initiatives Strategy

### Report of the Pedagogy and Curriculum Working Group

Endorsed by the President's Advisory Committee on Indigenous Initiatives | January 12, 2021

#### Background: The University of Guelph's Indigenous Initiatives Strategy

Over the past two decades, the engagement of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples, communities, cultures and ways of knowing has grown across campus, creating a need for a more coordinated approach to develop, support and evaluate Indigenous initiatives at the University of Guelph. Responding to this need, the President's Advisory Committee on Indigenous Initiatives (PACII) directed the University to form an Indigenous Initiatives Strategic Task Force tasked with developing an Indigenous Initiatives Strategy made up of a series of recommendations to guide the advancement of indigenization and reconciliation efforts at the University of Guelph (see [indigenous.uoguelph.ca](http://indigenous.uoguelph.ca)). At the heart of the challenge presented by the PACII was the recognition that the responsibility for indigenization and reconciliation at the University of Guelph resides with the whole campus community rather than with First Nations, Inuit and Métis students, staff, faculty and community partners.

The structure for the Task Force was established following a review of educational documents from First Nations, Inuit and Métis organizations and governments, including the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996) and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action (2015), and subsequently revised through engagement of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Knowledge Holders, local community members, students, staff and faculty. The result was the establishment of five Working Groups focused on the themes of *governance*, *Indigenous student support*, *pedagogy and curriculum*, *research and scholarship*, and *campus environment and cultural safety*, supported by an Advisory Circle composed of Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Holders who are engaged at the community level. Each Working Group established their own terms of reference, meeting schedule and membership, which included students, staff, faculty and local community members (Appendix 1). When local representation was not available, Working Groups reach out to provincial and national organizations for information and support.

To facilitate their work, the Working Groups were supported by Graduate Research Assistants, who: examined past and current initiatives at the University of Guelph; compiled peer-reviewed scholarship on the subject of decolonization in the academy; and conducted environmental scans of policies and practices at other post-secondary institutions, organizations, and municipal or provincial governments across Ontario, Canada and internationally. When

additional information was needed, direct contact was made by email or phone with subject matter specialists, individuals engaged directly with the initiatives, and members of the Advisory Circle. The goal of these reviews was to help the Working Groups discover exemplary practices that could inform recommendations for the University of Guelph.

With this background material in hand, the Working Groups discussed and debated options for moving forward with indigenization and reconciliation at the University of Guelph, be it around indigenizing convocation, refining curriculum, or improving our collective research practices with First Nations, Inuit and Métis partners. The results of these discussions, including a series of concrete recommendations, have been captured in five stand-alone reports for presentation to the PACII. **This report presents the recommendations of the Pedagogy and Curriculum Working Group.** In addition to outlining the recommendations, organized within thematic areas and categorized as ‘short-, medium- and long-term’, the reports offer context to each thematic area, including the related work that has been done to date at the University of Guelph. Before turning to this, and following this common background section, each report presents a unique introduction to their Working Group focus as conceived by the members of the Working Group and thought to be important for preparing readers for the recommendations that follow.

## Introduction: Pedagogy and Curriculum

At the outset, the Curriculum and Pedagogy Working Group set out to identify the needs, opportunities and mechanisms for braiding First Nations, Inuit and Métis knowledges and ways of knowing, being, and doing into undergraduate and graduate learning environments. This was done with reflection upon Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s call for post-secondary institutions to increase the integration of Indigenous knowledge into the classroom. The scope of our group’s mandate includes program and curriculum development, instruction and assessment, Indigenous community engagement, and experiential learning (see Appendix 1 for Terms of Reference).

While our discussions were wide ranging, our ultimate goal is founded on two premises. One, that educational institutions have an important role to play in citizenship education and capacity development. Post-secondary institutions have a responsibility to educate Canadians and those entering the workforce on reconciliation and the history of colonization, with the hope of having an impact beyond the borders of the university campus. Second, that educational institutions, their faculty and their students, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous and all of creation benefit from the success of Indigenous students and from the deeper integration of First Nations, Inuit and Métis cultures and ways of knowing into the curriculum (Widdowson 2016; Macdonald 2015; Ariss et al, 2016). Both premises stem from the understanding that the co-habitation of Western education systems and Indigenous knowledges, also known as two-eyed seeing, has the ability to open a dialogue across differences, to enhance our shared knowledge and creativity and cultivate an inclusive and respectful learning environment.

Several published frameworks and our own guiding principle helped to direct and shape our approach and our conversations as we worked to craft recommendations that best reflect the philosophies described above. We list the major ones below.

#### Our Guiding Statement

The Pedagogy and Curriculum Working Group adopted a statement which embodies the ultimate goals of the working group. Specifically, the goal of indigenization is to: Transform the existing academy by 1) intentionally valuing First Nations, Inuit and Métis faculty, staff and students, and braiding together their voices, knowledges and materials with existing scholarly and civil discourse; and 2) establishing physical and epistemic spaces that facilitate the ethical stewardship of Indigenous knowledges and practices so as to constitute an essential element of the university. Indigenization encompasses all students, faculty and staff for the health of our academic community and society at large (modified from Indigenous Advisory Circle, University of Regina, 2018).

#### Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action

This document articulates 94 calls to action to advance the process of reconciliation with First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples in Canada and to redress the legacy of Indian residential schools. It includes specific actions necessary to indigenize the public education system that should be taken. While some of these actions are directed toward K-12 curricula, all principles are applicable to post-secondary education, particularly related to teacher training, promising practices for teaching Indigenous cultures, knowledge and ways of knowing, and building capacity for intercultural understanding and mutual respect. Calls to Action directed at post-secondary institutions include creating programs in Aboriginal languages and educating teaching on how to best integrate Indigenous knowledges and pedagogies into the classroom. These will be reflected in our recommendations. Furthermore, action #7 provides a valuable long-term goal for post-secondary institutions of "eliminat[ing] educational and employment gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians" to which the working group and University of Guelph (U of G) should aspire. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission is included in our terms of reference.

#### The Spectrum of Indigenization

Following the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action, many Canadian universities and colleges have sought to indigenize their institutions. What indigenization has looked like, however, has varied significantly. The Pedagogy and Curriculum Working Group reflected upon the spectrum of indigenization as presented by Gaudry and Lorenz (2018), to understand the role of universities in decolonization, identify our responsibilities as an academic institution and adopt a position along the spectrum that best represents that responsibility (Appendix 2). The spectrum consists of three positions, ranging in degree of transformative institutional change: Indigenous Inclusion Policy – which strives to enable Indigenous students, faculty and staff to adapt or find a place within the conventions of the existing academy, without making any structural changes; Reconciliation Indigenization –

which aims to alter the university's structure and educate faculty, staff and students to change how they think about and act toward Indigenous people; and Decolonial Indigenization – which aims to deconstruct the university and build it again with different governance processes, roles and purposes. The Pedagogy and Curriculum Working Group adopt a goal positioned somewhere between Reconciliation Indigenization and Decolonial Indigenization. This stance was chosen as pragmatic, while recognizing the need for deep transformational change.

#### The 4Rs Framework for Indigenizing Curriculum

The recommendations presented by the Pedagogy and Curriculum Working Group draw on the Indigenous 4R Framework, which rests on the principles of Respect, Relevance, Reciprocity, and Responsibility (Barnhart& Kirkness, 2001), (Appendix 3). This framework recognizes the wholistic and interconnected nature of Indigenous knowledge systems and First Nations, Inuit and Métis learners. Rather than expect Indigenous students to conform to the dominant university culture, it places responsibility on the institution to understand how processes of colonialism are embedded in our educational system, reflect on its ethnocentric biases, and reorient the relationship between Indigenous peoples and the university environment. This involves removing systemic barriers and taking meaningful action at personal and institutional levels to implement a framework that benefits all faculty, staff and students by reflecting wholism and intersectionality.

Before moving forward, it is important to note that the intention of the Pedagogy and Curriculum Working Group has been to ensure that the language used in this report does not imply as essentialist understanding or binary categorization of either non-Indigenous or Indigenous peoples, but rather recognizes the intersectionality of all faculty, staff, and students and the unique perspectives and needs of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples.

#### Themes Identified

Our conversations and recommendations related to pedagogical and curricular reform are organized into four areas of focus: 1) Institutional Commitment, 2) Institutional Capacity for Curricular Change and Creation, 3) Support for Instructors, and 4) Support for Learners. The first two – Institutional Commitment and Institutional Capacity for Curricular Change - represent the need for systemic alterations to the mission and guiding principles of the University as well as the structures that facilitate curricular change. The second two areas – Support for Instructors and Support for Learners – stem from the question, what are the particular needs of the two partners and primary beneficiaries of educational interactions. We chose this organization because it reflects the manner in which our discussions unfolded, is practical, and hopefully accessible to those who read it. It is important to note that these areas are not mutually exclusive and, therefore, recommendations sometimes apply to more than one area. The overlap is a reflection of the wholistic and interrelated nature of the process of decolonization and indigenization.

### 1. Institutional Commitment

*Making systemic change starts with leadership and an institutional-level commitment to respect the perspectives and experiences of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples, understand structural and epistemological barriers to learning, and initiate action toward embracing Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing in graduate and undergraduate education.*

### 2. Institutional Capacity for Curricular Change and Creation

*The Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action (Clause #10, 62) identifies the need to develop culturally and age appropriate curricula within the education system. In turn, respectful, discipline-sensitive and efficient curricular change depends on having processes, expertise and resources available to incentivize, guide and facilitate development of Indigenous content in programs and courses as implemented by program committees, faculty, staff and students. This capacity is not unlike that required for other curricular change; however, community consultation and Indigenous pedagogical expertise are especially distinct.*

### 3. Support for Instructors

*As recognized in the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action (Clause 62ii, 63ii, 63iv), the majority of instructors at U of G will require guidance and understanding in order to respectfully integrate and teach First Nations, Inuit and Métis content in the curriculum. To support this need, the recommendations here identify specific resources and services that should be available to build our competencies as educators.*

### 4. Support for all Learners

*Developing an Indigenous-centred curriculum requires one to consider the needs of the student from a cultural, pedagogical and content perspective. The curriculum should recognize the right to access First Nations, Inuit and Métis cultures (e.g. languages), the importance of knowledge and awareness of the diversity of Indigenous histories, cultures, and ways of knowing, being and doing for all citizens and, as stated in the TRC Call to Action (Clause 63) the need to “build student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy and mutual respect” (Clause 63).*

## Institutional Commitment

Achieving transformational change begins with leadership and an institutional-level commitment to model respect for the perspectives, experiences and knowledge systems of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. There is a need to understand and address the structural and epistemological barriers to indigenization, and to establish processes that facilitate change in our graduate and undergraduate programs and society, in general. For educational institutions, this commitment involves setting goals for indigenization and reflecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis voices and perspectives in the strategic directions of the institution as well as providing supports and ensuring processes by which educational programming and learning environments are developed and assessed. It may also involve the development of incentives, faculty and staff education, and identifying Indigenous content that is applicable institutionally, rather than discipline specific, when warranted. We considered the need for

these institutional commitments at U of G in light of the unique contexts and circumstances of its academic units and programs.

Information gained through an environmental scan of other Ontario post-secondary institutions provided examples of how comparable universities within the provincial context are demonstrating and advancing institutional commitment and directives. This research has shown that while the extent to which other institutions have made systemic changes can be difficult to determine and appear to vary widely, there are some significant commonalities as well. Many have developed Indigenous Learning Outcomes (LOs) that guide curricular development across all programs (e.g. Confederation College). In other cases, LOs are embedded within particular academic units or centres (Carleton University).

Many educational organizations have mandated Indigenous course requirements (ICRs), either through a stand-alone course or as elements within a course.<sup>1</sup> The practice of ICRs has been met with divisive debate, urged on by a myriad of ethical, safety and practical concerns (Friesen, 2017; McDonald, 2016; Kuokkanen, 2016; Tribee & Kinew, 2018). However, despite the controversy and potential dangers surrounding ICRs, most Indigenous scholars and activists support their implementation, although they caution that “doing it right” is difficult and takes time, consideration, and personal reflection (McDonald, 2016; Gaudry, 2016).

Lastly, many universities in Ontario are demonstrating institutional commitment through the allocation of funds to hire pedagogical and curriculum specialists.<sup>2</sup>

Related scholarly literature and reports from institutions like Universities Canada point to the importance of reflecting upon, recognizing, and ratifying institutional commitment to decolonization and indigenization. Closing the education gap is stated as a primary incentive for universities, alongside the directive that universities benefit from the presence of Indigenous students and their cultures, and that the cohabitation of Western sciences and Indigenous knowledges on campuses has the power of opening a dialogue across cultures and enhancing our shared knowledge (Universities Canada, 2015).

In generating our recommendations on Institutional Commitment, the Pedagogy and Curriculum Working Group considered the institutional structures, processes, and practices currently in place to support indigenization. We found a need to clearly define what

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<sup>1</sup> Of the 19 Canadian Universities surveyed for this report, four have fully instituted an ICR for all undergraduate students, regardless of discipline. Alternatively, eight have instituted an ICR to some extent, meaning they have implemented Indigenous courses in at least one faculty, or for at least one degree type.

<sup>2</sup> University of Winnipeg, Trent University, Wilfrid Laurier University, and Queen’s University have hired curriculum specialists, educational developers who work to provide support to instructors as they engage with and braid Indigenous ways of knowing and Indigenous curriculum into courses and programs.

indigenization means at this institution and to declare our commitment to it through our Strategic Framework and Institutional Quality Assurance Process.

Discussions about indigenizing the curriculum have advanced to very different extents across campus. Progress in colleges such as CSAHS is notable - they have produced an Indigenous Strategic Plan and have conducted a comprehensive investigation on how faculty in CSAHS engage with Indigenous content and pedagogies in their teaching (Appendix 4). However, this college is unique in its effort and there is a definite need for an institutional wide conversation about indigenization and a comprehensive inventory of what courses, programs, and supports are currently available or in development. Further, we cannot presume to understand the diversity of needs and barriers to indigenization facing students as well as faculty and staff without further consultation. Addressing these needs are fundamental to transforming the curriculum and form the foundation upon which all program specific changes rest.

While U of G has ratified and is implementing an institutional inclusion framework, which includes being responsive to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in its mandate, the distinction between inclusion and indigenization and between equity, diversity and inclusion policies and indigenization has not been institutionally recognized, or adequately discussed in our governing bodies.

This working group created a sub-committee charged with developing and disseminating an environmental scan in the form of a survey to gather information from department chairs about First Nation, Métis and Inuit curriculum and teaching practices currently in use at U of G (Appendix 5).

Recommendations

The Working Group recommends the following:

*Short-term*

- Identify indigenization of the curriculum as a University priority.
- Explicitly embed indigenity within institutional guiding documents.
- Establish a standing Indigenous Curricular and Pedagogy Committee to operationalize and coordinate indigenization of the curriculum.
- As an essential first step, consult with First Nations, Inuit and Métis students, faculty & staff, and regional First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities and organizations, for feedback on the Indigenous Strategy related to curriculum and pedagogy.
- Establish a clear and comprehensive definition of what 'indigenizing the curriculum' means and what First Nations, Inuit and Métis content should be considered within the context of the university and specific disciplines.
- Establish, with consultation, a clear and comprehensive definition of 'Indigenous content', with a consideration for the distinctions between local, regional and national Indigenous knowledges and the unique perspectives of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples and communities.

- Clearly articulate and disseminate the institution's understanding of the distinction between equity, diversity, inclusion and indigenization.

#### *Medium-term*

- Develop a 6<sup>th</sup> University learning outcome, which commits to inclusion of First Nations, Inuit and Métis cultures, knowledges, and ways of knowing in the graduate and undergraduate curriculum.
- Conduct a comprehensive inventory of programs, courses, teaching strategies, and supports for Indigenous-focused education to identify specific gaps and opportunities and establish a baseline for tracking progress.
- Require academic units to deliberately examine how land acknowledgments can most appropriately be used in their curricula, within the context of their disciplines and academic cultures.
- Develop mutually beneficial partnerships with Indigenous institution(s) and educational experts for the purpose of ongoing content development, training and feedback.
- Establish targets and monitor admission patterns and outcomes of First Nations, Inuit and Métis students for the purpose of evaluating progress toward eliminating educational and employment gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians (TRC, Clause #7).

#### *Long-term*

- In lieu of a single approach or stand-alone course, transform the curriculum in a manner that is most meaningful to each discipline and program.

### **Institutional Capacity for Curricular Change and Creation**

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action (#10, 62) identifies the need to develop culturally and age appropriate curricula within Canada's education system. However, respectful, meaningful, and efficient curricular change depend on having processes, expertise, and resources available to incentivize and facilitate development of First Nations, Inuit and Métis content by program committees, faculty, staff and students. This institutional capacity for indigenizing the curriculum is, in some respects, not unlike that required for other forms of curricular change. However, ensuring the availability of knowledge and experience to honour the culture, language, ways of knowing and learning of Indigenous peoples, is critical to this process.

Though perhaps indirectly, the related literature asserts that institutional capacity involves having appropriate processes and protocols for not only facilitating curricular change and creation, but also nurturing the development of personal understanding of the importance of curricular change and creation to braid in First Nations, Inuit and Métis ways of knowing, being and doing (Johnston, 2010; Toulouse, 2008). In other words, institutional capacity needs to be assessed and developed at the level of processes and protocols, at the level of committees and boards, and at the individual level.



Other educational institutions have addressed these needs for institutional capacity in various ways. For example, “Pulling Together: A Guide for Curriculum Developers”, an open professional series developed in part by the University of British Columbia for institutions across the province, offers a learning series on understanding indigenization, meaningful integration of Indigenous epistemologies and pedagogies and more (Antoine, Mason, Mason, Palahicky, Rodriguez, 2018). Institutions such as Queens University and Lakehead University have hired Indigenous Curriculum Specialists and Educational Developers to consult with individuals or groups developing curricula and teaching methods, and Ryerson University uses a curriculum development fund to incentivize the creation of courses with Indigenous content and the embedding of Indigenous content and knowledge into existing ones (Lakehead University, 2018; Queen’s University, 2020; Ryerson, 2019).

For this Area of Focus, we reviewed the key steps in the development of new courses, new programs, and major changes to curricula in general and on campus specifically (Appendix 5). We considered how integration of Indigenous content might occur within this existing framework and, then, identified several important gaps in the curriculum change process that require attention. Key elements that emerged include the importance of consultation with Indigenous Knowledge Holders and educational experts at multiple points in the developmental process, and the availability of curricular and pedagogical expertise and resources.

Drawing from relevant literature, we discussed the diverse ways in which capacity for change and creation can be facilitated and the various areas in which capacity development may be needed. We reflected upon the fact that even with appropriate processes and protocols in place, creating the space for creative and meaningful integration of First Nations, Inuit and Métis content into our classrooms and curriculum requires the engagement of staff and faculty, and the decolonization of minds and hearts. As such, institutional capacity also takes the form of individuals having the knowledge and depth of understanding to recognize what meaningful content and integration is and looks like.

## Recommendations

The Working Group recommends the following:

### *Short-term*

- Promote awareness, reflection, and education about indigenizing the curriculum through public events, ceremonies, and symposia.
- Develop guidelines and protocols to ensure consultation of First Nations, Inuit and Métis educational experts, Knowledge Holders and communities occurs in a respectful, appropriate, and coordinated manner.
- Assemble ad hoc advisory panels, consisting of Indigenous Knowledge Holders, Elders and educational experts on Indigenous curriculum development and pedagogy to provide feedback on Indigenous-centered programs and course proposals.

### *Medium-term*

- Hire an Indigenous curricular specialist to support curricular transformation.
- Support and facilitate pedagogical transformation in and outside of courses with pedagogical educational specialists with training in Indigenous content.
- Incentivize development and implementation of Indigenous programs and course content creation through new and existing funding and resource initiatives.

### **Support for Instructors**

As educators at post-secondary institutions, instructors (faculty, staff, teaching assistant, research assistants, etc.) have an opportunity to provide and facilitate transformative change, not just for Indigenous students, but the entire student body so that all learners might change the dialogue and framework for learning on campus and, in turn, influence their personal and professional communities (Indigenous Corporate Training, 2016; Jones et al., 2016; OECD, 2017).

With this opportunity, however, comes great responsibility - for which ample support is needed. In this process, many instructors will be learners as well, and with the inclusion of Indigenous content, all will be leaders in mediating potential emotional upheaval in the classroom and in modeling personal engagement with new material (Pete et al., 2013).

Conversations with professionals at other Ontario post-secondary institutions show while support for instructors is one of the least developed and discussed areas to date, many post-secondary institutions are providing workshops, curriculum and pedagogical specialists, learning and teaching grants, consultation and mentorship, online resources and professional training series, and guides. These supports are provided through collaboration across various centers at universities.

The promising practices in providing support to faculty and staff have been identified in Toronto District School Board reports, academic literature, and reports by other post-secondary institutions in Ontario. They can be outlined as: ensuring all teachers have a thorough understanding of the residential school system and the impact of colonization; providing a safe and positive learning environment; including content that is meaningful to students and taught through Indigenous pedagogies, and the use of intentional language in the classroom. Barriers to operationalizing these admittedly lofty promising practices are: a lack of awareness or confidence and varying levels of engagement across the staff and faculty population; prejudiced perspectives in the classroom; not knowing what content is relevant, or where to find it. These barriers have been identified at U of G (see Appendix 8, CSAHS report). Our recommendations in this section address these barriers and provide potential avenues for overcoming them. They also reflect the fact that support for instructors is unique in that much of the support provided to instructors is done with the goal of ultimately supporting students.

Our analysis of support for instructors began by discussing what our previous recommendations demand of instructors, and what as an institution we should expect to be available for them. Through this, we recognized that some kinds of support are obvious (teaching resources) and will be sought after by instructors, whereas other forms are less obvious (decolonization of mind and heart), and may not be sought after by all. Furthermore, there are diverse levels of existing knowledge of, and engagement with, First Nations, Inuit and Métis knowledges and content across the university's instructor population; as such, multiple levels of support and multiple entry points to seek support are needed.

The College of Social and Applied Human Sciences' Indigenization Report notes that while there is a high level of interest among faculty to incorporate Indigenous content, several barriers limit how faculty proceed with indigenization. These barriers include a lack of knowledge, a lack of comfort, difficulty finding relevant Indigenous material and a lack of community connections and opportunities for collaboration.

In thinking how best to provide training within our institution we focused on the possibility of partnerships both internal and external to Guelph. We asked ourselves the following three questions: Are there academics within our institution whose expertise can be leveraged to provide training for staff and faculty? Can we draw from local Indigenous communities and provincial and territorial organizations to provide guidance and resources in this respect? What existing resources and practices can be adapted to our institutional context? (Universities Canada, 2016).

#### Recommendations

The Working Group recommends the following:

##### *Short-term*

- Consult all university members involved in curricular development and delivery to determine their needs regarding developing First Nations, Inuit and Métis content and the challenges they face teaching Indigenous content in and outside their programs.
- Establish a community of practice for faculty, instructors and teaching assistants and students to support their learning and reflection about methods of indigenizing teaching and learning.
- Create a database of scholars conducting or engaging with First Nations, Inuit and Métis pedagogies.

##### *Medium-term*

- Develop a ladder web-based portal to promote engagement and understanding of Indigenous history, relations, knowledges, and ways of knowing for all university members.
- Provide opportunities for instructors to understand and reflect deeply on Canada's historical and contemporary colonialism, facilitate decolonization of minds and hearts,

while increasing capacity to meaningfully engage in the work of decolonization and indigenization.

- Provide access to curriculum and pedagogical educational specialists to enable instructors to identify models of curricular transformation and teaching practices that respect Indigenous content, ways of knowing, and Indigenous learners.
- Develop and offer instructional skills workshops with a focus on constructive facilitation, mediation, conflict resolution, and active listening to manage the emotional as well as intellectual responses to Indigenous content in the classroom.
- Develop and offer educational workshops on the historical, political and cultural factors that influence First Nations, Metis and Inuit Peoples in Canada.

#### *Long-term*

- Establish faculty positions whose research is focused on the scholarship of Indigenous teaching and learning.

### **Support for Learners**

These recommendations are guided by our desire to not only increase student's knowledge and awareness of First Nations, Inuit and Métis history, culture and ways of knowing, being and doing, but are also a response to the following TRC Call to Action: "build student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy and mutual respect" (Clause 63). These recommendations are meant to reflect our commitment to foster and facilitate the development of reflective Canadian citizens – ones who will soon be entering the workforce. It must also be noted that some recommendations in this section have been reframed/reworded from other sections. This is not an oversight or repetition through neglect, but rather an expression of the wholistic and interrelated nature of the process of decolonization and indigenization.

Support for learners can be direct and indirect. The former is assessment and mechanisms used in the classroom, such as reflections in academic setting, evaluation and curricular supports. The latter is what comes out of that and the supports in place for those outcomes, such as trauma, violence, reflection leading to discomfort, etc.

Indigenous students may need formal support to ensure they can see themselves reflected in the curriculum and programming (Restoule, 2011; Savage et al., 2011; Heath, 2018). This can be achieved by: ensuring First Nations, Inuit and Métis voices and scholars are present; ensuring that we are not petrifying, oversimplifying, or mystifying Indigenous knowledge systems by stressing their normative content or sacredness, and, ensuring that we are not restricting our discussion to critiques of colonization, which enables those participating to envisage Indigenous peoples as victims of the system – moving beyond the victim role requires understanding resistance and acts of sustenance and finding strength in which First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples are engaged (Battiste, 2002).

Support for students in post-secondary institutions must also reflect the knowledge and awareness that students entering university have. Studies have found that first-year university students, graduating from Ontario high schools, are substantially unaware of First Nations, Inuit and Métis presence (Schaefli, 2018) and are largely ignorant of the structural injustices at work that uphold and retrench inequities faced by Indigenous peoples (Coulthard, 2007; Dion, 2009; Environics Institute, 2016; Maddison, Clark, & de Costa, 2016; Regan, 2010; Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015).

As an academic institution, our priority is the learning experience of our students. As such, it is important to reflect the support needs of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students and to understand that all learners are coming with unique perspectives and unique levels of knowledge. While we recognize the significant importance of student-based consultation, we had neither the appropriate time nor the appropriate resources to conduct a sufficiently rigorous consultation effort. To include the results of a lax consultation effort runs the risk of appearing tokenistic.

Our Indigenous Student Centre (ISC) has been the sole or at least the largest source of student support to date. Programs provided by ISC and the department of Student Experience include but are not limited to: Establishing an Aboriginal Gateway into Learning and Education (EAGLE), designed to offer Aboriginal students in grade 7 and 8 the opportunity to explore the possibilities offered by post-secondary education; the Leadership Intensive, a semester long program designed for participants to explore leadership theory and their own leadership; Catalyst Experiences (formally Project Serve), a program that provides community engagement opportunities focused on social justice and has partnered with Indigenous communities in the past; the Aboriginal Affairs Certificate, a workshops series aimed at providing introductory information and reflection on First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples, cultures and worldviews. More recently, a post-doctoral researcher has conducted a language revitalization project, exploring needs and challenges related to Indigenous language learning at U of G. The results of the research are outlined in the report, *We Stand Strong in our Knowledge: Seeking Meaningful Entry Points to Indigenous Language Revitalization at the University of Guelph* (Bergier and Anderson 2020).

## Recommendations

The Working Group recommends the following:

### *Short-term*

- Consult students to determine their educational needs including First Nations, Inuit and Métis content, pedagogical approaches and the challenges they face accessing and internalizing Indigenous content in and outside of their programs.
- Include mandatory Equity, Diversity and Inclusion statements in all course outlines, including reference to the Indigenous Student Centre, Diversity and Human Rights, and appropriate supports.

- Appoint cultural sensitivity readers on campus to support all students and faculty in communicating respectfully with and about First Nations, Inuit and Métis matters.

*Medium-term*

- Develop a curated database of Indigenous resources related to curriculum design and pedagogical practices and discipline specific perspectives for faculty, staff, and students.
- Ensure that culturally-responsive, emotional support services are available to all students to assist in processing the historical and cultural significance of Indigenous content and its personal ramifications.
- Promote and facilitate priority learning environments and pedagogical practices that align with Indigenous ways of knowing and learning, both on and off campus. This includes:
  - i. Opportunities for place/land-based learning;
  - ii. Opportunities for penalty-free learning within the curriculum;
  - iii. Opportunities for applying Indigenous research methods in independent study courses;
  - iv. Financial incentives for Indigenous communities-serving as employers/sponsors in co-op, work-integrated, internship, or community service-learning courses;
  - v. Opportunities for immersive learning, including co-op education positions specifically for Indigenous students; and
  - vi. Use of assessments based on storytelling, reflection, and experiential learning.
- Prioritize and promote access to content that relates to Indigenous history, culture, past and current, and ways of knowing, being and doing for graduate and undergraduate students such that Indigenous students see themselves reflected in the curriculum and co-curriculum. This includes:
  - i. Graduate and undergraduate courses to understand and apply Indigenous methodologies;
  - ii. Indigenous language courses; and
  - iii. Other significant gateways to learning that are culturally appropriate and relate to the university's academic strengths.

*Long-term*

- Prioritize and promote transition support for prospective and in-course Indigenous students in university programs. This includes:
  - i. Developing bridging courses and programs to support students off campus and in remote Indigenous communities;
  - ii. Admission processes that recognize past experiences. This may be captured within the Student Profile Forms review process; and
  - iii. Creating student mentoring programs for Indigenous students who are interested in this kind of support.

## Conclusions

The intention of this report is to offer a starting place on how to braid Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing/being/doing in undergraduate and graduate learning environments. It is based on discussion of the Pedagogy and Curriculum Working Group at U of G between April and February 2019/2020.

Our discussions were based on relevant scholarship and policies, initiatives undertaken by other institutions, and the experiences of working group members. It is the hope of this working group that the dialogue and recommendations written above articulate our desire for transformative change in both the pedagogical and curricula structures of the university, as well as in the minds and hearts of those operating within them. We recognize the important role that post-secondary institutions can and should play in citizenship education and that all, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, can benefit from the braiding of Western knowledge systems and Indigenous knowledges. We envision a future for U of G in which all can talk across differences to reach consensus on or understanding for what counts as knowledge, how different knowledge systems can be reconciled, and the types of relationships academic institutions should have with Indigenous communities (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018).

The task ahead is to determine how some of this work might be tailored to U of G and to partner with Indigenous institutions, communities, lands and peoples as we move toward the decolonization and indigenization of our institution. While not part of this preliminary review, consultation with Indigenous community members, students and faculty will likely be a necessary next step. Further committee work to address particular recommendations will also be required. As such, this report can provide direction for what is to be a long-term project of decolonization and indigenization.

## Appendix 1. Terms of Reference

### Curriculum and Pedagogy Working Group Terms of Reference

#### **Mandate**

Identify needs and opportunities for including Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing/being/doing in undergraduate and graduate learning environments

#### Areas of focus

- Program and curriculum development includes new or emerging programs, opportunities for new programs, and opportunities for modifying existing ones.
- Instruction and assessment includes pedagogical promising practices, and instructional skills and assessment from an indigenous perspective.
- Indigenous community engagement includes opportunities and approaches for establishing stronger engagement with indigenous communities in our courses and curricula.
- Experiential learning opportunities includes current experience in and outside the curriculum and future opportunities.
- Support for all learners.
- Instructor support for indigenizing the classroom

#### Approaches to accomplishing our goals

- Review visions for reconciliation and indigenization of educational programs from other post-secondary institutions
- Review past and current campus initiatives, programs and (academic) services
- Engage and facilitate forums for learning and reflection with campus, community and relevant partners
- Consider academic policies and procedures that might constrain or facilitate indigenization of educational programs

#### Outcomes of the Working Group

- Recommendations as to what is needed (i.e. what kinds of policies, practices and programs) to successfully include indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing/being/doing and support indigenous scholars in undergraduate and graduate learning environments
- Recommendations as to how to achieve these changes and to accelerate indigenization in our education mission.

#### **Timeframe**

Until the completion of the Aboriginal Initiatives Strategy. Ideally, approximately a 6 month duration.



## **Membership**

- Myrna Dawson, Canada Research Chair in Public Policy in Criminal Justice & Professor, Sociology
- Meg Ecclestone, Collections Librarian, Social Sciences & Business
- Brian Husband, Professor and Associate Dean (Academic), Integrative Biology
- Dale Lackeyram, Associate Director, Educational Development, Open Learning and Educational Support
- Brittany Luby, Assistant Professor, History
- Natasha Martin, Aboriginal Graduate Student
- Melissa Perreault, Assistant Professor, Molecular and Cellular Biology
- Daniel Poulin, Experiential Learning Specialist
- Robin Roth, Associate Professor, Geography

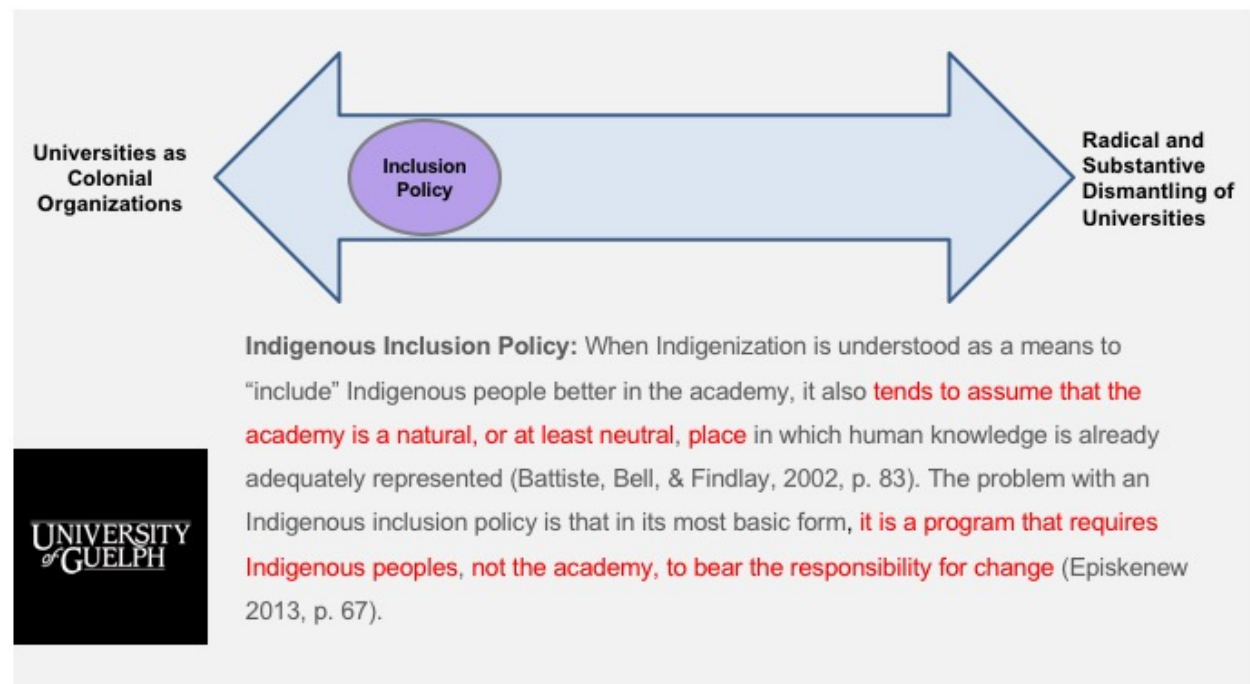
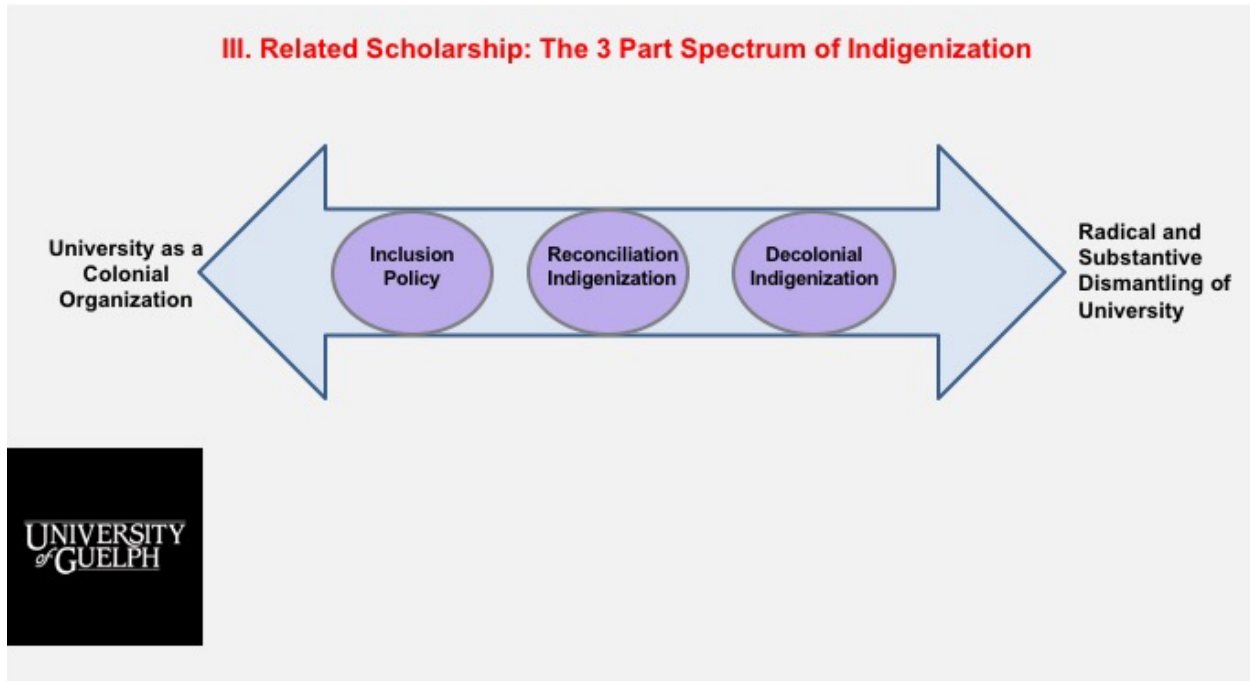
## **Research Support**

- Sidey Deska-Gauthier, Research Assistant

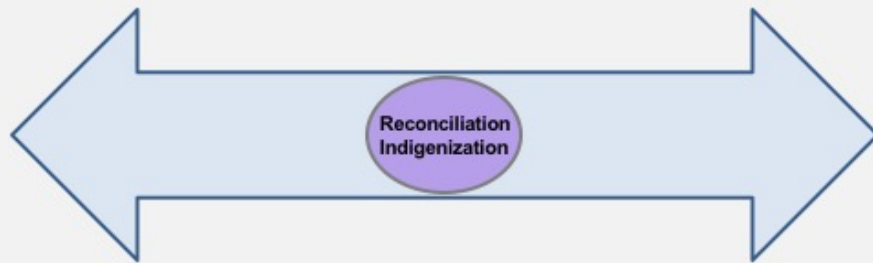
## **Meeting Schedule**

- March 21, 2019: Terms of Reference
- April 17, 2019: Defining indigenization and Areas of Focus
- May 20, 2019: Indigenous Course Requirements and Aboriginal Modes of Learning
- June 28, 2019: Indigenous Course Requirements and Aboriginal Modes of Learning
- July 15, 2019: Indigenous Course Requirements and Aboriginal Modes of Learning
- August 21, 2019: Indigenizing the curriculum – The 4Rs Framework and Aboriginal Pedagogies
- September 13, 2019: Support and Training for Faculty
- October 15, 2019: Training for Faculty and Meeting Needs of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Learners
- October 29, 2019: Training for Faculty and Meeting Needs of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Learners
- November 12, 2019: Language Revitalization, and Training and Support for Instructors
- November 26, 2019: Review of Support for Faculty and Learners
- December 9, 2019: Review of Support for Learners
- December 20, 2019: Review and Finalization of Recommendations
- January 9, 2020: Review and Finalization of Recommendations
- February 25, 2020: Review of Report

## Appendix 2. Spectrum of Indigenization



Universities as  
Colonial  
Organizations



Radical and  
Substantive  
Dismantling of  
Universities

**Reconciliation Indigenization:** What sets reconciliation Indigenization apart from mere Indigenous inclusion is an **attempt to alter the university's structure**, including educating Canadian faculty, staff, and students to change how they think about, and act toward, Indigenous people. Reconciliation Indigenization envisions the Canadian **academy taking on the role of citizenship education**, working to educate Canadians on reconciliation that has an impact beyond the borders of Canadian university campuses (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018).

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of GUELPH

Universities as  
Colonial  
Organizations



Radical and  
Substantive  
Dismantling of  
Universities

**Decolonial Indigenization:** The most radical and substantive approach to indigenization and is by and large off the radar of most university administrators. Decolonial Indigenization, envisions dismantling the university and building it back up again with a very different role and purpose. This decolonial Indigenization would use a **treaty based model of university governance** and practice.<sup>1</sup> Second, decolonial indigenization **supports a resurgence** in Indigenous culture, politics, knowledge, and on-the-land skills (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018).

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Appendix 3. 4Rs Framework



Pidgeon, 2008

## Appendix 4: Indigenizing the Curricula and Pedagogy Summary

### Indigenizing the Curricula and Pedagogy Executive Summary College of Social and Applied Human Sciences

#### Purpose of Survey/Interviews:

To investigate and gain insight on how faculty in the College of Social & Applied Human Sciences engage with Indigenous content and pedagogies in their teaching and research to determine strengths, needs, and interests across the College in Indigenizing curriculum and supporting Indigenous research.

#### Summary:

##### Teaching

There seems to be a high level of interest among faculty to incorporate Indigenous content in their courses; however, several barriers limit how faculty proceed with Indigenization. First, there is a lack of knowledge regarding whether Indigenous content is relevant and applicable to course content. In other words, some faculty feel the Indigenous content is only relevant when discussing Indigenous issues versus incorporating Indigenous ways of knowing into their courses. Second, there is a lack of comfort among many faculty members who are unsure how to proceed as settlers and discuss Indigenous issues/content. Third, faculty members report it is often difficult to find Indigenous material relevant to their course topics that is written at a level that can be easily understood by students. Fourth, there is a lack of time and direction from departments on how faculty members should be committing to Indigenization of their course content. Finally, most faculty members also reported having no knowledge of Indigenous pedagogy or how to incorporate it into their courses.

Faculty report that having more support, professional development, resources, and Indigenous faculty could assist them in incorporating more Indigenous content in their courses.

##### Research

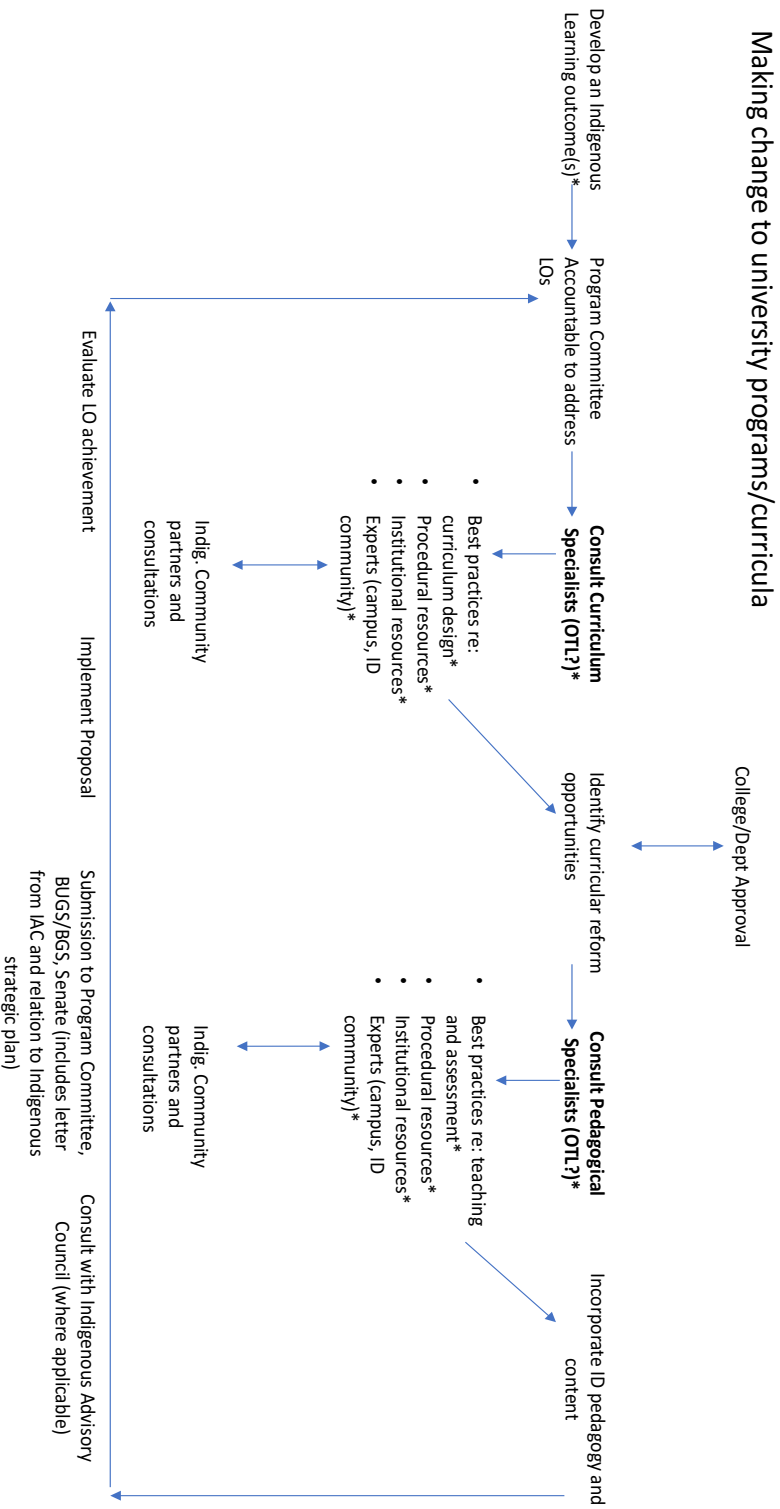
Many faculty members report that their main reason for not engaging in Indigenous research stems from a lack of community connections and opportunities for collaboration. Other faculty report that Indigenous research is not their area of expertise or that there is no difference between Western approaches and Indigenous approaches to their research topic.

More support, research collaborators, and training were listed as methods that would increase the likelihood that faculty would engage with Indigenous research.

##### Report overview

This report provides an overview of faculty responses to survey questions broken down by department and provides an overview of responses to each question. It provides a summary of key issues brought up in the surveys and interviews beginning on page 32. Finally, it provides an evaluation based on the results of the survey and interviews on page 38. The interview transcripts are available in the appendices.

# Appendix 5. Institutional Process Matrix



\* Form the basis of a recommendation

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