Âsokan– Building the Bridge to Reconciliation in Post-Secondary Education

Region 8 NACADA Conference
Missoula, Montana
April 2017
Who are we?
Background information from a Canadian perspective
The Lakeland College experience as seen by this Advisor
Discussion and sharing of resources
Introductions

- Who are we?
- Where are we from?
- What is our connection to this topic?
Cultural Competence

“By acknowledging gaps in diversity and asking for guidance from those with greater cultural competence, advisors can make significant progress toward their own cultural competence” (Archambault 186).
A note on terminology

- Indigenous / Aboriginal
- FNMI
  - First Nations (Status and Non-Status Indians)
  - Metis
  - Inuit
- Native
- Indian

Suggested resources:
www.naho/publications/topics/terminology
The Colonial Problem (see introduction) by Lisa Monchalin
This is me...

- Senior Academic Advisor
- Lakeland College
- Lloydminster, Alberta
- Canada

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  - “Lakeland Charlene Academic Advisor”
My belief…

“…all of us who work with students in post-secondary education have a role to play in re-storying our collective pasts and redirecting our futures. Change begins by raising awareness about our own cultural assumptions and indoctrinations. It is no longer sufficient to have good intentions; we must unpack what has been given to us as cultural baggage and take action” (Bonnar)
My very white childhood...
What I heard and learned as a child...

- Popular culture
- Racialized language
- Textbook rhetoric
Great Canadian Literature

FICTION

- Indian Horse by Richard Wagamese
- Wenjack by Joseph Boyden
- The Temptations of Big Bear by Rudy Wiebe

NON-FICTION

- Stolen Life by Yvonne Johnson & Rudy Wiebe
- The Reason You Walk by Wab Kinew
- The Education of Augie Merasty by Joseph Auguste Merasty & David Carpenter
“What’s the big deal with the residential schools? That was generations ago. Why haven’t they gotten over it by now?”

“So what are we supposed to call them?”

“How could she just leave her kids behind to come to college?”

“Really, why do teachers need to learn all this Aboriginal history?”

“My grandmother was abused in a Catholic boarding school too. It wasn’t only Natives, you know.”
Background Information

A Canadian Perspective
The Current Reality
- The Legacy of Residential Schools -

**SOCIAL/ECONOMIC**

- Inter-generational trauma
- Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women
- Incarceration rates
- Suicide rates
- Living conditions

* See Montchalin

**ACADEMIC**

- University Degree
  - Non-Indigenous Canadians: 9.8%
  - Indigenous Canadians: 26.5%
More Recent History

- 1986 – United Church of Canada apology
- 1990 – Phil Fontaine calls for churches involved in Residential Schools to acknowledge abuse
- 2006 – Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement (IRSSA)
- 2008 – Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) established; formal public apology by Prime Minister of Canada
- 2015 – Final Report and 94 Calls to Action released by TRC
According to the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada,

[f]or over a century, the central goals of Canada’s Aboriginal policy were to eliminate Aboriginal governments; ignore Aboriginal rights; terminate the Treaties; and, through a process of assimilation, cause Aboriginal peoples to cease to exist as distinct legal, social, cultural, religious, and racial entities in Canada....
...The establishment and operation of residential schools were a central element to this policy, which can best be described as “cultural genocide”.... (TRC 1)
The Lakeland College Experience

My Perspective as an Academic Advisor
My Indigenous Students

2016-2017

- Total UT Students
  - 271
- Self Declared FNMI
  - 9 = 3%
- Actual FNMI
  - 41 = 15%
My Cultural Incompetence
Building Cultural Competence

- Be vulnerable – acknowledge gaps in knowledge and seek to fill them
- Attend on-campus and community cultural events
- Seek mentors
- Ask questions
- Become an advocate
- Share resources
- Partake in PD opportunities
- Consider your office environment

Archambault (199-200)
My Office
Treaty Workshop
KAIROS Blanket Exercise

http://www.kairoscanada.org/what-we-do/indigenous-rights/blanket-exercise
Field Trips
Guest Speakers
New Initiatives

- Established an Aboriginal Student Advisory Council
- Hired an Indigenous Support Specialist
- Special Events
  - Traditional feast
  - Bannock making contest
  - Round dance
Upcoming Projects

- Convocation
- Protocols
- Summer road trip
- Self declaring FNMI status
- September welcome
- Transition program
Indigenizing the Academy

What is happening at other institutions?

MacEwan University – Time to Listen
http://www.macewan.ca/wcm/MacEwanNews/LONGFORM_TIME_TO_LISTEN
Indigenization is understood as “the transformation of the existing academy by including Indigenous knowledges, voices, critiques, scholars, students and material as well as the establishment of physical and epistemic spaces that facilitate the ethical stewardship of a plurality of Indigenous knowledges and practices so thoroughly as to constitute an essential element of the university. It is not limited to Indigenous people, but encompasses all students and faculty, for the benefit of our academic integrity and our social viability”
The University of Saskatchewan is dedicated to Indigenous student success, to fostering meaningful relationships with Indigenous communities and to promoting Indigenous knowledges and scholarship. Through collaboration, innovation, respect and humility, the university fosters a welcoming environment that is grounded in the principles of reconciliation and is able to address the calls to action placed on everyone in this country.
We’re building a healthier world.

Call to action #23 addresses the need to increase the number of Indigenous professionals in healthcare fields.

In the 2015/2016 academic year, the College of Nursing achieved their goal of having an undergraduate student population that matched the demographics of Saskatchewan in terms of Indigenous representation: over 17 per cent of students self-declared as Aboriginal, a number that is expected to continue to grow.

Additionally, the College of Medicine currently has 30 self-declared Aboriginal students enrolled in the medical degree program, and this past spring the college graduated a record number of Indigenous students.

Call to action #24 calls upon nursing and medical schools to educate students in Indigenous health and the legacy of residential schools. Thus far, we have committed to building a curriculum that is respectfully inclusive of Indigenous worldviews and to strengthening our recruitment and retention of Indigenous students in various health science colleges of the U of S.

Call to action #23 also speaks to the importance of providing these educational opportunities to those already working in healthcare fields. The U of S recently launched an online class available to all healthcare providers in Saskatchewan. The interactive course covers self-reflection, historical issues faced by Indigenous peoples and how to create an inclusive healthcare environment.
Acknowledgement of Traditional Indigenous Territories

In line with the foundational goals and core values of the Eyes High Strategy and the Academic Plan, the University of Calgary values, acknowledges, and respects the diversity among First Nations, Métis and Inuit people and their distinct cultures, worldviews, and protocols. The university values and supports equitable representation, cultural inclusion, and community partnerships in academic programs, research, learner participation, special events, and community partnerships, which acknowledges, includes, and engages First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples.

Read the University of Calgary Acknowledgement of Traditional Indigenous Territories here.

The University of Calgary recognizes First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples of Canada as traditional stewards of the land. As the University is located within the Treaty 7 region, public acknowledgement and recognition of the peoples of Treaty 7 is customary. At convocation, conferences, and other large public gatherings hosted by the University of Calgary, it is recommended that opening remarks include an official acknowledgement of the traditional territories of the Treaty 7 people of Southern Alberta.

This Acknowledgement of Traditional Territories Document should be used within the framework of the Cultural Protocol Document. Please contact the Native Centre at 403.220.6034 or nativecentre@ucalgary.ca to ask any questions you may have on its use.

The University of Manitoba campuses are located on original lands of Anishinaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, and Dene peoples, and on the homeland of the Métis Nation.

We respect the Treaties that were made on these territories, we acknowledge the harms and mistakes of the past, and we dedicate ourselves to move forward in partnership with Indigenous communities in a spirit of reconciliation and collaboration.
The Reconciliation Pole...

“The bottom half of the pole represents the time before Indian residential schools and features salmon, a bear and a raven. A schoolhouse, fashioned after a residential school Hart’s grandfather attended, is carved in the middle with students holding hands above it. The top half of the pole represents the time after residential schools and features spirits, family, and a canoe. On top of the pole is an eagle about to take flight, which Hart said represents “the power and determination needed to look towards the future.”
Where do we go from here?

“Canadians must do more than just talk about reconciliation; we must learn how to practice reconciliation in our everyday lives—within ourselves and our families, and in our communities, governments, places of worship, schools, and workplaces. To do so constructively, Canadians must remain committed to the ongoing work of establishing and maintaining respectful relationships” (TRC 21).
Suggested Resources

* Events, programs, and toolkits:
  * [http://reconciliationcanada.ca/](http://reconciliationcanada.ca/)
* Online “conversation” in 5 modules:
  * [http://www.leadnow.ca/skills-for-solidarity/](http://www.leadnow.ca/skills-for-solidarity/)
* National Center for Truth and Reconciliation:
  * [http://umanitoba.ca/centres/nctr/](http://umanitoba.ca/centres/nctr/)
* Timeline of events:
* CBC Indigenous on Facebook
* *A National Crime* by John Milloy


“Reconciliation is realized when two people come together and understand that what they share unites them and that what is different about them needs to be respected” (Kinew 211).