# Aligning Universities' Recruitment of Indigenous Academics with the Tools Used to Evaluate Scholarly Performance and Grant Tenure and Promotion

Dustin Louie
*University of Calgary*

## Abstract

The aim of this article is to challenge the discrepancy between Indigenous candidate requirements in academic job postings and their recognition in the tenure-track stream. For the purposes of this article, I conducted a scan of 15 academic positions for Indigenous scholars advertised in Canada between September 2018 and July 2019. In these advertisements, 100% of the postings included an expectation for the candidate to hold Indigenous Knowledges and connections to Indigenous communities. Through an examination of seminal Indigenous scholars, I unearth the capacities required to hold, maintain, and renew Indigenous Knowledges and connections to community, while simultaneously showing that none of these capacities are recognized within funding allowances, workload allotments, or tenure and promotion committees. Finally, I offer practical recommendations to post-secondary institutions to provide a supportive environment for

**Canadian Journal of Education / Revue canadienne de l'éducation 42:3 (2019)**

**www.cje-rce.ca**

Indigenous scholars to enjoy success while holding Indigenous Knowledges and community connections in a good way.

*Keywords:* Indigenous education, decolonizing post-secondary education, anti-oppressive education

## Résumé

Le but de cet article est de défier la contradiction entre les exigences des candidats dans les postes du travail pour les savants Indigènes et leur recognition dans les postes menant à la permanence. Pour cet article, j'ai scruté 15 postes académiques pour savant Indigènes annoncés au Canada pendant la période de 2018 à 2019. Cent pour cent des postes ont inclus une attente pour le candidat d'avoir les connaissances Indigènes et des liens avec les communautés Indigènes. En examinant les savants Indigènes phares, je déniche les capacités nécessaires pour avoir, maintenir, et renouveler les connaissances Indigènes et connexions avec la communauté, tout en illustrant qu'aucun de ces capacités sont reconnues dans les allocations de financement, affectations de charge du travail, ou par des comités de permanence et promotion. Finalement, les recommandations pratiques sont offertes aux institutions postsecondaires pour fournir un environnement favorable pour que les savants Indigènes puissent réussir tout en ayant les connaissances Indigènes et des liens avec la communauté dans une manière positive.

*Mots-clés :* éducation Indigène, décolonisant l'éducation postsecondaire, éducation anti-oppressive

# Introduction

A marked trend in the twenty-first-century Canadian university is the pursuit of Indigenous academics for tenure-track positions (Canadian Association of University Teachers, 2018). Spurred on by a growing national consciousness of Indigenous marginalization (Battiste, 2013), grassroots movements (Goulet & Goulet, 2014), the rise of social justice awareness (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017), and the transformative impact of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2015), universities are attempting to address their decades-long oversight of Indigenous representation (Henry et al., 2017). Hurried attempts to usher in a generational cohort of Indigenous scholars have been hampered by a foreseeable institutional learning curve. Studies have found that Indigenous academics are frequently marginalized within their institutions (Mohamed & Beagan, 2018). Though marginalization appears in many forms, one critical element is the disparity between the institutional aims when pursuing Indigenous academics and their actual experiences upon joining the ranks of the professoriate. There is an inconsistency between the capacities sought after in potential Indigenous academic hires and the university's ability to support and recognize the maintenance of such capacities. The aim of this article is not to indict universities that have accepted this work, but instead to provide insight for administration and leadership regarding how they can empower Indigenous academics to achieve success in the academy. I approach this article through my unique lens as a Dakelh (First Nation) scholar and assistant professor.

The stated aim of myriad universities in Canada is not to simply hire Indigenous scholars, but instead to decolonize and Indigenize their institutions (Louie, Poitras Pratt, Ottmann, & Hanson, 2017). Decolonization has been defined by Dei (2000) "as breaking with the ways in which the Indigenous human condition is defined and shaped by dominant Euro-American cultures" (p. 113). The presence of Indigenous scholars does not signal a victory in decolonization, it is merely one step in a lengthy process (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018). If spaces are not created, at all levels, for Indigenous scholars to approach academic work from diverse Knowledges and practices, then Indigenous hires are simply folded into a colonial system. Gaudry and Lorenz (2018) critique the "Indigenous inclusion" approach to decolonizing, stating that "by merely including more Indigenous peoples, it is believed that universities can indigenize without substantial structural change" (p. 219). If decolonizing directives of universities are taken up with honest intentions,

Indigenous academics are expected to push for uncomfortable change. The recommendations presented in this article are outside of standard institutional practice, which is a necessary foundation of decolonizing approaches. Serious attempts at decolonizing require challenging academic systems, policy, and norms to make spaces for other ways of being, which will all be modelled in this article in the section that offers practical recommendations. Resistance is anticipated, since Canadians are engrained within Western standards of knowledge and protocol, which lead us to believe they are the natural order.

The aim of this article is to question Canadian universities' approach to Indigenous academics roles in post-secondary institutions, specifically, challenging the discrepancy between the stated candidate requirements in job postings and the support Indigenous academics receive to maintain those unique standards once they enter the tenure-track stream. The twofold approach to this article looks at the practice of recruitment of Indigenous scholars into Faculties of Education, while also examining the incongruities in the way these scholars are evaluated within the faculty. The notable requirements in question are that successful candidates will ideally be grounded in Indigenous Knowledges and have connections to First Nations or Métis communities.[1] A wealth of complexity and nuance is required to hold Indigenous Knowledges and claim connections to community. This article will engage with these complexities by examining the theories of leading Indigenous scholars who define Indigenous Knowledges and community relationships, while also creating a roadmap for resolving the discrepancy between the aims of recruitment and the support and recognition offered to Indigenous academics.

My investigation of this issue will begin with a brief discussion on the growth in hiring of Indigenous scholars in post-secondary institutions, which will contextualize the current climate in which Indigenous academics are entering the academy. Next, I will

1 Inuit academics are not referenced here since the institutions in question have no Inuit representation. I do not feel informed enough of the Inuit perspective to represent their unique needs as academics. I call to my Inuit brothers and sisters to build from this scholarship in a way that is reflective of their own needs in their academic roles.

examine 15 tenure-track advertisements[2] for Indigenous scholars posted in a nine-month period, mostly in the field of education. I undertake an examination of these advertisements to emphasize trends in institutions' expectations of Indigenous scholars. The following sections will review Indigenous scholars' perspectives on Indigenous Knowledge and community connections, specifically how one holds and renews these capacities. Finally, practical recommendations will be offered to post-secondary institutions to provide a supportive environment for Indigenous scholars to enjoy success while holding Indigenous Knowledges and maintaining strong community connections in a good way.

## Background of the Study

In 2018, the Canadian Association of University Teachers (2018) released data that elucidated the growing representation of Indigenous Peoples in the professoriate. Between 2006 and 2016 there was an increase from 1% to 1.4% of professors in Canadian universities who self-identified Indigenous ancestry. Despite the 40% growth, the representation in 2016 falls considerably short of the 4.9% of the Canadian population that is Indigenous (Statistics Canada, 2018). Blame cannot be solely placed on academic hiring committees, since the high school and undergraduate completion rates remain drastically lower for Indigenous students (Statistics Canada, 2018). Systemic and institutional barriers manifest at each stage of education that deter and inhibit Indigenous students from success (Poitras Pratt, Louie, Hanson, & Ottmann, 2018). Given the smaller pool of potential graduate students and therefore academic hires, the continued chasm in representation in the academy is not surprising.

Despite a paucity of data since 2016, we are potentially in the midst of another period of growth of Indigenous representation in Canadian universities. In response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report in 2015, universities are striving to

2 Simon Fraser University (2019) – Assistant Professor; Mount Saint Vincent (2019) – Assistant Professor; University of Victoria (2019) – Assistant Professor; Sheridan College (2019) – Professor; University of Manitoba (2018) – Assistant or Associate Professor; University of Sudbury (2019) – Assistant Professor; University of Northern British Columbia (2018) – Assistant Vice-Provost; University of Calgary (2018a) – Canada Research Chair (Tier II); University of Calgary (2018b) – Canada Research Chair; University of British Columbia (2019) – Assistant or Associate Professor; University of British Columbia (2019) – Assistant or Associate; Ryerson (2019) – Assistant Professor; UBC Okanagan (2019) – Assistant Professor; University of Ottawa (2019) – Assistant Professor; McGill (2018) – Assistant Professor; Queen's University (2019) – Education Coordinator.

ameliorate their approach to Indigenous representation (Canadian Association of University Teachers, 2018). Anecdotally, the number of recruitment advertisements being shared, Indigenous doctoral students being hired before completing their dissertation, and noticeable representation in faculties are all positive indicators of growth in 2019. Individual universities and faculties have taken the lead by hiring clusters of Indigenous academics. Notably, the University of Saskatchewan committed to hiring 30 Indigenous scholars in the next decade (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018). The Werklund School of Education in the University of Calgary, in one faculty alone, hired six Indigenous assistant professors between 2012 and 2015. Moreover, in the same institution, the Faculty of Arts hired seven Indigenous academics in a cluster hire in 2017 (University of Calgary, 2017; UToday, 2013). Despite the growth in hiring, Henry et al. (2017) argue that Indigenous and racialized academics remain considerably underrepresented. Moreover, the Indigenous scholars who do achieve positions in the academy then face considerable barriers of White privilege pervasive in these institutions.

Mohamed and Beagan's (2018) and Henry et al.'s (2017) research have drawn attention to the persistent privileging of Whiteness in Canadian universities. Whiteness, as defined by Proulx (2018), includes the three elements of "structural advantage," "standpoint," and "cultural practices that are usually unmarked and unnamed" (p. 76). Mohamed and Beagan (2018) found that Indigenous and racialized scholars were faced with a pervasive resistance to their presence, which was demonstrated in the following ways: a lack of representation, the "neutral" Whiteness of academic culture, not belonging, delegitimization of Indigenous research, additional work, and overt acts of racism. Each category includes dozens of negative experiences that marginalize Indigenous academics and repeatedly emphasize that they do not belong, have not earned their place, and need to conform to Western standards to be deemed successful. Such messaging is a confluence from students, colleagues, administration, journal editors, and tenure and promotion committees (Mohamed & Beagan, 2018). An essential finding in the study (Mohamed & Beagan, 2018) revealed that each rank beyond assistant professor had fewer people of colour, which means the least diverse places in the university are at the highest levels of decision making. Henry et al. (2017) also found notable discrepancies between the remuneration of Indigenous and White scholars, even when taking into factor academics at the same tier with comparable records of achievement in the analysis. Reaching analogous levels of achievement has proven problematic for Indigenous scholars due to the

privileging of Western conceptions of research, teaching, and service. The new generation of Indigenous scholars are entering the academy with substantial pressure, in what may be a one-time emphasis on decolonizing and Indigenizing approaches. In what follows, the methods of recruitment and the expectations placed on Indigenous academics through recruitment and job advertisements will be examined.

## Methods

For the purposes of this article, a scan of 15 academic positions advertised for Indigenous scholars in Canada was conducted, dating from September 2018 to July 2019, and ranging in rank from assistant professor to assistant vice-provost. Each of these advertisements was for either a tenure-track position or for a position that already had been granted tenure. While there are potentially more than 15 Indigenous academic positions advertised in Faculties of Education during this timeframe, the advertisements represented here are the ones that were discovered through a comprehensive search of popular academic employment databases and university websites. In order to establish a baseline, 15 advertised academic positions in education that were not specifically directed to Indigenous scholars were selected at random and reviewed. One hundred percent of the postings for Indigenous scholars included an expectation for the candidate to have Indigenous Knowledges and connections to Indigenous communities, while the non-Indigenous recruitment contained no such requirements.

## Examining Tenure-Track Job Advertisements for Indigenous Academics

It is imperative to start by examining the recruitment advertisements for Indigenous scholars in order to understand the alignment of standards. Non-Indigenous academic advertisements demand excellence or potential excellence in research and publishing, pedagogical strengths, and experience teaching in a graduate and undergraduate milieu. Beyond the standard requirements for non-Indigenous academics, advertisements for positions targeting Indigenous scholars also include proficiencies absent in any other context. Most notably, they specify that candidates should have relationships with

Indigenous communities and have a solid grounding in the Indigenous Knowledges of those communities.

The consistent and unique expectations placed upon Indigenous scholars are absent in other fields of study, based on a scan of 15 job advertisements that were not Indigenous-specific, therefore these are overlooked in their actual practice. We cannot just tack on candidate expectations while simultaneously making no changes to job descriptions and assessments. Moreover, connection to Indigenous communities assumes that all applicants will be either First Nations originating from reserve communities or Métis scholars with accessible roots in Métis settlements. In practice, we know that not all Indigenous, or even First Nations people, have a connection to their traditional community, and that many Métis have long histories of mobility (St-Onge & Podruchny, 2012). The idealized Indigenous scholar who is steeped in Indigenous Knowledges and connected to a reserve community is not necessarily representative of the Indigenous population. The complicated nature of Indigenous Knowledges will be discussed in detail in a later section to establish an additional layer of complexity that most universities are neglecting.

Direct quotes from the 15 advertisements in the scan will demonstrate, in no uncertain terms, that colleges and universities require Indigenous scholars to have a grounding in Indigenous Knowledges and connections to Indigenous communities. Simon Fraser University's (2019) search for a faculty member in Indigenous education stated that desired candidate's approach should be "informed by involvement with Indigenous communities" and an "understanding of Indigenous Knowledge systems" (para. 4). Similarly, Mount Saint Vincent University (2019) advertised for a professor of Indigenous Knowledge and pedagogy in education, declaring that the successful candidate would "have research expertise and experience working in partnership with aboriginal communities to integrate Indigenous knowledge, culture, and pedagogy" (para. 3). The University of Victoria (2019) included in its job description the requirement of "Indigenous ancestry with lived experience in Indigenous communities, cultures, and traditions" (para. 4). Finally, the University of Calgary (2018b) stated as requirements in its advertisement: "The successful candidate will demonstrate evidence of excellence in both research and teaching informed by Indigenous epistemologies, ontologies, methodologies and knowledges… will have a demonstrated ability to develop partnerships with Indigenous communities in their field of research" (para. 3).

Universities consistently require Indigenous applicants to have strong Indigenous Knowledges and community relations to be successful candidates. Since such capacities are requirements for Indigenous faculty positions, universities must recognize the necessity of nurturing and acknowledging these capacities. This point is not an attempt to undermine the pursuit of Indigenous scholars with connections to knowledge systems and community. However, universities must understand the complex nature of maintaining these Knowledges and relationships, while also finding ways to have them represented in contracts, job descriptions, tenure, promotion, and honours within the University—as is done for excellence in research and other expectations for tenure-stream faculty.

## Indigenous Scholars' Perspectives on Indigenous Knowledges

In order to meaningfully examine the application of Indigenous Knowledges in post-secondary institutions, it is imperative to first establish the foundation of knowledge created by leading Indigenous scholars. By examining the nature of Indigenous Knowledges, and how one can come to embody them, informed perspectives can guide the capacities universities are requiring of Indigenous hires. By establishing a series of perspectives on Indigenous Knowledges, the institution is challenged to step outside of the limited scope in which it views the acquisition, practice, and maintenance of these capacities. It should be noted that there is not a single definition or perspective on Indigenous Knowledges, but that between and within Indigenous communities there are a diversity of perspectives. It is important to ask, when we listen to the wisdom of our Knowledge Keepers, is the university environment creating spaces for such maintenance to happen within academic roles?

To begin a deeper examination of what Indigenous Knowledges entail, let us turn to Mi'kmaq scholar Marie Battiste (2013), who believes that

> Indigenous knowledge embodies webs of relationship within specific ecological contexts; contain linguistic categories; rules, and relationships unique to each knowledge system; has localized content and meaning; has established customs with respect to acquiring and sharing of knowledge; and implies responsibility for possessing various kinds of knowledge. (p. 96)

Battiste's definition leaves much to unpack. Entire dissertations can be extracted from this quote alone, but instead I will limit my examination to the words that speak to the responsibility of holding Indigenous Knowledges. From Battiste's perspective, holding these Knowledges yields a standing in the community. However, it requires embodying the principles and living up to the responsibilities of a Knowledge Keeper. If universities are to pursue individuals holding Indigenous Knowledges, they should understand and honour the responsibilities associated. If a Knowledge Keeper was to shirk their duties, due to an all-encompassing schedule in the university, their reputation could diminish in the eyes of their community, removing the communal acknowledgement required in the claim of Indigenous Knowledges. There is an ongoing, reciprocal obligation within the holding and sustaining of Knowledges, not just a one-time static acquisition, and the academy needs to be cognizant of the impact of recruiting Knowledge Keepers and removing them from the community. The fallout of a tarnished reputation would be devastating to the scholar, while also abolishing a prerequisite that led to their recruitment into the academy.

Plains Cree and Saulteaux scholar Margaret Kovach (2009) contends that Indigenous Knowledges are grounded in relationships that must be tended to and renewed. "Relationship is not identified as a specific theme because it is wholly integrated with everything else. Indigenous epistemologies live within a relational web, and all aspects of them must be understood from that vantage point" (p. 57).

From an outside perspective, the maintenance of relationships can be misconstrued as something less significant. In my Indigenous Education course, we spend hours honouring one another at the start of the term by giving students a forum to introduce themselves. This process is necessary to create the trust mandatory to embrace difficult learning in a safe environment. Building from the work of my mentor, Saulteaux scholar Jacqueline Ottmann, I ask my students to answer four questions: Who am I? Where do I come from? Where am I going? and What are my responsibilities? Students occasionally misunderstand this as a frivolous activity that wastes critical time. If we are to meaningfully take up Indigenous Knowledges, we must be willing to establish and renew our relationships before accepting our work.

Similarly, prior to establishing research relationships and pursuing Indigenous Knowledges with community partners, we are required to make repeated visits, work on tangentially related projects, develop friendships, and become welcomed into the

community. We are not released from these responsibilities once the research has concluded. Otherwise, the community would be justified in viewing the relationship as merely a ploy to gain access to research participants. Absent from annual performance reports and tenure applications are acknowledgements for maintaining relationships long after research has ended, while these concepts are present in the recruitment ads with the mere presence of the phrase "Indigenous Knowledges."

Blackfoot scholar Leroy Little Bear (2000) contends that "renewal ceremonies, the telling and retelling of creation stories, the singing and re-singing of songs, are all humans' part in the maintenance of creation" (p. 2). Little Bear is sharing the Blackfoot perspective on developing and maintaining Indigenous Knowledges through ceremony. Creation can be seen in a number of lights. Some assert that we are speaking of literal creation, and others may view it as the creation of a shared history, knowledges, social systems, and relationships—the creation of culture. Without these ceremonies, stories, and songs, our shared experiences and culture begin to dissolve. Ceremonies and storytelling are central components of many Indigenous peoples' methods of creating and maintaining knowledge systems (Archibald, 2008). While Western observers historically misunderstood Indigenous ceremonies as superstition and pagan practices, there is a deep complexity that informs ways of knowing, social organization, and communal values (Fiske & Patrick, 2000). Participating in ceremony is compulsory in some communities to maintain positions in traditional societies, status in clan systems, honouring of traditional names, and immeasurable responsibilities for Knowledge Keepers. The complexity of responsibilities highlighted here is not reflected in the assessment criteria set out for academics, or in the institutional understandings that shape academics' work lives. The next logical step in the universities' pursuit of decolonizing is aligning the requirements of recruitment with recognition in yearly assessments and tenure and promotion committees.

The complicated philosophy presented here is only the start of a nuanced discussion on Indigenous Knowledges. A fundamental argument of this article is that faculties need to consider the implications of including Indigenous Knowledges in their recruitment materials. Beyond a buzzword, there are real-world considerations and complications associated with these requirements. The two stages of this research, recruitment and recognition, must be viewed as part of the same process in the lifecycle of an academic.

Based on the work of Battiste (2013), Kovach (2009), and Little Bear (2000) it is clear that critical elements of achieving and maintaining Indigenous Knowledges may

include spending time on the land, maintaining relationships, honouring our responsibilities, participating in ceremony, and holding roles in traditional clans or societies. The responsibilities presented here can form a potential framework universities can establish as criteria to ensure they are establishing an environment that fosters Indigenous Knowledges. However, I do not want to overlook the significant complexity required on the part of Indigenous academics to interpret and apply these philosophies within the complicated structures of university faculties. Moreover, administrators will then be required to gain a nuanced understanding of the concepts in order to apply them. While daunting work, universities must put the necessary time and resources into a comprehensive approach to decolonizing projects.

## Indigenous Scholars' Perspective on Community Connections

Cree scholar Shawn Wilson (2001) argues that "an Indigenous paradigm comes from a fundamental belief that knowledge is relational.… It goes beyond the idea of individual knowledge to the concept of relational knowledge" (p. 176). The relational elements speak to our bonds with our families, Elders, clan members, and our traditional territories. Separation from these spaces and people can result in a degradation of our placement in the community and traditional systems. For example, in anecdotal experience I have heard critical words spoken by Indigenous community members of a prominent Indigenous scholar who no longer spends time in his home community. Maintaining good relationships with your home community and people can be a prerequisite for First Nations or Métis communities placing their trust in you. It is improbable that a non-Indigenous scholar would be held to the same standards to develop a research program. We often hear the phrase "It is not who you claim, but who claims you." In relation to the requirement of community connections, how are Indigenous scholars supported or discouraged from dedicating time and attention to maintaining relationships? Moreover, which practices strengthen relationships and are misunderstood by leadership within institutions who decide tenure and promotion? We must never lose sight that simply ushering more Indigenous scholars into universities is not the end goal, it is establishing an academic environment where they can be successful and thrive. By requiring connections to community

for scholarly hires, the university is making a commitment to this practice and all that it entails.

Sto:lo scholar Jo-ann Archibald (2008) reminds us of the "good power of interconnections within family, community, nation, culture, and land. If we become disconnected, we lose the ability to make meaning from Indigenous stories" (p. ix). Creating meaning from stories, or Indigenous Knowledges, is made possible by a continued connection to the important places and people in our lives. Classifying the Knowledge developed and maintained from family and community relationships is difficult within the academy. Faculties recognize the merit of attending conferences or trips with specified research goals. However, if we return to our territory for community gatherings, it can be difficult to convince the academy of the institutional benefit of our lived experience. Similarly, Battiste (2013) believes that "Indigenous knowledge is inherently tied to the people's mutual relationship with place and with each other over time" (p. 95). The place-based nature of knowledge and community is essential to Indigenous perceptions of both Knowledge and relationships. Little Bear (2015) believes that one of the reasons Indigenous people have such a strong relationship with the land is because, in our world of constant flux, the land changes at the slowest pace and therefore offers us the greatest connection to the past.

Indigenous academics frequently bear unique responsibilities as a representative of their people. The placement of an Indigenous scholar affords the whole community a voice in higher education that was previously outside of their sphere of influence. Pressure on academics accumulates since they are expected to return home, or represent urban Indigenous people, upon completion of their studies (Hampton, 1995). One scholar was told by community members, "You go get your education and bring that knowledge back here" (Lewington, 2018, para. 16). Indigenous academics who stay in the university ecosystem are indebted to their home communities and often bear internalized guilt. Community members and leadership habitually depend on Indigenous faculty to address systemic and pervasive needs, even when beyond our specialization or fields. The internal and external pressures on Indigenous academics are often invisible to non-Indigenous colleagues and deans, due to the supplementary work falling outside of annual performance reports and outdated rubrics for service, teaching, and research. The academy can proudly voice our connections to Indigenous communities, but it must recognize the responsibility that accompanies claiming Indigenous places and people.

## Challenges of Meeting Tenure Based on Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Expectations

The argument formulated in this article represents a rather simple equation. Universities require X and Y of Indigenous scholars. Experts contend that you need to practice A, B, C, and D to achieve X and Y. Therefore, universities need to recognize and support A, B, C, and D as crucial elements of academic roles. This basic formula represents the connection between job advertisements and tenure and promotion for Indigenous academics. The argument of this article is not criticizing the inclusion of Indigenous Knowledges and community connection in recruitment, but instead encouraging universities to align their practices of evaluation with their practices of recruitment. In this context, universities require connections to both Indigenous Knowledges and communities for all 15 academic positions reviewed in this research. However, Indigenous academics and Knowledge Keepers contend that in order to maintain Knowledges and community connections we must spend time in our territory and with our people, attend ceremonies, and adhere to communal responsibilities. Therefore, if universities are including requirements of Indigenous Knowledges and connections to communities, concrete recognition must be included in our contracts and criteria for evaluation. What follows are possibilities for universities or individual faculties to align their hiring requirements with the practical supports provided to Indigenous scholars. There are limitless possibilities, and this list is by no means exhaustive, but it is imperative to start with concrete and accessible recommendations that can be implemented in short-term approaches.

### Provide Funding and Time for Community Visits outside of Research Agendas

The initial phase of this process is to ensure that any position necessitating Indigenous Knowledges and community connections has corresponding recognition in the contract. Recognition to certify the practical means by which the maintenance of Knowledge will be funded, included in job requirements, and acknowledged in tenure and promotion. For example, funding could be handled through an expansion of professional expense reimbursements (PER) or their equivalent in other institutions. Under the current guidelines

at the University of Calgary (2018b),[3] eligible PER expenses include "travel or local expenses related to meetings or research activities not covered by normal travel grants in accordance with the University travel policy" (p. 7). The condition of research-related travel limits the acceptable expenditures to Western approaches of relationship building and Knowledge creation. Moreover, it delineates community visits as a transactional relationship that exchanges time spent in the community for access to research participants. Expanding the acceptable professional expenses to include community visits without a research agenda provides a venue for meaningful creation of Indigenous Knowledges and relationships. In these cases, scholars would make community visits with no intention of ever conducting research. This is not an argument for an inequitable disbursement of funds to Indigenous scholars, but simply a request to expand the current eligible expenditures to include knowledge creation or relationship development outside of a research context.

A potential workload approach to honouring community obligations is to provide course releases for faculty members who have responsibilities in traditional societies, kinscapes (Macdougall & St-Onge, 2016), clans, hereditary structures, or any other Indigenous system of Knowledge creation. Currently, within the Werklund School of Education, where I am an assistant professor, there is no formal policy or criteria related to course releases, which means the emphasis is placed upon the understanding of the administration. The sole responsibility cannot be cast on administration to adjudicate, a policy is imperative to safeguard access to the workload acknowledgement of supplementary roles. In one hiring committee interview, I witnessed an academic respond to multiple questions about their position in traditional Indigenous societies. Based on the interview, it was apparent that their participation in the society was an essential component of their attractiveness as an applicant. Since universities are purposefully pursuing academics who hold positions in traditional societies, space must be afforded for sustained participation in the roles and responsibilities of being a society member.

One possibility is to dedicate a course release for societal roles, which can stipulate a set number of work hours a professor can dedicate to their role in the traditional

3 In this section on practical recommendations, the article will rely on the University of Calgary's guidelines for tenure and promotion. While the policies differ between institutions, the policies at the University of Calgary (2018b) will be used as the entry point for this discussion.

society. Faculty administration could attend a community event to announce that part of the academic's teaching load will be dedicated to honouring their roles in traditional societies, kinscapes, or clan systems. A recognition of community roles as part of Indigenous academics' positions would signal to First Nations and Métis communities that the institution truly values connections to community and Indigenous Knowledge systems. Moreover, universities are not disconnecting Knowledge Keepers from their community for the benefit of the institution.

A colleague shared an illustration of this phenomenon manifesting in a high school context (L. Prince, personal communication, January 8, 2019). Despite being a high school example, this is a familiar practice in the relationship between Indigenous Knowledge Keepers and educational institutions, which speaks to the larger relationships between systems and community. A hereditary chief was hired to support an education initiative to Indigenize the curriculum. The district recruited the Knowledge Keeper explicitly "because of her academic and cultural knowledge." Complications surfaced when a death in the community required the educator to attend to their obligations in the Balhats system, which is the sacred responsibility of a hereditary chief. However, colleagues and administration grew resentful and eventually dismissive of the time the hereditary chief committed to her community responsibilities. Education systems are eager to recruit Indigenous educators who are steeped in Indigenous Knowledge, yet have no systems in place to support their continued roles within traditional systems. The incongruity can result in Indigenous educators losing their standing in the community, which makes them no longer desirable to the school, resulting in the once-respected member of an Indigenous community losing both their traditional and Western roles simultaneously. It would be comparable to hiring a pastor at a school for their spiritual knowledge and not giving them Sunday off for Mass or the Christmas break for religious ceremonies. However, this could never happen, since Canadian society and work schedules are already designed to accommodate Christian ceremonies.

## Expanding Criteria in Annual Performance Reports, Tenure, and Promotion

Research by the Canadian Association of University Teachers (2018) has discovered a 40% growth (from 1% to 1.4%) of Indigenous scholars in Canadian universities in the

decade leading up to 2016. However, Henry et al. (2017) have identified that, with each level of promotion, the representation of Indigenous academics is substantially reduced. There are a multitude of causations and artificial barriers to which we can attribute the lack of ascendancy of Indigenous scholars. An important place to begin is examining the established policy frameworks used to assess yearly performance, give tenure, and provide promotion into the ranks of associate and full professor. The University of Calgary (2005) guidelines for promotion and tenure in its collective agreement includes the following statement:

> The University of Calgary is committed to achieve and maintain a fair and representative work force. This commitment includes: a) measures for the identification and removal of artificial barriers to the selection, appointment, promotion, and training of members of the following groups: women, aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities, and visible minorities. (p. 4)

This statement marks a commitment to removing artificial barriers to tenure and promotion for Indigenous people. Beyond vague commitments, it is imperative to develop practical policy for the removal of said barriers in this process, cultivating platitudes into actionable change. Moreover, it is critical to remember that a primary aim of this article is to promote an alignment of recruitment advertisements and tools of evaluation in faculties of higher education.

The tenure and promotion framework for the University of Calgary (2005) includes four areas of recognition that are structured into the scholarships of discovery, integration, application, and teaching. Within the scholarship of discovery—which is most often associated with research—we have indicators of success that include "authored book; edited book; monograph; article in journal; book chapter; paper published in conference proceedings; full text paper presented at a conference; presentations to academic or professional conferences; reports or other documents" (p. 17). Conference presentations are an occasion for scholars to build and disseminate their knowledge. What if we are hired, at least partially, for our Indigenous Knowledges? While there are conferences and sites of dissemination recognized by the university, there are also ceremonies, communal events, and responsibilities critical to our growth as scholars. A logical step is to either extend the definition of "conferences" to include community gatherings or to specifically name Indigenous events and ceremonies as spaces of knowledge development

and dissemination recognized in our research programs. The example given here is only one possibility in the realm of research. A wealth of additional changes in policy related to research, teaching, and service can expand the systems of tenure and promotion in any university.

Criticisms may emerge from non-Indigenous scholars who want their position in a church or attendance of a family reunion recognized in their performance report. In these cases I would agree, as long as the advertisements for their position included being hired for Christian Knowledge or participation in a specific community. Since Indigenous academics are being hired precisely for their Knowledge systems and community relationship, this is the justification for their inclusion. Participation in ceremonies, time on the land, and relationship building need to be appreciated as academic pursuits that are critical for knowledgeable, community-engaged Indigenous scholars, as they are stated in recruitment.

## Educate Non-Indigenous Scholars about Its Importance

A compulsory next step is to educate committees on the necessity and significance of Indigenous-focused criteria in tenure and promotion rubrics. Scholars unfamiliar with Indigenous education and Knowledge systems may devalue the new criteria due to unfamiliarity with the field, resulting in the policy changing but the practice remaining stagnant. It is paramount that leadership, committees, and colleagues are educated about the necessity of an expansive and relevant definition of academic activities. Given the gaps in individual and institutional knowledge and the persisting need to decolonize, it would be expected that committee members and colleagues may dismiss the practice of community visits, ceremony, time on the land, or other pursuits of Indigenous Knowledge as outside of the academic purview, regardless of the established policy. The policy is merely a document, we entrust our committees to interpret and weigh the strength of an application through their own experience and ways of knowing. Moreover, it is imperative to think strategically about manoeuvring any policy, governance, or practice approaches through various strata of leadership. Transformation cannot come from administration alone, unions can take a leadership position and help nurture anti-oppressive environments through collective bargaining and supportive messaging.

There are scores of examples of Indigenous practices in education being deemed lesser than Western approaches. Research (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018) has revealed that students and colleagues frequently believe that Indigenous scholars have not earned their station in the institution. There is an erroneous assumption that Indigenous research does not carry the same rigour or scientific foundations (Mohamed & Beagan, 2018). Moreover, students feel comfortable challenging the authority of professors of colour (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017), significant wage gaps persist (Henry et al., 2017), and Western academic journals are ranked as the highest tier. A pertinent example is the creation of Indigenous-focused education programs in universities across Western Canada. A consistent frustration of these schools is their informal branding as a lower standard of teacher education (Archibald & La Rochelle, 2018). In reality, the students who attend these programs are required to learn the standard teacher education curriculum, while also learning about teaching Indigenous students and ways of knowing. Critics of these programs often base their allegations on nothing more than racist assumptions (Archibald & La Rochelle, 2018). The assumption of White supremacy, which is the foundation of colonization, assumes that any Indigenous program or scholar is somehow inferior to their Western or White counterpart. Universities, despite their liberal self-image, are still steeped in the unconscious traditions of White supremacy.

Teacher education programs across Canada now incorporate compulsory Indigenous education courses (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017) that challenge students' assumptions, teach Indigenous history, unveil collusion with colonial agendas, and empower teachers to become agents of decolonization. A paralleled approach is vital within the ranks of the academy, where many of the same assumptions, often unknowingly, are enacted through the lowered expectations and oppressive gatekeeping of Indigenous faculty. Enacting meaningful change requires in-service education for academics at every level. In-service training can explain the justification for changes in policy while working to challenge the foundations of colonial mentalities. Shifting policy is one step in this process, but we must also look to empower administration, committees, unions, and fellow scholars to achieve a fluency in decolonizing approaches and Indigenizing shifts in our frameworks for hiring, promoting, and recognizing scholarly activity. There are myriad avenues for negotiating the application of compulsory in-service training and responding to expected resistance from faculty members. In many cases, universities have developed Indigenous strategies that have wide-ranging implications and requirements for faculty

and administration (University of Calgary, 2018b). In other cases there are provincial or federal mandates that require public institutions to take up the calls of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2015). Prior to relying on external motivations, Indigenous scholars and allies in these universities can frame in-service training as supportive instead of confrontational.

## Conclusion

If universities refuse to recognize and support Indigenous academics' community visits and participation in traditional events, this will not lead to a complete separation from these practices. However, Indigenous scholars will face an untenable load between the official and unofficial requirements of their academic positions. Burnout, failure in promotion, or self-removal from the academic system are predictable costs of Indigenous scholars facing an overburdening workload. This is an unfortunate reality for many Indigenous scholars. Remember, the dual roles referenced here are based on the universities' pursuit in their recruitment material for Indigenous scholars. Mohamed and Beagan (2018) found that people of colour in academic positions are often overworked due to such additional responsibilities. Keep in mind that Indigenous professors are often the lone representation of their cultural group in the faculty (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018), which leads to being drawn into a plethora of committees, guest lectures, and research studies to give the "Indigenous perspective." A renewed focus on Indigeneity in higher learning is cause for excitement, but we need to be deliberate in our growth beyond simply representation. At present there are aspects of Indigenous academics' roles that are going unrecognized, causing undue stress, limiting chances of success, and compromising the possibility of ascending to positions of leadership and stability in the academy.

In practice, I contend that administrators exist, mine included, who recognize and celebrate the benefits of community connections and participation in traditional systems, beyond the recruitment phase. The recommendations presented here already exist, informally, for some Indigenous scholars who are empowered with freedom in teaching, research, and service. However, this is due to personal understanding in the levels of leadership and not to directed policy. Relying on the individual understanding of leadership is a precarious position because leadership transitions can result in the disappearance

of institutional knowledge in these areas. It is imperative to institute formal policy that protects the rights of Indigenous academics to faithfully undertake their institutional roles—as invited to do by the criteria through which they were appointed.

The recommendations offered here, or the notion of assessments matching job advertisements, will not be the panacea for decolonizing post-secondary institutions. Dozens of decolonizing projects of various size and ambition can be taken up simultaneously in governance, teaching and learning, curriculum design, leadership, human resources, and countless areas of academia. Slightly shifting a few words in PER expenditures, tenure and promotion criteria, providing course releases for traditional responsibilities, and establishing compulsory professional development for academic staff may seem inconsequential. However, real life implications for Indigenous scholars may be the difference between success and failure. The simple recommendations made here can form a starting point that can be a catalyst for bold and audacious long-term planning. Each of these projects may constitute one small part of a larger revolution, an accumulation of accessible changes that usher in an era of systemic transformation.

## References

Archibald, J. (2008). *Indigenous storywork: Educating the heart, mind, body, and spirit*. Vancouver, BC: UBC Press.

Archibald, J., & La Rochelle, J. (2018). Raven's response to teacher education: NITEP, an Indigenous story. In P. Whitinui, C. Rodriguez de France, & O. McIvor (Eds.), *Promising practices in Indigenous teacher education* (pp. 207–220). Singapore: Springer.

Battiste, M. (2013). *Decolonizing education: Nourishing the learning spirit*. Vancouver, BC: UBC Press.

Canadian Association of University Teachers. (2018). *The slow march towards equity*. Retrieved from https://www.caut.ca/bulletin/2018/04/slow-march-toward-equity

Dei, G. J. S. (2000). Rethinking the role of indigenous knowledges in the academy. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, *4*(2), 111–132.

Fiske, J. A., & Patrick, B. (2000). *Cis dideen kat (When the plumes rise): The way of the Lake Babine Nation*. Vancouver, BC: UBC Press.

Gaudry, A., & Lorenz, D. (2018). Indigenization as inclusion, reconciliation, and decolonization: Navigating the different visions for indigenizing the Canadian Academy. *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples*, *14*(3), 218–227.

Goulet, L. M., & Goulet, K. N. (2014). *Teaching each other: Nehinuw concepts and Indigenous pedagogies*. Vancouver, BC: UBC Press.

Hampton, E. (1995). Towards a redefinition of Indian education. In M. Battiste & J. Barman (Eds.), *First Nations education in Canada: The circle unfolds* (pp. 5–46). Vancouver, BC: UBC Press.

Henry, F., Dua, E., Kobayashi, A., James, C., Li, P., Ramos, H., & Smith, M. S. (2017). Race, racialization and Indigeneity in Canadian universities. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, *20*(3), 300–314.

Kovach, M. (2009). *Indigenous methodologies: Characteristics, conversations, and contexts*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Lewington, J. (2018, November 14). A new network aims to connect and support Indigenous scholars. *Maclean's*. Retrieved from https://www.macleans.ca/education/indigenous-scholars-network-connect/

Little Bear, L. (2000). Jagged worldviews colliding. In M. Battiste (Ed.), *Reclaiming Indigenous voice and vision* (pp. 77–85). Vancouver, BC: UBC Press.

Little Bear, L. (2015). *Blackfoot metaphysics waiting in the wings* (Doctoral dissertation). University of New Brunswick. Retrieved from http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/obj/thesescanada/vol2/002/NR82763.PDF

Louie, D., Poitras Pratt, Y., Ottmann, J., & Hanson, A. (2017). Applying Indigenizing principles of decolonizing methodologies in university classrooms. *Canadian Journal of Higher Education*, *47*(3), 16–33.

Macdougall, B., & St-Onge, N. (2016). Métis in the borderlands of the northern Plains in the nineteenth century. In A. Anderson & J. O'Brien (Eds.), *Sources and methods in Indigenous studies* (pp. 257–276). New York, NY: Routeledge

Mohamed, T., & Beagan, B. L. (2018). "Strange faces" in the academy: Experiences of racialized and Indigenous faculty in Canadian universities. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, *22*(3), 338–354.

Mount Saint Vincent University. (2019). *Tenure track faculty position (Indigenous Knowledge and pedagogy in education)*. Retrieved from https://www.linkedin.com/jobs/view/assistant-professor-faculty-of-education-indigenous-knowledge-and-pedagogy-mount-saint-vincent-university-at-mount-saint-vincent-university-1057508255 [URL is no longer valid]

Poitras Pratt, Y., Louie, D., Hanson, A. J., & Ottmann, J. (2018). Indigenous education and decolonizing. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Education*. doi:10.1093/acrefore/9780190264093.013.240

Proulx, C. (2018). White backlash against Indigenous Peoples in Canada. *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies*, *38*(1), 75–89.

Sensoy, O., & DiAngelo, R. (2017). *Is everyone really equal? An introduction to key concepts in social justice education*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Simon Fraser University. (2019). Faculty position: Assistant professor. Retrieved from http://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/fnst/pdf/Assistant%20Professor%2C%20Tenure%20Track.pdf [URL is no longer valid]

Statistics Canada. (2018). *National Indigenous peoples day…by the numbers*. Retrieved from: https://www.statcan.gc.ca/eng/dai/smr08/2018/smr08_225_2018

St-Onge, N., & Podruchny, C. (2012). Scuttling along a spider's web: Mobility and kinship in Metis ethnogenesis. In N. St-Onge, C. Podreuchny, & B. Macdougall (Eds.), *Contours of a people: Métis family, mobility, and history* (pp. 59–92). Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to action*. Retrieved from http://trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf

University of Calgary. (2005). *Procedures pertaining to the appointment, promotion, and tenure of academic staff*. Retrieved from https://www.ucalgary.ca/hr/files/hr/apt-educjune05.pdf

University of Calgary. (2017). *Greeting our new recruits*. Faculty of Arts. Retrieved from https://arts.ucalgary.ca/news/greeting-our-new-recruits [URL no longer valid]

University of Calgary. (2018a). *Professional expense reimbursement (PER) handbook: Procedures and guidelines*. Retrieved from https://www.ucalgary.ca/hr/files/hr/perhandbook.pdf

University of Calgary. (2018b). *Canada Research Chair (tier ii) Indigenous heritage*. Retrieved from https://www.academicgates.com/job/detail/00155d140103-11e8-de9d-f4a916c2-be70

University of Victoria. (2019). *Assistant professor: Indigenous education*. Retrieved from https://csse-scee.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/employment_2018_07Jul_uVic_INED_210-082_AP.pdf

UToday. (2013). *Inclusivity a standard for faculty, staff, and students*. Retrieved from https://www.ucalgary.ca/utoday/issue/2013-11-01/inclusivity-standard-faculty-staff-and-students [URL no longer valid]

Wilson, S. (2001). What is an Indigenous research methodology? *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, *25*(2), 175–179.