



EMBRACING  
TRANSFORMATION:  
INDIGENIZING &  
DECOLONIZING  
ORIENTATION PROGRAMS



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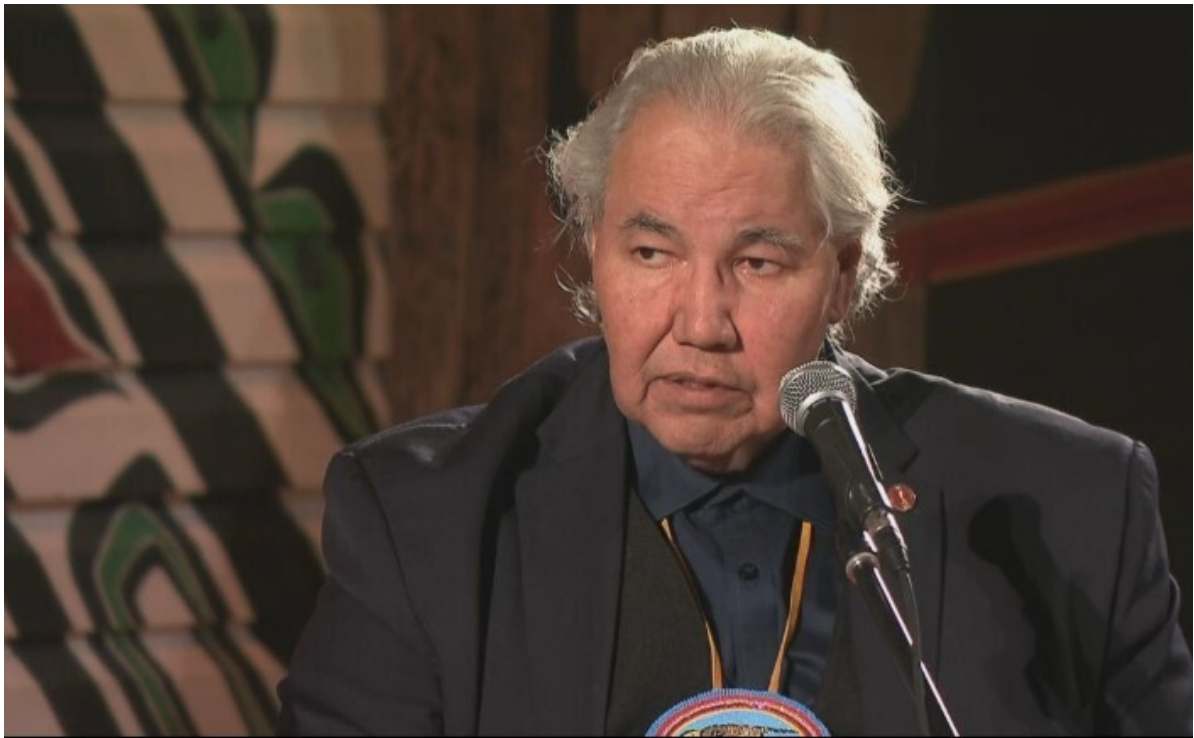
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WE HAVE DESCRIBED FOR YOU A MOUNTAIN. WE HAVE SHOWN YOU THE PATH TO THE TOP. WE CALL ON YOU TO DO THE CLIMBING

— *Senator Murray Sinclair, Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2015)*



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## TERMS

### COLONIALISM:

Colonialism a practice or policy of control by one people or power over other people or areas, often by establishing colonies and generally with the aim of economic dominance. In the process of colonization, colonizers may impose their religion, language, economics, and other cultural practices. The foreign administrators rule the territory in pursuit of their interests, seeking to benefit from the colonized region's people and resources. It is associated with but distinct from imperialism.

### DECOLONIZATION:

The process of dismantling colonial ideologies, systems, and structures that perpetuate the oppression and marginalization of Indigenous peoples. Decolonization involves critically examining and challenging the assumptions, beliefs, and practices that have shaped Western institutions and embracing alternative ways of thinking and acting that center Indigenous voices, experiences, and perspectives.

### INDIGENIZATION:

The process of incorporating Indigenous knowledge, perspectives, and practices into institutions, systems, and structures. Indigenization recognizes the unique cultural, historical, and spiritual contributions of Indigenous peoples and seeks to create a more inclusive and diverse environment that honors and respects Indigenous ways of knowing and being.

### RECONCILIATION:

The ongoing process of building respectful and just relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples to address the historical and ongoing impacts of colonization, residential schools, and systemic discrimination. Reconciliation involves recognizing and addressing past and present injustices, fostering healing and understanding, and working together to create a more equitable and inclusive society.



## INDIGENOUS LAWS:

The customs, traditions, and practices of Indigenous peoples that form their legal systems. These laws, often orally transmitted through generations, are embedded in various cultural forms, including songs, stories, ceremonies, and land use practices. They are living and evolving, responding to contemporary societal issues. Indigenous laws represent the relationship between Indigenous communities, the land, and all living beings, aiming to maintain harmony and balance. It is crucial to recognize and revitalize these laws as part of reconciliation and decolonization processes.

## ABORIGINAL LAW:

Aboriginal law in Canada refers to a body of law that concerns a variety of legal issues related to Indigenous peoples in Canada, including treaty rights, land claims, self-governance, taxation, hunting and fishing rights, and cultural protection. It's an area of law that has been shaped by constitutional legislation, statutory law, and court rulings. Aboriginal law is distinct from Indigenous laws. The latter refers to the legal traditions, practices, and customs of Indigenous peoples themselves, which are embedded in their unique cultures, histories, and philosophies.

Indigenous laws often govern relationships and responsibilities within Indigenous communities and with the land and environment. Whereas Aboriginal law includes the principles outlined in Section 35 of the Canadian Constitution Act, 1982, which recognizes and affirms existing Aboriginal and treaty rights. This includes rights of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. These legal principles guide negotiations between Indigenous groups and the federal and provincial governments, and are interpreted and applied in Canadian courts. It's important to note that the legal landscape in Canada is evolving to increasingly recognize and incorporate Indigenous legal traditions, partly due to the work of Indigenous legal scholars and the ongoing process of reconciliation in Canada.

## TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION OF CANADA (TRC):

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Canada is an official body established in 2008 as part of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement. The commission was created to investigate and address the historical injustices and human rights abuses inflicted upon Indigenous peoples in Canada through the Indian Residential School system, which operated from (approximately) the 1850s until the late 20th century. The TRC concluded its work in 2015, releasing a final report that included 94 Calls to Action. These calls to action covered a wide range of areas, such as child welfare, education, language and culture, health, and justice, with the aim of guiding Canadian society toward healing, reconciliation, and a more just and equitable future for Indigenous peoples.

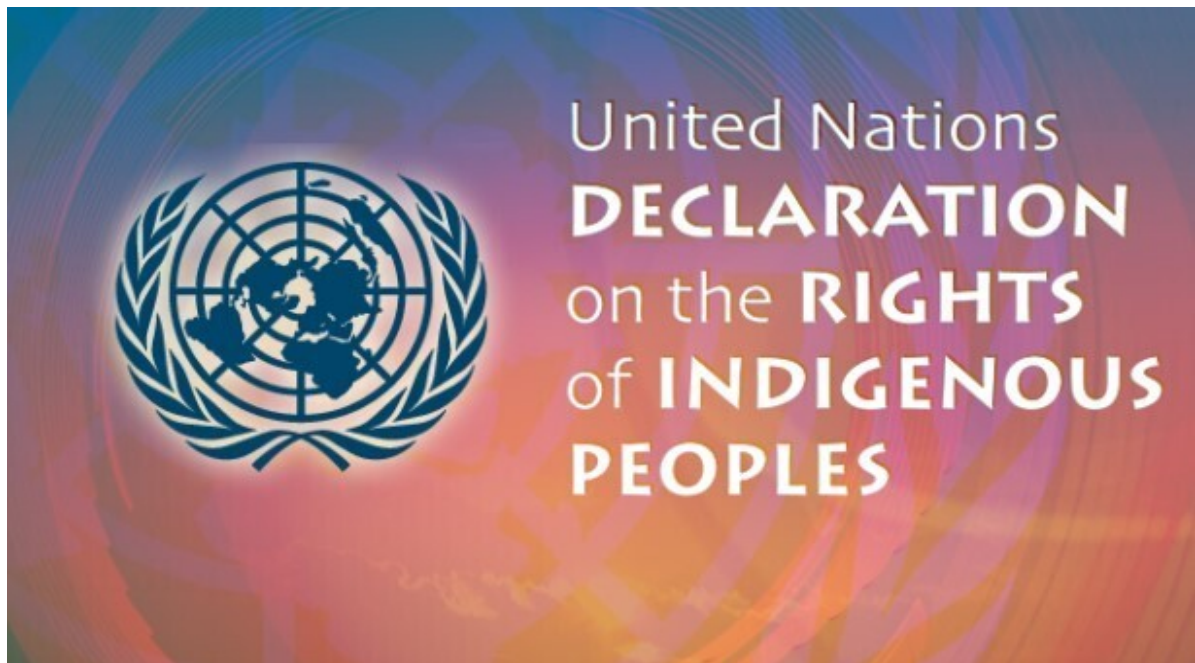
## UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES (UNDRIP):

UNDRIP is a comprehensive international human rights instrument adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on September 13, 2007. UNDRIP outlines the rights of Indigenous peoples globally and establishes a universal framework of minimum standards for their survival, dignity, and well-being. UNDRIP contains 46 articles that cover various aspects of Indigenous peoples' rights, including:

- 1). The right to self-determination, which includes the right to freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social, and cultural development.
- 2). The right to maintain and strengthen their distinct political, legal, economic, social, and cultural institutions while retaining the right to participate fully in the political, economic, social, and cultural life of the state.
- 3). The right to be free from discrimination and to have their cultural traditions, customs, and land rights recognized and respected.
- 4). The right to maintain, protect, and develop the past, present, and future manifestations of their cultures, such as archaeological and historical sites, artifacts, designs, ceremonies, and technologies.



5).The right to redress for past human rights violations, including forced assimilation and dispossession of their lands, territories, and resources. UNDRIP is a significant milestone in the recognition and protection of the rights of Indigenous peoples worldwide. While not legally binding, it serves as a guiding document for governments and other institutions to develop policies and practices that respect and promote the rights of Indigenous peoples.



# THE BEGINNING

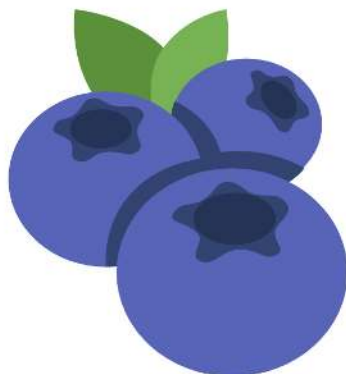


## LEARNING LEVELS

# Levels of Indigenous Learning



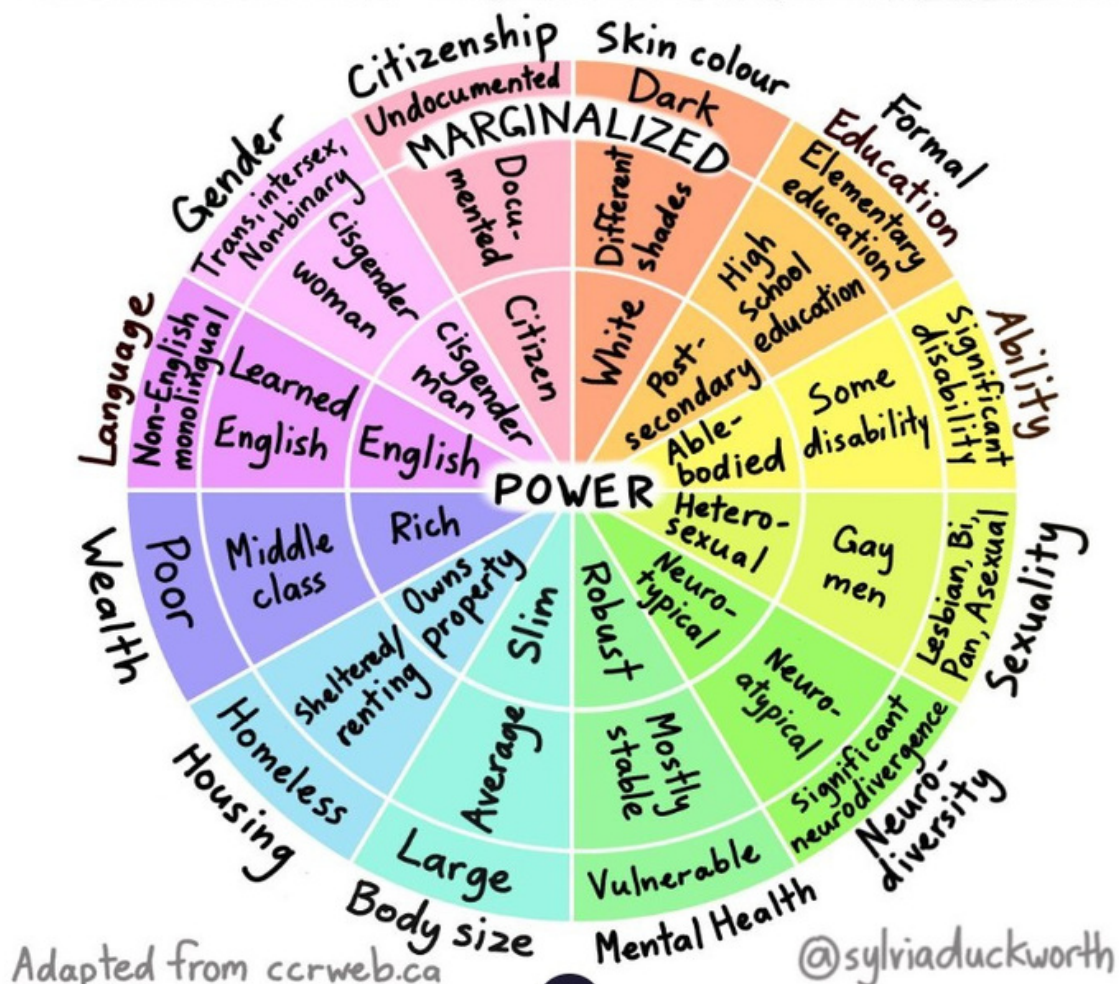
<b>Level</b>	<b>Beginner or Level 1/Step 1</b>	<b>Intermediate or Level 2/Step 2</b>	<b>Advanced or Level 3/Step 3</b>
<b>Type</b>	Indigenous Cultural Awareness	Indigenous Engagement	Indigenization
<b>Topics</b>	First Nations, Inuit, Métis History Pre-colonization-Colonization-Now/Treaties/Aboriginal rights	What is engagement? What is consultation? Rationale and requirements for Indigenous engagement, engagement principles, engagement planning	Learning, Unlearning, Relearning/TDC/JNDRIP/MMIWG25/Accountability Trauma-informed/Ethical Spaces/Listening/Lens shift/Building Good Relationships/Reflection/Indigenous rights & laws
<b>Delivery</b>	online hopefully soon	Ongoing between you and local Indigenous communities by taking workshops/attending events/learning on your own/creating accountability measures within your unit	CTL: Lori and Andrea





# CHECKING IN WITH YOURSELF BEFORE YOU DO THE WORK

## WHEEL OF POWER/PRIVILEGE



## PREFACE: THE JOURNEY TOWARDS RECONCILIATION, DECOLONIZATION, AND INDIGENIZATION IN ORIENTATION PROGRAMS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

As we reflect on our institution's history and future, it is crucial to acknowledge the significant role the University of Alberta plays in the path towards reconciliation, decolonization, and Indigenization. This is not a journey we embark on lightly; rather, it requires careful introspection, a deep understanding of our past, and a firm commitment to enact meaningful change in our present and future.

Our locations on Treaty 6, 7 & 8 territories, the Métis Settlements and Métis Nation of Alberta regions reminds us of our accountabilities to the Indigenous communities we are privileged and honoured to serve and our responsibilities to uphold the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action (TRC), Indigenous laws, the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2 Spirit 231 Calls for Justice (MMIWG2S), Indigenous sovereignty, Indigenous land rights, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). This is a commitment we have stemming from the TRC, and we have this honour, privilege, and duty to reflect Indigenous knowledges and ways of being in every facet of our institution, including our Faculty Orientation Programs.

Indigenization involves integrating Indigenous knowledges, laws, and perspectives into our institution, moving over, and letting Indigenous peoples lead. This is not merely about 'including' Indigenous cultures, but about fundamentally transforming our institutional structures, policies, practices, and ideologies to ensure that Indigenous peoples and Indigenous epistemologies are not merely added to, but rather central in our university. Why? Because the University of Alberta is on Indigenous land and the Treaties have not been honoured in any way, shape or form here.

Reconciliation, a term deeply rooted in the principles of justice, respect, and acknowledgement, calls upon Canadians to take action. It demands that Canadians recognize and redress the harm done by colonial structures and policies, and work towards healing, equity, and understanding Indigenous sovereignty.

Decolonization is the process of dismantling these harmful structures that persist within our institution and replacing them with systems that truly reflect, respect, and value Indigenous knowledges, cultures, laws, Indigenous sovereignty, learning styles, and traditions. This means moving beyond token gestures and superficial acknowledgements, and towards deeply transformative changes in each one of our practices and policies.

As we embark on this journey, Canadians must do so with humility and understanding that it will be a continuous learning process, filled with challenges, but also tremendous potential for growth and positive change. The University of Alberta's Faculty Orientation Programs are the initial touchpoint for new students, and we recognize the potential they hold in communicating our commitment towards Reconciliation, Decolonization, and Indigenization.

We extend our gratitude to the Indigenous communities who have guided us in this journey thus far, and who we all must hold ourselves accountable to. We look forward to a future where every student stepping on to University of Alberta lands, begins their journey with an understanding of our shared history and our collective honour and privilege towards creating a more equitable and inclusive university and society.





## INTRODUCTION: THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA'S COMMITMENT TO TRUTH & RECONCILIATION

The University of Alberta, situated on Treaty 6 territory and the ancestral lands of the Cree, Blackfoot, Métis, Nakota Sioux, Haudenosaunee/Iroquois, Dene, and Ojibway/Saulteaux/Anishinaabe, recognizes the importance of acknowledging and honouring the Indigenous peoples who have called this land home since time immemorial. The University of Alberta acknowledges the historical and ongoing impacts of colonization on Indigenous peoples and is committed to fostering meaningful relationships with Indigenous individuals and communities and implementing transformative changes towards truth, reconciliation, and decolonization in our programs, processes, and decision-making.

The TRC released its final report in 2015, outlining 94 Calls to Action that urge Canadian institutions, governments, and individuals to redress the harmful legacy of residential schools and move towards healing and reconciliation. As part of its response to the TRC's Calls to Action, the University of Alberta has developed an Indigenous Strategic Plan to guide its efforts in supporting Indigenous students, staff, and faculty, and integrating Indigenous knowledges, perspectives, and cultures into the fabric of the institution.

Orientation programs play a crucial role in welcoming new students to the university community and setting the tone for their academic journey. Indigenizing and decolonizing faculty orientation programs is an essential step in creating a more inclusive and supportive environment for Indigenous students, as well as engaging non-Indigenous students in the process of reconciliation. By fostering respectful relationships, raising awareness of Indigenous peoples and communities, Indigenous laws, Indigenous sovereignty, Indigenous lands and our varied cultures across Treaty 6, 7 and 8, the Métis Settlements and the Métis Nation of Alberta regions, and supporting Indigenous-led initiatives, and coming from an Indigenous-centric place, the University of Alberta can contribute to the broader movement towards healing and decolonization in Canadian society.

## INDIGENIZATION PATH



## 2. UNDERSTANDING INDIGENIZATION, DECOLONIZATION, AND RECONCILIATION

### 2.1. DEFINING MORE KEY TERMS

Before diving into the process of transforming Faculty Orientation Programs, it is essential to understand the key concepts that guide our efforts. The following definitions provide a foundation for our discussion:

- **Indigenization:** The process of incorporating Indigenous knowledge, perspectives, and practices into institutions, systems, and structures. Indigenization recognizes the unique cultural, historical, and spiritual contributions of Indigenous peoples and seeks to create a more inclusive and diverse environment that honors and respects Indigenous ways of knowing, being and sovereignty while we occupy their lands as uninvited guests.
- **Decolonization:** The process of dismantling colonial ideologies, systems, and structures that perpetuate the oppression and marginalization of Indigenous peoples and that Canadians currently operate and make decision in today. Decolonization involves critically examining and challenging the assumptions, beliefs, and practices that have shaped Western institutions and embracing alternative ways of thinking and acting that center Indigenous voices, laws, learning, experiences, lands, and perspectives.
- **Reconciliation:** The ongoing process of building respectful and reciprocal relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous individuals and communities to address the historical and ongoing impacts of colonization, systemic discrimination, micro-aggressions, and racism they face hourly. Reconciliation involves recognizing and addressing past and present injustices and your role in it now; fostering a different way of being; and being held accountable to next actions that may not fit colonized-Westernized- standardized ways of operating, implementing programs, transforming, or making decisions, so you must have courage to embark on this journey and change the mold in a different way that may seem uncomfortable to you and may seem like you are being traitorous or



**Epistemic Disobedience:** In order to move beyond the limitations of colonialism, Mignolo, W. and Tlostanova, M.V ((2012) "Learning to unlearn: Decolonial reflections from Eurasia and the Americas") suggest that we need to engage in what is called epistemic disobedience. This involves questioning dominant narratives and challenging the legitimacy of the systems and institutions that perpetuate colonialism. By doing so, we can begin to shift the balance of power and create new possibilities for collective action.

**The Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery:** The Church's repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery raises questions about the validity of Canadian laws and policies that are based on this outdated and harmful ideology. This development may prompt a reevaluation and potential revision of Western academic and legal frameworks, leading to a more equitable and inclusive approach to Indigenous rights, land claims, and more.

**Traitorous Love:** Lussier and Stuchley argue that simply being an ally to Indigenous peoples is not enough - instead, they advocate for a more radical approach that involves actively challenging dominant Western paradigms and supporting the work of Indigenous peoples in rebuilding their communities. By using the term, "traitorous," Lussier and Stuchley are suggesting that this approach requires a willingness to challenge established norms and values within the legal system, even if it means going against one's own interests or those of one's colleagues. In this sense, they see their work as a form of resistance against colonial ideologies that continue to operate within the academy and the legal system more broadly.

THE MASTER'S TOOLS WILL NEVER DISMANTLE THE MASTER'S HOUSE

— Audre Lorde, *Black American Scholar and Poet*

## 2.2 THE IMPORTANCE OF LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Land acknowledgements are an important practice in the journey towards reconciliation, as they recognize the Indigenous peoples who have lived on, cared for, and maintained relationships with the land since time immemorial. By acknowledging the traditional territories on which the University of Alberta is situated, we honor the contributions and resilience of Indigenous peoples, raise awareness of the ongoing impacts of colonization, and commit ourselves to working towards a more just and equitable society.

Incorporating land acknowledgements in orientation programs and campus activities is a meaningful way to begin the process of indigenization and decolonization, as it sets the stage for respectful engagement with Indigenous histories, cultures, and perspectives. Land acknowledgements should be grounded in genuine understanding and respect, and delivered in a manner that invites reflection, dialogue, and action.



Eagle feather & smoky sky. Photo credit Andrea Menard, May 2023



## 2.3 ALLYSHIP AND ITS ROLE IN RECONCILIATION

Allyship is a critical component of the reconciliation process, as it involves non-Indigenous individuals actively supporting and advocating for Indigenous peoples and their rights, cultures, and well-being. Allyship requires ongoing self-reflection, education, and a commitment to challenging one's own biases, assumptions, and privileges. In the context of orientation programs and campus activities, allyship involves creating spaces for Indigenous voices to be heard, supporting Indigenous-led initiatives, and fostering an environment in which all students are encouraged to engage in the process of reconciliation. By promoting allyship and nurturing a culture of mutual respect and understanding, the University of Alberta can foster a more inclusive and supportive community for all of its members.



Indigenous students, community members, elder, and staff with non-Indigenous students, faculty and staff joining together for the "Walking With Our Sisters" beading circle, Aboriginal Students Association space. University of Alberta, North Campus. 2012. Photo Credit: Andrea Menard.

### 3. INDIGENIZING AND DECOLONIZING ORIENTATION PROGRAMS: THE POTENTIAL FRAMEWORK



University of Alberta, Augustana Campus. Indigenous and non-Indigenous community members strategizing for Indigenous Peoples Day. May 2023. Photo Credit: Sydney Tancowny

To Indigenize and decolonize orientation programs at the University of Alberta, it is essential to develop a framework that guides the planning, implementation, and evaluation of these programs. The following elements form the foundation of this potential framework you can utilize as you re-design, decolonize and Indigenize:

### 3.1 COLLABORATION WITH INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

This is depicted in Levels of Indigenous Learning Level 2. Developing strong relationships with local Indigenous communities, Elders, and Traditional Knowledge Keepers is crucial for ensuring that Faculty Orientation Programming reflect Indigenous perspectives, values, lands, laws, and traditions. By actively engaging with Indigenous stakeholders and seeking their guidance and input, the University of Alberta can create culturally responsive programs that honor Indigenous knowledge systems and foster reciprocal respect.

Collaboration can take various forms, including:

- Inviting Elders and Traditional Knowledge Keepers to participate in orientation events and share their wisdom with students in Sharing Circles.
- Consulting with Indigenous student groups and nearby Indigenous community organizations to ensure that orientation programs meet their needs and aspirations.
- Establishing partnerships with local Indigenous communities to support ongoing collaboration and dialogue. Create quarterly tea and bannock get togethers.



## 3.2 CREATING TRAUMA-INFORMED & ETHICAL SPACES

Indigenizing and decolonizing Faculty Orientation Programs requires creating trauma-informed and ethical spaces where Indigenous students feel welcomed, supported, valued, and have a sense that their identity is important to the university.

- Providing culturally relevant resources and support services for Indigenous students, such as Indigenous Student Services and dedicated spaces for cultural activities and gatherings (First Peoples House); but are there any other? And if not, why not? Is this truly reconciliation/decolonization/Indigenization in action?
- Ensuring that orientation leaders and staff receive training in all *Levels of Indigenous Learning* as depicted earlier.
- Creating opportunities for students to engage in dialogue and reflection on the importance of reconciliation, decolonization, and Indigenization. Can you handle this? What else do you need to help you? An Indigenous person? Who?



Métis artist Jaime Black for the REDress Project, with University of Alberta students, 2012. Augustana Campus. Photo credit: Andrea Menard.

### 3.3 INTEGRATING INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGES AND PERSPECTIVES

To be accountable to reconciliation and adhere to the Indigenous Strategic Plan, orientation programs must integrate Indigenous knowledges and perspectives into their activities and events. This can be achieved by:

- Incorporating land acknowledgements, smudging ceremonies, Elders, Traditional Knowledge Keepers, and may include other appropriate Indigenous protocols in orientation events depending on the season, with proper protocol and permission from the Indigenous community, and with proper reciprocal relationships formed.
- Offering various Indigenous workshops, presentations, and discussions led by Indigenous scholars, artists, Traditional Knowledge Keepers, Indigenous language speakers, and Indigenous community members.

### REFLECTIONS

Do you have a budget for this? If not, why not?

Who will you contact? What is appropriate?

Do you know enough?

Will you respect the Indigenous individuals you invite in?

What are signs of respect?



- Encouraging students to participate in Indigenous-focused courses, programs, and extracurricular activities throughout their academic journey.

By adopting this framework and working closely with Indigenous stakeholders, the University of Alberta can create Faculty Orientation Programs that honour and celebrate Indigenous cultures, support Indigenous students, and engage the entire campus community in the journey towards reconciliation, Indigenization, and decolonization.

### REFLECTIONS

But is this tokenization? And what do we do about this surface-level introductions once a year?

If Faculty Orientation Programming is embarking on the reconciliation journey towards truth, are their faculties?

If we make these promises and rolemodel to the students what decolonization/Indigenization/reconciliation is like, and then the faculties don't follow through, is this fair?

What is appropriate in this instance?

What do we do?



## 4. EXAMPLES OF UNIVERSITY ORIENTATION PROGRAMS

The following examples offer inspiration and guidance for the University of Alberta as it seeks to transform its own Faculty Orientation Programming and foster a more inclusive and supportive campus community.

### 4.1 WELCOMING AND SUPPORTING INDIGENOUS STUDENTS

Creating a welcoming environment for Indigenous students during orientation is essential for their sense of belonging and well-being. The following examples demonstrate how institutions can create programs that specifically address the needs of Indigenous students:

- **Dedicated Indigenous Orientation Programs:** Offer separate orientation programs designed specifically for Indigenous students, providing a safe space for them to connect with their peers, access resources, and engage with their traditions, laws, and cultures. These programs may include cultural activities, presentations by Indigenous faculty scholars, and information sessions on available faculty in-house support services. Provide food and gifts (it is culturally appropriate).
- **Culturally Responsive Services and Trauma-Informed & Ethical Spaces:** You can start ensuring that Faculty Orientation Programming showcases Indigenized and decolonized, trauma-informed resources that offer a thought to providing ethical spaces in which Indigenous and non-Indigenous students can thrive within the faculty. Does your faculty have any of this? If not, why not?
- **Make sure you mention Indigenous Student Associations/Indigenous Graduate Student Associations .** Additionally, an Indigenous Mentorship Program would be beneficial to set up in your faculty, as well as a faculty-specific Indigenous Student Associations and have it as a high priority to budget/ and create capacity for./ and assist in managing if the Indigenous students need this (because there may be few students attending so it becomes a burden to them, but do not centre yourself in their efforts).

## 4.2 ENGAGING NON-INDIGENOUS STUDENTS IN RECONCILIATION

To foster a campus community that values and respects Indigenous cultures, laws, traditions, and ways of life, it is essential to engage non-Indigenous students in the process of reconciliation. Examples of successful practices can include:

- **Reconciliation Workshops and Panels:** Incorporating workshops and panel discussions on reconciliation, Indigenous histories, and contemporary issues into orientation programs can help raise awareness and encourage dialogue among non-Indigenous students. These sessions should be led by Indigenous speakers along with informed allies to ensure accurate and respectful representation.
- **Allyship Training:** Providing training on allyship, trauma-informed spaces, ethical spaces, accountability, learning, unlearning and relearning and reflective practises, Indigenous sovereignty, Indigenous rights, Indigenous land rights, Treaties, and Indigenous laws for orientation leaders and student volunteers can help create an equitable environment for Indigenous students, while also promoting a culture of respect and understanding among the broader student population.



### 4.3. BUILDING BRIDGES BETWEEN INDIGENOUS AND NON-INDIGENOUS STUDENTS

Fostering connections and promoting understanding between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students is a vital aspect of Indigenizing and decolonizing orientation programs. The following examples highlight successful practices in this area:

- **Shared Cultural Experiences:** Incorporating shared cultural experiences into orientation programs, such as traditional Indigenous storytelling, drumming, or dance performances, can create opportunities for students from diverse backgrounds to learn about and appreciate Indigenous cultures together.
- **Group Activities and Discussions:** Facilitating group activities and discussions that encourage students to share their own cultural backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives can help build bridges between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, fostering a sense of unity and respect. This should be facilitated by someone from a racialized culture and be trauma-informed. If this is not possible you can create an anonymous mentimeter where you can ask what land the students are coming from and how to Indigenize the land they are coming from. And then you can launch in and discuss the land the University of Alberta North Campus sits on, how to respect it, and how to become an ally by showing respect for the land, and how to create relationships with Indigenous peoples by reciprocity, relationality, and trust.

By reflecting, building capacity, and drawing on these examples, the University of Alberta Faculty Orientation Programming sectors can begin creating orientation programs that embody the principles of Indigenization, decolonization, and reconciliation.

## 5. INDIGENIZING AND DECOLONIZING CAMPUS ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

Beyond orientation programs, the University of Alberta must also work to Indigenize and decolonize campus activities and events throughout the academic year. This ongoing commitment will help create a campus culture that is inclusive, respectful, and supportive of Indigenous students, faculty, and staff. The following strategies can be employed to achieve this goal:

### 5.1. ENCOURAGING CULTURAL EXPRESSION AND PARTICIPATION

Promoting and supporting Indigenous cultural expression and participation in campus activities and events can help raise awareness and appreciation of Indigenous cultures among the broader campus community. This can include:

- Showcasing Indigenous art, music, dance, and other forms of creative expression in campus events, exhibitions, and performances.
- Inviting Indigenous guest speakers to share their expertise and perspectives in various campus forums, workshops, and seminars.
- Encouraging Indigenous student groups with the help from supportive allies to organize and host events that engage with the broader campus community.





Non-Indigenous students assisting in the REDress Project installation for the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls & 2 Spirit, 2012. Augustana Campus. Photo credit: Andrea Menard

## 5.2. HIGHLIGHTING INDIGENOUS PRESENCE AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Recognizing and celebrating the presence and contributions of Indigenous students, faculty, and staff is essential for fostering a sense of identity and belonging. Strategies for achieving this can include:

- Showcasing Indigenous research, scholarship, and achievements through campus publications, social media, and events and demonstrate how it the University of Alberta achieves diverse ways of knowledge gathering (e.g. showcase land-base learning from Dr. Dwyane Donald, or showcase Dr. Lana Whiskeyjack's art) and talk about how the University of Alberta is in the process of decolonizing and Indigenizing in order to practise reconciliation.
- Acknowledging and showing respect for the work of Indigenous faculty, staff, and students • Incorporating land acknowledgements and other Indigenous protocols in campus events, ceremonies, and official communications in orientation.

### 5.3. SUPPORTING INDIGENOUS-LED INITIATIVES

Empowering Indigenous students, faculty, and staff to lead initiatives and projects that promote Indigenization, and decolonization is crucial for creating lasting change. The university can support these efforts by:

- Providing funding, resources, and mentorship for Indigenous-led initiatives, research projects, and community engagement activities.
- Encouraging collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous student groups, departments, and faculties to develop and implement joint projects and events.
- Recognizing and celebrating the achievements of Indigenous-led initiatives and the individuals involved and listening to what they want.



Photo Credit: Camosun College.

## 6. EVALUATING AND ENHANCING INDIGENIZATION AND DECOLONIZATION EFFORTS

As the University of Alberta embarks on the journey to Indigenize and decolonize its orientation programs and campus activities, it is essential to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of these efforts and identify areas for improvement. This ongoing process of reflection and refinement will help ensure that the university remains responsive to the evolving needs and aspirations of Indigenous students, faculty, and staff. The following approaches can help guide the evaluation and enhancement of Indigenization, decolonization and reconciliation initiatives:

### 6.1. GATHERING FEEDBACK FROM INDIGENOUS STAKEHOLDERS

Respectfully consult with Indigenous students, faculty, staff, and Indigenous community members. This is crucial for understanding the impact of the faculty orientation programming's Indigenization and decolonization efforts and identifying areas for improvement. This feedback can be gathered through:

- Surveys, focus groups, and interviews with Indigenous students, faculty, and staff to assess their experiences and satisfaction with orientation programs and campus activities.
- Meetings and consultations with Indigenous community organizations, Elders, and knowledge holders to seek guidance and input on orientation program development and implementation.
- Collaborative evaluation processes that involve Indigenous stakeholders in analyzing data, identifying trends, and developing recommendations for improvement.
- Decolonizing and Indigenizing your feedback forms.
- Decolonizing and Indigenizing your data.
- Decolonizing and Indigenizing your next steps.
- Decolonizing and Indigenizing your goals in creating ethical space and an equitable campus community that recognizes respects and is accountable to Indigenous peoples whose land the University of Alberta is on.

## 6.2. TRACKING PROGRESS AND OUTCOMES

Monitoring and reporting on key indicators related to Indigenization and decolonization can help the university track its progress and demonstrate its commitment to these goals. Relevant indicators may include:

- Participation rates of Indigenous students in orientation programs and campus activities.
- Retention and graduation rates of Indigenous students.
- The number of Indigenous-focused events, workshops, and initiatives offered on campus.
- The number of non-Indigenous students, faculty, and staff participating in Indigenous Learning Levels, trauma-informed and ethical spaces, learning, unlearning and relearning, being accountable, allyship training, reflective practices.



## EMBRACING TRANSFORMATION: INDIGENIZING & DECOLONIZING ORIENTATION PROGRAMS

This guidebook provides an overview of the University of Alberta's commitment to truth and reconciliation, explores the concepts of Indigenization, decolonization, and reconciliation, and offers practical guidance for implementing these principles in orientation programs and campus activities. Drawing on my own experiences with Indigenous communities in the unceded lands of British Columbia and Alberta over the past twenty-five years, working for them, as well as working for government and non-profit organizations; I highlight to you an informed and generalized Indigenous viewpoint on how to Indigenize, decolonize and move towards reconciliation in an actionable way in order to transform the university experience for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students alike for the greater good of society.

As we embark on this journey together, let us remember that the process of Indigenizing and decolonizing our institutions is not a destination, but a continuous path towards greater understanding, reciprocity, and respect. May this book serve as both a guide and an inspiration for the those involved in Faculty Orientation Programming as we work together to build a more inclusive, just, equitable, and vibrant campus for all.



University of Alberta, "Walking With Our Sisters" Beading Circle. 2012, Aboriginal Students Association space. Indigenous & non-Indigenous individuals beading.  
Photo credit: University of Alberta

## 6.3. REFLECTING ON AND SHARING LESSONS LEARNED

As the University of Alberta continues to develop and refine its indigenization and decolonization efforts, it is important to reflect on the lessons learned and share these insights with the broader campus community and other institutions. This can be achieved through:

- Hosting conferences, workshops, and seminars to discuss best practices, challenges, and innovative approaches in Indigenizing and decolonizing orientation in higher education.
- Publishing articles, reports, and case studies that document the university's experiences, successes, and lessons learned.
- Establishing networks and partnerships with other institutions to exchange ideas, resources, and support in advancing Indigenization, decolonization, and reconciliation in higher education.

By adopting these evaluation and enhancement strategies, the University of Alberta can continuously improve its efforts to create a more inclusive, respectful, and supportive environment that respects Indigenous sovereignty, autonomy, Indigenous forms of data collection, Indigenous ways of gathering feedback, while honouring and being respectful and practicing reciprocity and humbleness and employ active listening skills while collaborating and letting Indigenous peoples lead in Indigenous epistemologies, data collection, Indigenous laws, and Indigenous pedagogies for the good of the whole. This prevents the trap of pan-Indigeneity, tokenism, appropriation, and re-colonization.

### REFLECTION

Does your faculty have the capacity to render data collection in a trauma-informed, Indigenous-centric and ethical way? If not, why not?

Why is it important to be held accountable in the reconciliation process?

## 7. CONCLUSION

Indigenizing and decolonizing Faculty Orientation Programs and campus activities at the University of Alberta represents a crucial step towards fostering a more inclusive, diverse, and supportive campus community. By embracing the principles of Indigenization, decolonization, and reconciliation, the university gains the privilege and honour to learn about appropriate Indigenous events and take direction from Indigenous peoples whose land they are occupying. They additionally have the advantage of meeting Indigenous individuals, students, staff, faculty, Elders, Traditional Knowledge Keepers, senior administration and communities and including them in on something fun and important like orientation programming. Orientation Programs are vital because they have the potential to engage the entire campus community in the ongoing journey towards truth and reconciliation in a genuine way that can make lasting impacts on everyone's lives for the better.



This guidebook book has outlined only the beginning steps for transforming Faculty Orientation Programs. By adopting these steps towards Indigenizing and decolonizing towards truth and reconciliation (and maintaining a consistent focus on these goals with courage and determination), the University of Alberta can become an ally in the movement to move towards reconciliation with truth and to create a more just and equitable higher education system in Canada.

Ultimately, the process of Indigenizing and decolonizing the University of Alberta is not only about changing programs, policies, and practices through: a lens shift; being held accountable; understanding Indigenous sovereignty and laws; becoming Indigenous-centric; advocating for capacity within your faculty; learning, unlearning and relearning; getting to know Indigenous peoples and whose land you are working on; but also about coming from a heart-centered place of courage, love, honesty, truth, wisdom, respect, and humility (taken from the Anishnaabe Seven Grandfather Teachings). By creating space and letting others lead in their own ways, the University of Alberta can help build a brighter, more inclusive future for all members of its campus communities, and contribute to the broader movement towards healing, understanding, and reconciliation in Canadian society.

**EDUCATION GOT US INTO THIS MESS AND EDUCATION  
WILL GET US OUT OF IT.**

*— The Honourable Justice Murray Sinclair, Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission*



## REPORTS

Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2 Spirit 231 Calls for Justice

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

University of Alberta's Indigenous Strategic Plan



MMIWG2S Red Dress Day, Indigenous community collaboration. Camrose, Treaty 6. May 5, 2023. Photo credit: Emma.

## BOOKS

"Braiding Sweetgrass" by Robin Wall Kimmerer

"As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom through Radical Resurgence" by Leanne Betasamosake Simpson

"Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples" by Maori Scholar, Linda Tuhiwai Smith

"Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto" (Sioux Scholar) by Vine Deloria Jr.

"Native Science: Natural Laws of Interdependence" by Tewa Scholar, Gregory Cajete

"The First Astronomers: How Indigenous Elders read the stars" Duane Hamacher, Elders and Knowledge Holders

"Innovations in Culturally Based Science Education Through Partnerships and Community" by Megan Bang, Douglas Medin, et al.

"Decolonizing Education: Nourishing the Learning Spirit" by MicMaq Scholar, Marie Battiste

Mignolo, W., & Tlostanova, M. V. (2012). Learning to unlearn: Decolonial reflections from Eurasia and the Americas. Ohio University Press.

"Pedagogy of the Oppressed" by Paulo Freire

"Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom" by Black American Scholar, bell hooks

"Naturalizing Indigenous Knowledge Synthesis Paper", July 2009 by Blood Scholar, Leroy Little Bear on Treaty 7

"21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act: Helping Canadians Make Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples a Reality" by Bob Joseph

"White Fragility" by Robin D'Angelo

"Nice Racism" by Robin D'Angelo

"White Benevolence: Racism and Colonial Violence in the Helping Professions" Edited by Amanda Gebhard, Sheelah McLean, and Verna St. Denis

"White Women" by Saira Rao and Regina Jackson

"Standoff: Why Reconciliation Fails and How To Fix It" by Métis Legal Scholar, Bruce McIvor

"The Four Agreements: A Practical Guide to Personal Freedom" by don Miguel Ruiz

Danielle Lussier, PhD (Law) (Métis) and Steven Stuchley define their approach in, "Other Materials" - Traitorous Love and Decolonizing the Canadian Guide to Uniform Legal Citation"



# EMBRACING THE JOURNEY:

As we begin our journey towards reconciliation, decolonization, and Indigenization, it's important to remember that this is the first step on a long road ahead. It's a path laden with challenges and complexities, but equally rich in opportunities for growth, understanding, and transformation. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission calls on all Canadians - which includes University of Alberta's faculty, staff, and students alike - to contribute to this collective effort. This journey demands active engagement, continuous learning, and genuine commitment from all of us. The work is significant, but rest assured, it's worth it both personally and professionally. Students look to us as role models, drawing from our actions and attitudes to shape their experiences at the University of Alberta. As such, we have a unique and important opportunity to demonstrate what it means to practice decolonization and Indigenization, and how we can actively participate in the process of reconciliation. In embracing this responsibility, we not only contribute to creating a more inclusive, equitable, and respectful university community, but we also inspire our students to carry these values with them as they navigate their own journeys. This is our chance to make a meaningful difference. Let's seize it, knowing that every step we take on this path brings us closer to the university - and the world - that we aspire to create.