



First Steps: Towards The Path of Truth & Reconciliation

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INTRODUCTION

Conestoga Students Inc. acknowledges it operates on the traditional territories of the Anishnawbe, Haudenosaunee, and Neutral peoples.

CSI recognizes the continued colonization of Indigenous peoples in the colonial state of Canada.

The land and peoples of Turtle Island were, according to Xat'sull writer Bev Sellers, "solid, secure and strong at contact."¹ The Indigenous peoples of the so-called Americas thrived through and with the lands for thousands of years before the arrival of European colonizers. The forced and violent intervention of the European settler *in and to* the lands of Turtle Island *is and was* a catastrophic event for Indigenous people's existence on Turtle Island. Through centuries of ongoing systematic & violent cultural and material dispossession, the Indigenous peoples of the Americas have been subject to colonization by the European settlers and their descendants; the colonial state of Canada is the Westphalian successor to the colonial practices of the British crown. The forms of colonization and dispossession have changed since the inception of the Canadian colonial machine over 150 years ago, but its brutality, inhumanity, and mission remain unchanged.

"Kill the Indian in him, and save the man."²

Illuminated by the tireless efforts of Indigenous grassroots activists, leaders, rebels & radicals, CSI acknowledges the work of colonization is ongoing and increasingly insidious³. While holidays are introduced in honour of the creation of Truth & Reconciliation in the colonial state of Canada, numerous Indigenous communities do not have access to safe drinking water⁴. Indigenous peoples account for greater than 30% of Canada's incarcerated population as of 2021 while making up little more than 5% of the population⁵. 52% of children in foster care are Indigenous, a more significant number of Indigenous children in

¹ "Whose Land Is It Anyway?," Inclusion Press, 6, accessed June 17, 2021, <https://inclusion.com/product/whose-land-is-it-anyway/>.

² "Canada's Dark Side," accessed June 17, 2021, <https://origins.osu.edu/article/canada-s-dark-side-Indigenous-peoples-and-canada-s-150th-celebration>.

³ "Whose Land Is It Anyway?," 21.

⁴ Government of Canada; Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, "Ending Long-Term Drinking Water Advisories," interactive resource; notice; promotional material; search interface, September 27, 2017, <https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1506514143353/1533317130660>.

⁵ Office of the Correctional Investigator Government of Canada, "Annual Report of the Office of the Correctional Investigator 2018-2019 - Office of the Correctional Investigator," March 25, 2021, 20, <https://www.oci-bec.gc.ca/cnt/rpt/annrpt/annrpt20192020-eng.aspx>.

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the hands of the state than during the height of the residential school system. These facts highlight only a small portion of the ongoing domination of Indigenous peoples by the Canadian colonial state. Reconciliation is a necessary step, but it must not be confused for the only step.

Within this frame, CSI approaches the work of Truth & Reconciliation, a gravely crucial first step towards mending the spiritual and material being of Indigenous peoples on Turtle Island.

In recognition of the necessary work of Truth & Reconciliation, CSI has compiled a brief report outlining the structures, methods, actions, projects, and initiatives adopted by postsecondary institutions in Canada as they grapple with and pursue Truth and Reconciliation. Truth and Reconciliation is a necessary step in the long process of transformative actions that begin to right the perpetual wrongs done to Indigenous peoples by Canadians.

CSI believes it is the responsibility of Conestoga College to:

- Acknowledge its role in perpetuating colonial practices through its administration and pedagogy
- Begin the work to deconstruct these practices
- Empower Indigenous people and allies to lead this process of Truth and Reconciliation.

CSI should be prepared to help when invited by the people leading this process. This report has been created in collaboration with the Indigenous Associate Vice President of CSI and the Advocacy Team to initiate the crucial first steps within the Conestoga College community to form a group responsible for considering & implementing Truth and Reconciliation efforts.

The work of Truth & Reconciliation is complex but vital. It must be provided the necessary material and administrative support for the process to thrive and impact the operation of Conestoga College, the lived experience of Conestoga students, staff & faculty, and the cultivation of Indigenous ways of knowing and being⁶. The harms that can come from this process being tokenized, marginalized, underfunded, or under-supported cannot be understated; failure to properly support and promote this process can cause irreparable damage to Indigenous knowledge, community, and peoples. The stakes for getting this right are far too high.

⁶ Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Eve Tuck, and K. Wayne Yang, eds., *Indigenous and Decolonizing Studies in Education: Mapping the Long View*, 2018, 171–73.

TRUTH & RECONCILIATION: EXISTING PRACTICES IN POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTIONS

A review of postsecondary institutions across Canada reveals an absence of uniformity in Truth & Reconciliation work approaches. The labour of Truth & Reconciliation is often, and appropriately, approached on a *local level*: the context institutions and Indigenous groups//nations are situated in are highly localized and context-specific. Treaty relations, Indigenous nation-to-nation status, and institutional history and practices are variant across Canada; therefore, a one-size-fits-all or best practice would be antithetical to any meaningful attempt at Truth & Reconciliation. This work must be informed by the immediate and historical context Conestoga College finds itself in, and the historical relations and lived experience of the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, and Neutral peoples whose land the institution rests.

In the Ontario context, the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities requires the province's publicly funded postsecondary institutions to establish Aboriginal Education Councils (AECs). The Councils are meant to "serve to strengthen relations between the institutions and Indigenous communities and partners", and "help to provide a greater voice for Indigenous peoples in institutional decision-making". AEC's have been the vehicles in these institutions for beginning the work of Truth & Reconciliation but are not the center of Truth & Reconciliation. Throughout this report you will see reference made to Ontario's AEC's through Academics Groups 2016 Environmental Scan of AEC's operation within Ontario. This work is the best available compendium of current practices in the space of Indigenization and is referred to frequently throughout.

Conestoga College *operates an AEC, but information on its practices, projects and initiatives is not public* or transparent. While Conestoga College may have taken steps towards Truth & Reconciliation through the bolstering of Indigenous decision making, it has not made any attempt to publicize this work.

There are structural commonalities across institutions that are instructive for moving forward in the Truth & Reconciliation process. The commonalities are highlighted below.

Pre-Requisites to Committee Formation

Before the process of Truth & Reconciliation can begin, PSIs across Canada have engaged in extensive consultation processes within their institutions, soliciting Indigenous voices within the postsecondary environment and outside the institution in their immediate communities. As the University of Regina asserts as their first principle in their Truth & Reconciliation process, "Truth must come before Reconciliation."⁷ Soliciting the input of the

⁷ "Reconciliation Action Committee | Executive Offices, University of Regina," accessed July 4, 2021, <https://www.uregina.ca/president/Reconciliation/index.html>.

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Indigenous community inside and outside of Conestoga College is the only way to meaningfully navigate what Reconciliation can look like for Conestoga College.

It is essential to recognize that the process of Truth & Reconciliation can only move forward if Indigenous peoples in the community *desire* reconciliation, feel it can create a meaningful, material change, and will not denigrate the larger political and cultural goals of their community. Truth & Reconciliation is, ultimately, a colonial political project seeking to bring Indigenous peoples into the colonial Canadian state⁸. If Reconciliation is only to be an "accommodation" of Indigenous peoples in Conestoga College's community, then it will become what Taiaiake Alfred has rightly called, "the invitation from Canada to share in the spoils of our nations' subjugation and dispossession."⁹ It cannot be an invitation to participate in the institutions that have caused, encouraged, or ignored the dispossession and genocide of Indigenous peoples. It must be the empowerment of Indigenous people to deconstruct, alter, and ultimately change these institutions. By soliciting community voices before beginning the Truth & Reconciliation process at Conestoga College, the college can ensure that this process represents the expressed desires and goals of Indigenous communities Conestoga College is enmeshed with. It is only through this critical engagement with the community that Conestoga College can begin to situate its Reconciliation project and develop the scope and purpose of its endeavor.

Purpose & Scope

The purpose and scope of Reconciliation work across institutions must be "community-directed." The Truth & Reconciliation Commission delivered the call to educational institutions at all levels to build student capacity, intercultural leadership with understanding, empathy, and mutual respect and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Nearly all programs across Canada have taken this as a statement of purpose to varying degrees, incorporating the T&R Commission's educational calls for actions¹⁰. There is no one size fits all solution.

However, there are Terms of Reference across Canadian PSI's that seek to delineate the committee's purpose, commission, council, etc. A common purpose across institutions is the committee as a board of review; to quote the University of Toronto's Steering Committee for the University of Toronto Response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada terms of reference, the steering committee's purpose is to, "review and recommend priorities concerning the [TRC] of Canada's Calls to Action that are applicable to the University of Toronto" and to, "review the role of the University's Council of Aboriginal Initiatives in the oversight of responses to the TRC Calls to Action and divisional initiatives

⁸ Glen Sean Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minneapolis: Univ Of Minnesota Press, 2014).

⁹ "Whose Land Is It Anyway?," 11.

¹⁰ See Appendix 1

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related to the TRC.¹¹ From there, the University of Toronto mandate highlights five areas under the committee's review.¹²

The University of Ottawa has a similar mandate, which highlights its role as a Board of Review to the Universities progress in Indigenizing the institution and as the creative nexus of the project, where positive recommendations about new policies, programs, and strategies emerge. To quote the mandate itself, "to create the vision, and drafting and recommending the adoption of action plans, university policies, and procedures to enable effective integration of Indigenous knowledge and Indigenous persons into the university's overall mandate and strategy."¹³

In short, the purpose of many committees, shared across many PSI's, is then both to create, draft and recommend new policies and procedures to apply the Calls to Action, Indigenize the institution (pending on the project's scope), as well as to review the institutions progress in meeting these goals.

For these committees to succeed in achieving their purpose, there must be clarity in their mandate and scope. In Academica Group's 2016 review of Ontario's Aboriginal Education Councils, they highlighted that Terms & References for these councils varied between institutions (themselves highlighting the localized contexts in which these councils were formed). However, they stressed the need for *clear* terms & references as an integral pathway to AEC's accomplishing their purpose in any meaningful way. To quote Academica Group,

"In the absence of clarity on this issue, members can have different views on such fundamental questions as whether the AEC is a forum for information sharing, whether it has an advisory role, or whether it should have a formal role in decision-making. Absence of clarity on these questions can undermine efforts to build trust within the AEC and between it, the institution, and the Indigenous community. The more successful Councils are those that clarify both that the AEC's main role is advisory and that its advice will reach senior decision makers by virtue of their direct involvement with the council."

For an example of terms of references for Truth & Reconciliation committees in the postsecondary space, [see Appendix 2.](#)

¹¹ Steering Committee for the University of Toronto Response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, "Answering the Call: Wecheehetowin: Final Report of the Steering Committee for the University of Toronto Response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada" (University of Toronto), 4, accessed July 5, 2021, <https://www.provost.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/155/2018/05/Final-Report-TRC.pdf>.

¹² See Appendix 2

¹³ "Autochtones | University of Ottawa," Autochtones, accessed July 5, 2021, <https://www.uottawa.ca/indigenous/about-us/governance/standing-committee-on-indigenous-engagement>.

The scope of the projects is determined by the institutions themselves and are often dependent on the commitment of an institution's administration. Some schools seek to do the bare minimum, incorporating land acknowledgments and no more; others, like the University of British Columbia and the University of Regina, have incorporated the process of Truth & Reconciliation *and* the Indigenization of the institutions into all aspects of the institution's operations¹⁴. These projects incorporate parts of the Truth & Reconciliation's Call to Actions relevant to the postsecondary context, but often incorporate additional actions.

For the University of British Columbia, the scope of their actions towards Truth & Reconciliation stretches beyond the Calls to Action and encompasses an *institution-wide push* towards the Indigenization of the institution, as laid out in the Indigenous Strategic Plan¹⁵. The Indigenous Strategic plan aims to not only actualize the Calls to Action of Truth and Reconciliation but also views their work as a response to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls' Calls for Justice.

To meet the calls, UBC's Strategic plan empowers their committee to advise the institution on actions to:

- Redirect research initiatives towards projects that are reciprocal, community-led, legitimize Indigenous ways of knowing and promote Indigenous peoples' self-determination.
- Include Indigenous ways of knowing, culture, histories, experiences, and worldviews in curriculum delivered across Faculties, programs, and campuses. This includes ensuring all academic programs, undergraduate and graduate, include substantive content in at least one course which explores Indigenous histories and identifies how Indigenous issues intersect with the major field of study of the faculty
- Recruit Indigenous people to position UBC as the most accessible large research university globally for Indigenous students, faculty, and staff.
- Enrich the UBC campus landscape with a stronger Indigenous presence.¹⁶
- And more

The project's scope extends beyond the Calls to Action relevant to Canadian Postsecondary institutions¹⁷, but this scope was determined through extensive outreach. UBC made a concerted effort to meet not only with the UBC community but also the indigenous nations in which UBC is situated. The scope is determined at the institutional level and reflects a commitment by the administration to meet the Calls to Action of *its own community*.

¹⁴ Shauneen Pete, "100 Ways: Indigenizing & Decolonizing Academic Programs," *Aboriginal Policy Studies* 6, no. 1 (October 28, 2016), <https://doi.org/10.5663/aps.v6i1.27455>; "Indigenous Strategic Plan," Indigenous Portal, accessed July 2, 2021, <https://aboriginal-2018.sites.olt.ubc.ca/indigenous-engagement/indigenous-strategic-plan/>.

¹⁵ "Indigenous Strategic Plan."

¹⁶ "Indigenous Strategic Plan."

¹⁷ See Appendix 1

Funding & Administrative Support

Absent a substantial investment from institutional decision-makers at the level of financial and administrative support, the implementation of any project towards Truth & Reconciliation, regardless of scope, is destined to fail¹⁸. In their chapter, *Grappling With Indigenous Content Requirements in the Changing Canadian Postsecondary Environment* in the edited volume, "Indigenous and Decolonizing Studies in Education: Mapping the Long View" authors Adam Gaudry (Métis) and Danielle E. Lorenz interviewed Indigenous academics across Canadian postsecondary institutions who have begun to implement the Calls to Action of the Truth & Reconciliation report. While ambivalence existed amongst scholars regarding the proper form or general utility of these programs, there was consensus amongst scholars that the success of institutional efforts at Truth & Reconciliation is heavily dependent on institutions' investment in the process. To quote the authors conclusion,

"The point is that, if we're going to do this, we need to do it collaboratively and with the support of the highest levels of administration. If half-baked programming is implemented or if programs are rushed before there's adequate capacity to deliver them... <they> are not going to work. Or worse, their failure will set us back, perpetuate mistruths, or destroy interest in actually engaging with Indigenous peoples and Indigenous histories.¹⁹"

To ensure a consistent, high level of funding, Academica Group has recommended as a best practice that Truth & Reconciliation committees have budget oversight, both in applying for and in reviewing the outcomes of funding requests from provincial and federal governments²⁰. This ensures that

- Programs and activities advocated for and recommended by committees have the administrative and institutional material supports necessary
- Institutions are unable to undermine or underfund these programs or utilize these programs as a means of accessing greater governmental funding absent positive action.

Additionally, institutions have signaled their commitment to Truth & Reconciliation by aligning the actions of their Truth & Reconciliation commissions to their Institutional Strategic Plans. This is an important step in mitigating the risk of compartmentalizing Indigenous issues within the institution and helps to entrench a whole-of-institution approach²¹. The most prestigious and acclaimed programs, like those at the University of British Columbia, the University of Manitoba, and the University of Regina, have adopted the whole-of-institution approach to widespread acclaim, both intra-institutionally and within the Indigenous communities that have been empowered in these commissions.

¹⁸ Smith, Tuck, and Yang, *Indigenous and Decolonizing Studies in Education*.

¹⁹ Smith, Tuck, and Yang, 172.

²⁰ Academica Group Inc., "A Review of Aboriginal Education Councils in Ontario: Final Report" (Academica Group Inc.), 7, accessed July 4, 2021, <https://oneca.com/documents/Academica%20Report%202016.pdf>.

²¹ Academica Group Inc., 6.

Structure

The structure of Truth & Reconciliation boards, committees, etc., vary across institutions. For simplicity, these groups will be called committees hereafter unless otherwise specified. Highlighted below are practices common across institutions in the fields of decision-making power, membership, responsibilities, and goals.

Decision Making: Powers & Form

The mandates of the empowered Truth & Reconciliation committees at Canadian institutions can vary by the scope of Reconciliation actions taken by the institution. However, decision-making power or mandates are relatively uniform across committees. For the University of Toronto, the *Steering Committee for the University of Toronto Response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada* is empowered to, "make recommendations regarding how the University community can implement the TRC Calls to Action, in alignment with the University of Toronto's mandate and mission... the Committee was tasked with making an inventory of existing Indigenous initiatives and programming across the University, and with recommending how to build on these". For the University of British Columbia's Indigenous Strategic Plan Implementation Committee, "The mandate ... is to devise and monitor implementation strategies and advise administration on the allocation of resources."

These committees often have *no unilateral decision-making power*; that is to say, these committees collaborate with Institutional administrations to meet the goals of Reconciliation as determined through the scope of the project as defined by the administration. The level of deference institutions give to these committees in decision-making processes, program review and implementation, etc., is institutionally dependent and relies on a given institution's commitment to Truth & Reconciliation or projects that go beyond. As mentioned above, administrative support and commitment to the Truth & Reconciliation project are the deciding factors in success or failure.

A means of ensuring institutional support and leveraging these commission's recommendations into concrete action is to integrate these bodies into the institutional structure of the administration and the institution itself. According to Academica Groups review of Ontario AEC's, "The most successful AECs were integrated within and across the layers of decision-making at the institution, providing advice and recommendations to the Board of Governors, the Senate, the executive team and other institutional leaders."²² Many institutions have incorporated the Truth & Reconciliation process into the administration's senior leadership; Lakehead University & the University of British Columbia have appointed a Chair on Truth and Reconciliation and a Senior Advisor to the President on Indigenous Affairs respectively, to advocate for Truth and Reconciliation initiatives and provide

²² Academica Group Inc., 6.

leadership in the institutions strategic planning processes²³. These positions and the integration of the Truth & Reconciliation project more broadly into the institution's strategic planning certifies a whole-of institution approach to Truth & Reconciliation and helps to ensure the institution's goals, practices, and research align with Truth & Reconciliation.

Regarding the decision-making process of Truth & Reconciliation committees across Canada, consensus decision-making is highlighted as a common practice. Simon Fraser University's Aboriginal Reconciliation Council has incorporated consensus decision-making as one of the guiding principles of the Council's mandate²⁴. Consensus does not mean uniformity in opinion; it allows the process of listening, speaking, discussing, and discerning to unfold in a non-restrictive timeline and empowers the council or committee to speak in one voice.

Membership

Membership of committees, as with all other committee factors, varies by institution. A common feature of membership in Truth & Reconciliation committees is the inclusion, elevation, and empowerment of Indigenous voices from within the institution's structure and outside. For example, the Aboriginal Steering Committee at Simon Fraser University incorporates off-campus Indigenous representatives from the broader community. Indigenous people from the off-campus community are invited to serve on the committee, with nominations being put forward by other steering committee members; the Office of the President makes the final selection from these nominations²⁵. Like the University of Toronto, other institutions have invited an Indigenous Elder or Elders as chair(s) of their Steering Committee²⁶.

There is no concrete makeup of committee membership. However, some common practices are highlighted below:

- Many institutions seek to have a representative of each department's faculty of the institution, whether that be a chair or Indigenous member of a particular department, present on the committee.
- The institution's president will often serve as an ex-officio Chair of the committee
- Institutions seeking to highlight Indigenous voices will ensure the inclusion of those voices from faculty, staff, students, and the community.

²³ "Chair on Truth and Reconciliation," Lakehead University, accessed July 4, 2021, <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/faculty-and-staff/departments/services/provost-vice-president-academic/orientation-handbook/president/truth-reconciliation/chair>; "Indigenous Strategic Plan."

²⁴ Simon Fraser University Aboriginal Reconciliation Council, "Walk This Path With Us: Report of The SFU Aboriginal Reconciliation Council" (Simon Fraser University), accessed July 4, 2021, https://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/aboriginalpeoples/arc/ReconciliationQuarterlyReports/SFU-ARC%20Walk%20This%20Path%20With%20Us_Full%20Report_New%20cover_Email%20Size.pdf.

²⁵ "Aboriginal Steering Committee - Office for Aboriginal Peoples - Simon Fraser University," accessed July 2, 2021, <https://www.sfu.ca/aboriginalpeoples/about/aboriginal-steering-committee-.html>.

²⁶ "Truth and Reconciliation at U of T," University of Toronto News, accessed July 4, 2021, <https://www.utoronto.ca/news/truth-and-reconciliation-u-t>.

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- Many institutions will have a quota on Indigenous membership on these committees.
 - Indigenous or Aboriginal services are given several membership positions, as are outside community members.

In their review of Aboriginal Education Councils in Ontario, Academica Group highlighted memberships whose composition included a majority of Indigenous community members were "more likely to serve as a forum to bring community needs and issues to the attention of the institution and to promote the strengthening of relations between the community and institutions."²⁷

Additionally, community-based majority membership committees "ensure genuine consultation and dialogue between the community and the institution."²⁸ The validation of the committee experience as a genuine expression of the needs and desires of the Indigenous community Conestoga College finds itself immersed within can help to create processes and actions that are, "experienced by participants as genuine and based on mutual, open-ended dialogue, and rather than as pro forma or as inauthentic exercises that simply to allow the institution to "check a box."²⁹

Community-based committees immersed in constructive, reciprocal, and productive dialogue with the administration that create meaningful and actionable change is one of the best ways Conestoga College can commit to the goals of Truth & Reconciliation.

Subcommittees

To effectively tackle the immense work of Truth & Reconciliation, several PSI's have instituted sub-committees, working groups, or faculty groups through which the direction of the central Truth & Reconciliation committee is carried out. For example, the University of Waterloo has 5 working groups, each dedicated to research, outreach, and identify recommendations in a specific subset of the University's broader Indigenization mandate³⁰. The 5 working groups are:

- Community Engagement
- Curriculum & Academic Programming
- Policy & Procedures
- Research
- Student Experience

Each working group is tasked with submitting a report that will become a part of the larger Indigenization strategy at the University of Waterloo.

²⁷ Academica Group Inc., "A Review of Aboriginal Education Councils in Ontario: Final Report," 9.

²⁸ Academica Group Inc., 10.

²⁹ Academica Group Inc., "A Review of Aboriginal Education Councils in Ontario: Final Report."

³⁰ "Working Group Members," Indigenization Strategy, October 4, 2017, <https://uwaterloo.ca/indigenization-strategy/working-group-members>.

POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTION ACTIONS, PROJECTS, AND INITIATIVES REFLECTIVE OF TRUTH & RECONCILIATION

The work of Truth & Reconciliation is, sadly, relatively new in postsecondary institutions. This being the case, there is little by way of *concrete* programs, actions, and initiatives that have arisen from the Truth & Reconciliation process. Nonetheless, there are projects in the works, new programs, and initiatives in their early stages worth highlighting.

HIGHLIGHT: WESTERN UNIVERSITY'S OFFICE OF INDIGENOUS INITIATIVES// AN INDIGENOUS CURRICULUM AND PEDAGOGY ADVISOR

Building upon Western University's Indigenous Strategic Planning initiatives and mandate, Western has created the Office of Indigenous Initiatives. This office is the central hub of Western University's indigenization project, which, "will lead system-wide change required to advance truth and reconciliation efforts, achieve equitable outcomes for Indigenous Peoples, and implement Western's Indigenous Strategic Plan."³¹

Current initiatives being run out of the Office of Indigenous Initiatives include the Indigenous Learning Fund, which provides funding, academic and administrative support for project proposals that seek to advance the Indigenization of the institution³². This includes projects that develop or review courses to deconstruct Westerns pedagogical colonial practices or pilot projects that test new ideas and promising practices in Indigenous teaching and learning³³.

Leaning on the deconstruction of colonial pedagogy, Western has appointed an Indigenous Curriculum and Pedagogy Advisor. This role was created to assist, "faculty and staff in Indigenizing and decolonizing their curriculum. Working together through an Indigenous decolonial lens, the Advisor will support the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives, pedagogies, and ways of knowing into curriculum across disciplines³⁴." Underlying the initiative is the recognition of Western University of the deeply embedded colonial practices, pedagogies, ontologies, and epistemes in their institution that facilitated, encouraged, or ignored the ongoing genocide of Indigenous peoples. Working to deconstruct the practices of colonial being that constructed an institutional indifference to Indigenous ways of being and knowing, the Indigenous Curriculum and Pedagogy advisor can seek to assist faculty

³¹ "Our Mission," accessed July 4, 2021, <https://Indigenous.uwo.ca/about-us/index.html>.

³² "Indigenous Learning Fund - Pilot Program," accessed July 4, 2021, <https://indigenous.uwo.ca/initiatives/learning-fund.html>.

³³ "Indigenous Learning Fund - Pilot Program."

³⁴ "Learning & Development," accessed July 4, 2021, <https://Indigenous.uwo.ca/initiatives/learning/index.html>.

and staff to deconstruct and reevaluate their own curricula to ensure that their pedagogical practice does not perpetuate a colonial hierarchy of knowing and being.

HIGHLIGHT: WIIDOOKTAADWIN INDIGENOUS MENTORSHIP INITIATIVES; NIPPISSING UNIVERSITY

In the spirit of reciprocity and recognizing the connection between one another, Nipissing University has facilitated Wiidooktaadwin Indigenous Mentorship Initiatives (Wiidooktaadwin being an Anishinaabe word that means "helping one another"³⁵.) The mentorship initiative pairs Indigenous university students with Indigenous youth in local secondary schools. During the fall, Indigenous university students, elders, and Indigenous knowledge holders visit schools leading sessions that include Indigenous teachings and activities that emphasize working together and the importance of sharing our gifts³⁶.

Programs such as these ensure an ethic of reciprocity and care is carried into and through the university environment and help Indigenous youth feel the University environment to be a communal, welcoming space. However, faculty and elders at Nipissing University know the program can do more. Recognizing the knowledge and pedagogical practices of Elders and Knowledge Keepers as an under-appreciated, often denigrated form of teaching, Elder Muriel Sawyer stated, "I'm sitting here right now being quiet...it's not that I have nothing to say, ...it's actually reflecting because the whole model of teaching... it means you sit there and listen and you take in and then what you do take in you reflect on that, and then that in turn forms your opinion or allows you to have an opinion to say³⁷." Elder knowledge and pedagogy have applications beyond mentorship; they can inform the operation of the postsecondary institution.

Dr. Brant-Castellano feels the mentorship program can be expanded to, "Make traditional teachings and counseling by Elders available. Consider that those who are new to learning from Elders may need help with listening deeply. It is also known pedagogically as processing what you hear. It's about listening to Elders.³⁸" Having mentorship counseling available to Indigenous students in the University environment can help students feel supported in this colonial environment and reflect on their educational experiences in culturally resonant ways.

³⁵ "Wiidooktaadwin Indigenous Mentorship Initiatives (WIMI)," Nipissing University, accessed July 4, 2021, <https://www.nipissingu.ca/departments/indigenous-initiatives/wiidooktaadwin>.

³⁶ "Wiidooktaadwin Indigenous Mentorship Initiatives (WIMI)."

³⁷ Nipissing University, "Deepening Our Collective Understanding: Redefining Success for Aboriginal University Students" (Nipissing University), 40, accessed July 4, 2021, <https://www.nipissingu.ca/sites/default/files/2021-03/Redefining%20Aboriginal%20Student%20Success%20Final%20Report.pdf>.

³⁸ Nipissing University, 40.

HIGHLIGHT: UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA FIRST NATIONS LONGHOUSE

Indigenous ways of being and cultural understandings of space often include an ethic of reciprocity; according to Indigenous architect & scholar Patrick Robert Reid Stewart, Indigenous architecture, "was/is a response to climate changes, geography, geology, natural resources, and food systems; it expressed culture, spirituality, governance/political systems, social systems, sustainability.³⁹" The building of the First Nations Longhouse at UBC, a "home away from home," serves as an intellectual, social, spiritual, and cultural home for Aboriginal students attending UBC. Student facilities include study space, computer lab, and meeting and gathering rooms. It is also a central hub for programming, services, and events for Aboriginal students, the university, and the wider community⁴⁰.

Having space not only for Indigenous students but designed by and with Indigenous knowledge and ethics helps to situate Indigeneity in the institution as an equal, distinct tradition. The Longhouse has an explicit ethic accompanying it that students are expected to follow within the space. The ethic seeks to establish an environment of mutual respect, reciprocity, and trust not only between people, but with place.⁴¹

HIGHLIGHT: UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION

"Embedded within each Indigenous language is a wealth of knowledge and unique cultural expression. Each language carries a community's system of governance and relationship to the land. Languages represent countless generations of accumulated traditional knowledge and ways of knowing.⁴²" The University of Victoria's Indigenous Language Revitalization project seeks to empower and educate students to develop understandings of the complex dynamics of language loss, maintenance, and recovery while also providing practical strategies for work in Indigenous communities to preserve and revitalize threatened languages.

Through their course offerings at the undergraduate and graduate level, the University of Victoria teaches students to develop practical strategies for Indigenous languages to thrive and flourish, build language skills, and prepares them to be teachers and interpreters, able to connect generations of Indigenous language speakers and educate future generations

³⁹ Patrick Robert Reid Stewart, "Indigenous Architecture through Indigenous Knowledge : Dim Sagalts'apkw Nisim [Together We Will Build a Village]" (University of British Columbia, 2015), <https://doi.org/10.14288/1.0167274>.

⁴⁰ "Longhouse," Indigenous Portal, accessed July 4, 2021, <https://aboriginal-2018.sites.olt.ubc.ca/longhouse/>.

⁴¹ "Longhouse Teachings," Indigenous Portal, accessed July 4, 2021, <https://Indigenous.ubc.ca/longhouse/longhouse-teachings/>.

⁴² "Indigenous Language Revitalization - University of Victoria - University of Victoria," UVic.ca, accessed July 4, 2021, <https://www.uvic.ca/about-uvic/about-the-university/Indigenous-focus/Indigenous-language-revitalization/index.php>.

and curate oral histories⁴³. In doing so, the University of Victoria is answering several Calls to Action of the Truth & Reconciliation Commission⁴⁴, and revitalizing the ontologies present in Indigenous languages that challenge and reshape colonial understandings of place and being.

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS

DISCLAIMER: The following suggested next steps are for the consideration of CSI's Executive Team and/or Board of Directors. These suggestions are not guaranteed to be adopted and/or implemented by CSI. An individual or collective action plan (such as CSI's Strategic Plan) will be created and published in the future which may or may not include these suggested steps.

FORMATION OF CONESTOGA T&R IMPLEMENTATION GROUP

Given the broad array of programs and committees outlined above, we suggest Conestoga College begins the process of engaging its community of Indigenous students, faculty, staff, and the local community to start on the process of Reconciliation.

Our suggestions are not exhaustive nor definite, as we do not wish to set the direction of a committee that **its Indigenous members must create**. With that being said, we do suggest:

- An extensive Indigenous community outreach period, engaging with the wants and needs of Conestoga's respective local Indigenous nations, its staff, faculty, and students.
- Any committee formed to pursue the project of Truth & Reconciliation has the following membership:
 - Minimum Indigenous membership representing Indigenous staff, faculty, and students, respectively
 - At least one (1) representative of Be-Dah-Bin Gamik
 - At least three (3) elders and youth from local Indigenous nations
 - Faculty representation
 - Senior administration representation
 - CSI representation
 - 40% Indigenous representation to achieve quorum at any meeting of the committee
- Clear and broad purpose and scope to Indigenize Conestoga College; the example set by PSI's across Canada is that Truth & Reconciliation *requires* a whole-of-institution approach. As such, Indigenization is the path forward to achieve that goal.
- Integrating the Truth & Reconciliation process in decision making throughout the institution: As part of the Indigenization and whole-of-institution approach, Conestoga College should center the work of Truth & Reconciliation in its long-

⁴³ "Indigenous Language Revitalization - University of Victoria - University of Victoria."

⁴⁴ "Calls to Action Booklet," NCTR, accessed July 4, 2021, <https://nctr.ca/shop/calls-to-action-booklet/>.

term strategic planning. This includes creating an Indigenous Strategic Plan to guide the institution's long-term vision and the appointment of Indigenous educators to positions of administrative power akin to the University of British Columbia's Senior Advisor to the President on Indigenous Affairs.

- Going beyond Truth & Reconciliation: While it is important to act upon the Calls to Action relevant to PSI's, Conestoga College should seek to go beyond this. Like the University of British Columbia, Conestoga College should also seek to align its institutional strategic future with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls' Calls for Justice.
- Properly Fund and support the process: As reiterated throughout this document, the success or failure of this process hinges on the institution's willingness to provide the material and administrative support to make the work of Indigenization worthwhile, beneficial, and reciprocal. Actions that can be taken to ensure proper funding is requirements to seek funding from provincial and federal actors to support Indigenization efforts and providing budgetary oversight power to any Truth & Reconciliation Commission that may come into being.

FOR CONESTOGA STUDENTS INCORPORATED

As a non-Indigenous led student association, it is not the place of Conestoga Students Inc. to initiate or lead the process of Reconciliation; to do so would be to impose a pre-requisite on a process that must be initiated and lead by the members of the Indigenous community in which Conestoga College is immersed.

However, CSI should be a willing and vocal ally to the actions of Indigenous groups both on campus and off. CSI's Indigenous Circle should seek to evaluate our own actions, practices, and beliefs for ways to reify colonial relations of domination and to deconstruct these practices as best we can. We can begin to educate our student population on processes of colonization and neo-colonization and advocate for provincial and federal engagement on a nation-to-nation basis with local Indigenous nations. From there, however, we leave it to our Indigenous brothers and sisters in spirit to lead us in this process of Reconciliation if they so choose, or turn away from these actions if they so desire.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: TRUTH & RECONCILIATION: CALLS TO ACTION APPLICABLE TO POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTIONS

Calls To Action	
10	<p>We call on the federal government to draft new Aboriginal education legislation with the full participation and informed consent of Aboriginal peoples. The new legislation would include a commitment to sufficient funding and would incorporate the following principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Providing sufficient funding to close identified educational achievement gaps within one generation. ii. Improving education attainment levels and success rates. iii. Developing culturally appropriate curricula. iv. Protecting the right to Aboriginal languages, including the teaching of Aboriginal languages as credit courses v. Enabling parental and community responsibility, control, and accountability, similar to what parents enjoy in public school systems. vi. Enabling parents to fully participate in the education of their children vii. Respecting and honouring Treaty relationships.
11	<p>We call upon the federal government to provide adequate funding to end the backlog of First Nations students seeking a postsecondary education.</p>
14	<p>14. We call upon the federal government to enact an Aboriginal Languages Act that incorporates the following principles:...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Aboriginal languages are a fundamental and valued element of Canadian culture and society, and there is an urgency to preserve them. ii. Aboriginal language rights are reinforced by the Treaties iii. The federal government has a responsibility to provide sufficient funds for Aboriginal-language revitalization and preservation iv. The preservation, revitalization, and strengthening of Aboriginal languages and cultures are best managed by Aboriginal people and communities v. Funding for Aboriginal language initiatives must reflect the diversity of Aboriginal languages.

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16	We call upon postsecondary institutions to create university and college degree and diploma programs in Aboriginal languages.
23	We call upon all levels of government to: iii. Provide cultural competency training for all health-care professionals.
24	We call upon medical and nursing schools in Canada to require all students to take a course dealing with Aboriginal health issues, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, and Indigenous teachings and practices. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.
43	We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to fully adopt and implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as the framework for Reconciliation.
44	We call upon the Government of Canada to develop a national action plan, strategies, and other concrete measures to achieve the goals of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
55	55. We call upon all levels of government to provide annual reports or any current data requested by the National Council for Reconciliation so that it can report on the progress towards Reconciliation. The reports or data would include, but not be limited to: iii. The educational and income attainments of Aboriginal peoples in Canada compared with non-Aboriginal people.
57	We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to provide education to public servants on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.
62	We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments, in consultation and collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal peoples, and educators, to: ii. Provide the necessary funding to postsecondary institutions to educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge

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	and teaching methods into classrooms.
65	We call upon the federal government, through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, and in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, postsecondary institutions and educators, and the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation and its partner institutions, to establish a national research program with multi-year funding to advance understanding of Reconciliation.
66	We call upon the federal government to establish multi-year funding for community-based youth organizations to deliver programs on Reconciliation and establish a national network to share information and best practices.
83	We call upon the Canada Council for the Arts to establish, as a funding priority, a strategy for Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists to undertake collaborative projects and produce works that contribute to the reconciliation process.
84	<p>We call upon the federal government to restore and increase funding to the CBC/Radio-Canada, to enable Canada’s national public broadcaster to support Reconciliation, and be properly reflective of the diverse cultures, languages, and perspectives of Aboriginal peoples, including, but not limited to:</p> <p>ii. Increasing equitable access for Aboriginal peoples to jobs, leadership positions, and professional development opportunities within the organization.</p>
86	We call upon Canadian journalism programs and media schools to require education for all students on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations.
87	We call upon all levels of government, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, sports halls of fame, and other relevant organizations, to provide public education that tells the national story of Aboriginal athletes in history.
92	<p>We call upon the corporate sector in Canada to adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a reconciliation framework and to apply its principles, norms, and standards to corporate policy and core operational activities involving Indigenous peoples and their lands and resources. This would include, but not be limited to, the following:</p> <p>i. Commit to meaningful consultation, building respectful relationships, and obtaining the free,</p>

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	<p>prior, and informed consent of Indigenous peoples before proceeding with economic development projects.</p> <p>ii. Ensure that Aboriginal peoples have equitable access to jobs, training, and education opportunities in the corporate sector, and that Aboriginal communities gain long-term sustainable benefits from economic development projects.</p> <p>iii. Provide education for management and staff on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.</p>
<p>93</p>	<p>We call upon the federal government, in collaboration with the national Aboriginal organizations, to revise the information kit for newcomers to Canada and its citizenship test to reflect a more inclusive history of the diverse Aboriginal peoples of Canada, including information about the Treaties and the history of residential schools.</p>

APPENDIX 2: TERMS OF REFERENCE EXAMPLE

Steering Committee for the U of T Response to the

Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report:

Terms of Reference

1. Review and recommend priorities concerning the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada's Calls to Action that are applicable to the University of Toronto. Specifically:
 - a) Make recommendations regarding how the University community can implement the TRC Calls to Action, in alignment with the University of Toronto's mandate and mission; and
 - b) Develop an inventory of existing divisional initiatives relating to the TRC's Calls to Action, and recommend how to build on promising programs and initiatives.

2. Review the role of the Council for Aboriginal Initiatives (including the respective roles of the Council and of First Nations House) in the oversight of:
 - a) Responses to the TRC Calls to Action and other Aboriginal Initiatives across the University; and
 - b) Initiatives furthering the President's Priority of re-examining and reinventing undergraduate education.

3. Review and make recommendations concerning:
 - a) Recruitment of and support for Indigenous students at the University of Toronto, at the undergraduate, second-entry and graduate levels on all three campuses.
 - b) Recruitment of and support for Indigenous employees, staff and faculty at the University of Toronto on all three campuses.
 - c) Indigenous alumni engagement and involvement, especially in the area of supporting student success.
 - d) Inclusion, where appropriate, of Indigenous content in curriculum throughout the University, and the enhancement of existing Indigenous-focused courses and academic programs.

- e) Inclusion of Indigenous issues, research and themes in the University's programming, such as the Canadian sesquicentennial celebrations throughout 2017.
4. The Steering Committee may establish working groups to address each specific area identified and invite staff, faculty and students from within the University community to participate. People with relevant experience and expertise from outside the University may also be invited to participate.
5. Present to the President and the Vice-President and Provost an interim report of the Group's work by June 30, 2016, and a final report by December 31, 2016.

Additional Terms of Reference

- Indigenous Education Council of Mohawk College and Terms of Reference: <https://www.mohawkcollege.ca/indigenous-students/indigenous-education-council-of-mohawk-college>
- Trent University Terms of Reference for IEC: <https://www.trentu.ca/fphl/sites/trentu.ca.fphl/files/AEC%20Terms%20of%20Reference%20Final%202015.pdf>
- Algonquin College Terms of Reference for Education Council: <https://www.algonquincollege.com/mamidosewin/files/2019/06/IEC-Terms-of-Reference-Nov-2018.pdf>
- McMaster University Aboriginal Education Council Terms of Reference <https://indigenous.mcmaster.ca/indigenous-service-and-community/indigenous-education-council>
- Concordia University Indigenous Directions Leadership Council Terms of Reference: <https://www.concordia.ca/indigenous/about/leaders/terms-of-reference.html>
- Guelph University President's Advisory Committee on Indigenous Initiatives Terms of Reference: <https://indigenous.uoguelph.ca/pacii>
- Simon Fraser University Aboriginal Steering Committee Terms of Reference: <https://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/aboriginalpeoples/Aboriginal%20Steering%20Committee%20TERMS%20OF%20REFERENCE.pdf>

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- Selkirk College Task Force on Governance Process for the Indigenization of Education at Selkirk College
<https://my.selkirk.ca/media/myselfkirkca/myselfkirkforstaff/operationalupdates/GPIE-Task-Force-ToR-2016-09-19.pdf>
- University of Waterloo's President's Steering Committee on an Indigenization Strategy for the University of Waterloo Terms of Reference: <https://uwaterloo.ca/indigenization-strategy/terms-reference/steering-committees-terms-reference>
- UBC Indigenous Engagement Committee Terms of Reference:
https://bog3.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2018/04/8.1_2018.04_Indigenous-Engagement-Committee-ToR.pdf

APPENDIX 3: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action: http://trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf
- Senator Murray Sinclair: The truth is hard. Reconciliation is harder: <https://www.policyalternatives.ca/multimedia/senator-murray-sinclair-truth-hard-reconciliation-harder>
- Stealing Children to Steal the Land: Naomi Klein speaks to the legendary Manuel family about the uncovering of a mass grave of 215 Indigenous children: <https://theintercept.com/2021/06/16/intercepted-mass-grave-kamloops-residential-school/>
- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf
- Tamara Starblanket, *Suffer the Little Children: Genocide, Indigenous Nations and the Canadian State*: <https://www.amazon.ca/Suffer-Little-Children-Genocide-Indigenous/dp/0998694770>
- Glen Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*: <https://www.upress.umn.edu/book-division/books/red-skin-white-masks>
- MMIWG Calls For Justice: https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Calls_for_Justice.pdf
- Whose Land Is It Anyway? A Manual for Decolonization: https://fpse.ca/decolonization_manual_whose_land_is_it_anyway
- How to be an ally to Indigenous Peoples at University of Waterloo: <https://uwaterloo.ca/indigenization-strategy/how-be-ally-indigenous-peoples-university-waterloo>
- Truth & Reconciliation Commission of Canada Reports: <https://nctr.ca/records/reports/>
- Shauneen Pete, 100 Ways: Indigenizing & Decolonizing Academic Programs: <https://journals.library.ualberta.ca/aps/index.php/aps/article/view/27455>