
**University of Saskatchewan
Senior Leadership Consultations with
Indigenous Faculty and Staff
November – December 2020:
*Truth-telling***

**Facilitated and compiled by the Office of the Vice-
Provost Indigenous Engagement
July 29, 2021**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	1
FORWARD	2
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
WHAT WE LEARNED	6
LEADERS & LEADERSHIP	7
EDUCATION & SYSTEM-WIDE LEARNING	8
SYSTEMS & STRUCTURAL CHANGE (POLICY & PROGRAM TRANSFORMATION)	10
WHOLISTICALLY SUPPORTING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES	13
CONCLUSION	16
APPENDIX	18
RECOMMENDATIONS	18
LEADERS & LEADERSHIP	18
EDUCATION & SYSTEM-WIDE LEARNING	19
SYSTEMS & STRUCTURAL CHANGE (POLICY & PROGRAM TRANSFORMATION)	19
WHOLISTICALLY SUPPORTING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES	21

FORWARD

We acknowledge we are on Treaty Six territory and the traditional homeland of the Métis. We pay our respects to the First Nations and Métis ancestors of this place and reaffirm our relationship with one another.

Hello. Bonjour. tānsi. hau koda. ëdłanet'e?hau kola.taanishi.hau kona.anin
[English. French. Cree. Dakota. Dene. Lakota. Michif. Nakota. Saulteaux]

In the summer of 2018, the Indigenous community gifted the University of Saskatchewan a name for our University Plan 2025: nīkānītān manācihitowinihk in Cree and ni manachīhitoonaan in Michif which translates as "Let us lead with respect." This report from Senior Leadership consultation with Indigenous faculty and staff is a major step in the learning journey underway at USask – to take needed action to be a university in which Indigenous concepts, methodologies, pedagogies, languages, and philosophies are respectfully woven into the tapestry of learning, research, scholarship, creativity, and community engagement; to be a university that removes institutional structures, policies and practices that represent barriers to Indigenous faculty and staff, and any marginalized group. This is a step towards the Aspiration we committed to in approving our University Plan 2025: Transformative decolonization leading to reconciliation. President Stoicheff has called us to take action against racism and oppression. This report describes how Indigenous faculty and staff have observed or directly experienced systemic, overt, or covert racism, and the need to increase safety for Indigenous faculty, staff, and students. In launching our University Plan in 2018, our President stated that fundamental to our strengths and vision as a university is the key role we have in reconciliation: "...[W]e will achieve much when we are a strong university of common purpose, a trusted partner in the national imperative of reconciliation...".

Thank you to each of the contributors for the trust shown in speaking as you have. Your words are significant and point to 47 actions in four areas. Thank you to our President and former Interim Provost for attending each of the sharing circles with Indigenous faculty and staff, towards the end of 2020. Miigwetch Dr. Ottmann for leading this process and the writing of this report, and also to your Office of the Vice Provost Indigenous Engagement for the support provided.

The consultation continues beyond this initial report to ensure the recommended actions are the right ones. We will await this advice – ready to learn and to take action. We look ahead as our

President has envisioned: “It is our collective responsibility to build and shape the community and the world we want every day...If we are deliberate and courageous, we can make these changes together through dialogue, education and action” (President Stoicheff, June 17, 2020: Statement and actions on racism).

Professor Airini
Provost and Vice President Academic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The President, Provost, and Office of the Vice-Provost, Indigenous Engagement (OVPIE), held consultation sessions with Indigenous faculty and staff to gain insights on the perceptions and experiences of working at the University of Saskatchewan (USask) as an Indigenous person. This report summarized emergent themes from meeting notes taken by members of the OVPIE. This report is a constructive response to engagement with Indigenous faculty and staff about things that matter to them. Indigenous people came together at these sessions to inform departmental, college, unit and institution-wide leadership – the decision makers, policy makers, program- and curriculum-developers, and fiscal holders. The report will be shared with Indigenous faculty, staff, senior leaders on campus, and Elders that will support the implementation process.

The methodology for capturing the themes was determined by the Canadian Hub for Applied and Social Research (CHASR), which is a unique university-based research support and consulting service. CHASR regularly engages and supports academic-based researchers from a variety of disciplines, backgrounds, and institutions, including those in government (federal, provincial, and municipal), NGOs, and private sector firms. Meeting notes were provided to CHASR from several note-takers present at the consultation sessions. These multiple perspectives allowed for validation of the points made and helped to clarify meaning and context in some instances. Altogether, seven consultation sessions were held with Indigenous faculty and staff from November 2nd, 2020, to December 10th, 2020. Additionally, two debrief circles (one each for staff and faculty) were held December 16th and December 18th, 2020. Documents were uploaded into NVivo and coded for personal experiences and proxy experiences (both positive and negative), and potential pathways for improvement. The themes that emerged from these data are presented in this report and have no direct quotes to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. It was crucial that no identifying information was presented.

During the sessions, participants provided examples of challenging situations and experiences, including times they observed or directly experienced systemic, overt or covert (e.g., microaggressions) racism, indicating the need to increase safety for Indigenous faculty, staff, and students. Exhaustion and burn out has been experienced by many as they struggle to support educating their colleagues (and/or students) on Indigenous histories and current realities, overcoming the barriers and challenges imposed on them personally and professionally, promoting respectful Indigenousization, growing their research, and moving through tenure and promotion processes. There was a general sense of frustration, feelings of being undermined, and some participants were apprehensive to speak directly about their experiences or observations on campus because they feared negative repercussions. There is also consultation fatigue and a

disbelief that any form of change will happen as requests and advocacy for change on some issues, such as university-wide smudging and more Indigenous spaces, has been consistently occurring for decades with little movement.

Participants shared examples of similar meetings that happened in the past, but with very little or no action for positive change. A message that became clear was that Indigenous engagement must move beyond tokenism and symbolic gestures, and Indigenous peoples must be fully engaged in decision-making bodies or responsibilities from the outset. Suggestions were given to improve the hiring practices of Indigenous faculty and staff, while retention was identified as a significant issue that needs addressing. Recent instances of Indigenous scholars and staff leaving the university has greatly impacted the Indigenous community remaining on campus.

There were also stories of positive experiences. Some participants referred to their departmental leadership and other Indigenous colleagues as resources for safety, support and growth. Where opportunities allowed for community building and the practicing of cultures, participants expressed these as critically important to positive workplace experiences. There was optimism and belief that USask can serve as a representative of systemic change since what is good for the wellbeing of Indigenous peoples is good for the University and the broader community as a whole. President Stoicheff's presence at the consultations was appreciated, and to some, served as a symbol of commitment to action. The Indigenous faculty and staff provided invaluable recommendations, 47 in all, that can translate to action items and a path forward for the university to become the university the world needs, a world that is inclusive of Indigenous ways of knowing and being.

During the validation of the report with Indigenous faculty and staff, many referenced the need for “real” and comprehensive systemic and structural change that is informed and led by Indigenous leaders, and the importance of implementing “real” evaluation and accountability measures and transparent reporting processes with consequences if Indigenization efforts are lacking. In spite of the challenges described by Indigenous faculty and staff, this report represents hope.

WHAT WE LEARNED

We begin this account, this report, by recognizing the context that these sessions emerged from – recognizing that the Indigenous faculty and staff experiences that were shared in the seven sessions with President Peter Stoicheff, Interim-Provost Melissa Just and Vice-Provost Indigenous Engagement Jackie Ottmann in November and December of 2020 have been evident for some time for many and for years as an Indigenous collective. In 2020, the University of Saskatchewan community, like the rest of the world, was brought to a brief halt by the pandemic caused by the COVID-19 virus, and we had to pivot to new ways of thinking, doing and being. In addition, people all over the world came together to form movements against racism and oppression.

In response to this, President Stoicheff made statements (June 1 and June 17, 2020) to communicate USask’s position and plan of action to become anti-racist and anti-oppressive as an institution: “Acting does not necessarily mean just ‘calling out’ unacceptable behaviour and attitudes, although that must continue where it’s happening, and begin where it’s not. Acting calls for the dismantling of institutional structures, policies and processes that contribute to inequalities faced by marginalized groups. Acting also means being well informed by history and current realities, and asking questions that open new ways of thinking through research and learning. It means challenging the status quo and changing our opinions. And it means leading and contributing to the discussions that universities are ideally suited to provide.” The university has begun to address racism in specific areas:

- The Equity Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy and Action Plan is nearing completion, and it has a very active group of EDI Champions that are promoting important EDI work across the entire campus.
- The Indigenous Strategy has been accepted as a gift by all our governing bodies and will be ceremonial launched this spring.
- We are reviewing the Discrimination and Harassment Prevention Services policies and processes to become more proactive and accessible.
- Unconscious bias training has begun for all senior administrators, and for search committee work, and will be a requirement for all new hires — training that will permeate the university workforce.
- To help ensure a USask culture that is inclusive for all students, the University of Saskatchewan Students Union and the President’s Office have developed an Anti-Racism, Anti-Oppression Memorandum of Understanding signed March 26th, 2021.

- We entered into a strategic alliance with the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission to activate at USask the citizenship principles of being enlightened, ethical, empowered, engaged and empathetic.
- We continue to work with and contribute to the Saskatoon Anti-Racism Network, and employees will benefit from actively participating in Anti-Racism training.

The Vice-Provost Indigenous Engagement also made two statements (June 8 and September 2, 2020) in support of the anti-racism, anti-oppression movements.

Addressing injustice(s) begins with openness, vulnerability, active listening, taking action, and evaluating progress towards change. The seven sessions with Indigenous faculty and staff, were held in response to the call for systemic change (change that is truly inclusive, celebrates and is driven by the strength in diversity, and equitable) by Indigenous faculty and staff. We recognize and honour the gift of story – the stories that were courageously gifted by the Indigenous faculty and staff that volunteered to participate in the sessions; and, as appointed leaders in the USask community, we commit to prioritizing the recommendations, implementation and evaluation as an immediate plan of action. In fact, work towards some of the recommendations commenced early this year.

LEADERS & LEADERSHIP

At the center of nearly all the stories that were shared was the practice of leadership. Leadership greatly influenced the experiences (positively or negatively) of Indigenous staff and faculty. Supportive leaders take time to actively listen, engage in constructive, respectful and difficult dialogue, ensures that various wholistic supports are in place, and facilitate responsive and bold systemic and structural change. These leaders were described as fair and sensitive to issues that Indigenous staff and faculty face, exercising respectful allyship, actively working with Indigenous faculty and staff to advance Indigenization, decolonization, and reconciliation. There were references to particular deans or department heads that made experiences at the University of Saskatchewan engaging and positive.

During the sessions, there were also stories of leaders that created or exacerbated negative experiences through disrespectful comments and actions, and by not holding people accountable for racist acts or remarks, such as tenured faculty. As one participant stated that “academic freedom did not give anyone the right to be disrespectful”. Some participants indicated that there are covert and overt practices that ‘divide and conquer’ Indigenous peoples on campus. Examples that were mentioned were people leaders that demonstrated favoritism and the privileging and valuing of Indigenous people that don’t challenge the status quo or those that don’t hold people leaders to higher standards of Indigenization *over those that do*. These actions

cause division and strife within the on-campus Indigenous community that sometimes extends into the external community.

Leaders are expected to:

- a) frequently and actively engage and work with Indigenous faculty and staff to advance Indigenization.
- b) actively address systemic racism, and incidents of microaggression and discrimination towards Indigenous faculty and staff as they happen.
- c) be bold and action-oriented when it comes to Indigenization and decolonization; be accountable by regularly evaluating implementation of Indigenous and reconciliation initiatives. Indigenous faculty and staff provided numerous examples of inaction, tokenistic gestures, and unaccountability to Indigenization, decolonization and reconciliation efforts.
- d) ensure that Indigenous peoples are represented in leadership roles, have a voice in decision-making, and have meaningful roles on committees (beyond tokenism). Many believed that non-Indigenous faculty and leadership must not be making decisions that directly affect Indigenous faculty, staff, and students without Indigenous input.
- e) delve deeper into, and evaluate, the high-level initiatives that are already implemented at the University of Saskatchewan so positive day-to-day changes for the Indigenous community on campus can be visible and felt.
- f) be aware of the implications of their decisions and actions on the Indigenous community; hence, valuing the wealth of expertise of all Indigenous staff and faculty by treating all with respect, dignity, fairness, and appropriate recognition of their academic and work achievements.
- g) hold regular meetings with Indigenous faculty and staff to discuss challenges, identify and create plans to build upon successes.
- h) engage in merit processes that include the evaluation and recognition of Indigenization, reconciliation and decolonization advancement within their units; and, many participants noted that Senior Leaders (Deans, Vice-Provosts, and Vice-Presidents) must be evaluated on and awarded for Indigenization, reconciliation, and decolonization work and quality of relationships with Indigenous peoples.

EDUCATION & SYSTEM-WIDE LEARNING

Many participants suggested that ignorance and intolerance could be addressed through the education and training of leadership faculty, staff, and students about Indigenous peoples' diverse cultures, methodologies, pedagogies, histories, cultures, traditions, and current realities. Moreover, it was suggested that more opportunities to generate awareness and appreciation of Indigenous strengths and contributions, as well as consideration of ways to build respectful

relationships with Indigenous peoples, are needed. It was noted that the responsibility to educate others about Indigenization (when this work was not acknowledged or described in their job profiles, but rather assumed), in addition to meeting workload requirements, was too much for individual faculty and staff. Some participants commented that they appreciated expressing their Indigeneity, stating that they could not leave their identities at home. The two focus areas for institution-wide education and training were: anti-racism and anti-oppressive education and learning opportunities, and Indigenous peoples' ways of being, knowing, and doing.

Finally, in the validation sessions, some Indigenous faculty and staff noted the importance of allies respecting boundaries by stepping aside and allowing space for Indigenous peoples – their voices and leadership. There was concern that allies are stepping into authority roles that Indigenous peoples must be in and that some non-Indigenous peoples are seeing themselves as Indigenous.

1. As related to Indigenous histories, subjects, topics, contemporary realities, and concepts, participants noted that the university community must be held to higher standards of knowledge and actions.

Recommendations include:

- a) Clear and consistent working definitions and frameworks of concepts such as Indigenization, reconciliation, decolonization, anti-racism, culture, cultural spaces, and trauma. These can be drawn and expanded upon using existing documents such as the University Plan and Indigenous Strategy.
- b) Indigenization of university and college communications. This would include information and teachings regarding Indigenous symbols, phrases (e.g., land acknowledgement), images etc. that are very visible and easily accessible; highlighting and introducing new Indigenous hires on various social media platforms.

2. **Anti-racism and anti-oppressive education and learning opportunities.** Numerous negative stories and specific experiences were shared by Indigenous faculty and staff. Participants shared stories of lateral violence, microaggressions, overt and covert racism, and harmful behaviours from colleagues, leaders, and students, many of which is exasperated by systemic racism. Non-visible Indigenous faculty and staff members have the additional challenge of hearing disparaging comments and opinions about Indigenous people from colleagues who were not aware of their Indigenous heritage.

Recommendations include:

- a) Resistance of pan-Indigenous actions through demonstrations of appreciation and visible expressions recognizing the diversity within and between Indigenous peoples at USask (e.g., urban, rural, remote, First Nations, Métis, Inuit etc.).
- b) Mandatory anti-racism and anti-oppression training for senior leaders.

- c) Anti-racism and anti-oppression training must be encouraged for all non-Indigenous community members (staff, faculty, students).
- d) Mandatory anti-racism/anti-oppression training for all new hires.
- e) Leaning into, and learning from, Indigenous peoples and enacting concepts such as nīkānītān manācihitowinihk | ni manachīhitoonaan (“Let us lead with respect”); this knowledge can support the organizational climate and cultural transformational change that is needed.
- f) Compulsory/mandatory anti-racist/anti-oppression courses and programming at undergraduate and graduate levels.

3. **Indigenous Peoples’ ways of being, knowing and doing.** It was determined that the USask community still has a lot to learn about Indigenous peoples’ diverse and distinct worldviews, rich perspectives, histories, traditions, current realities and contributions.

Recommendations include:

- a) Members of the campus and broader Saskatoon community be given opportunities and be encouraged to learn about and embrace Indigenous cultures, knowledges, and histories.
- b) Indigenous artifacts displayed at the university be connected to the appropriate teachings and information to encourage further learning.
- c) Celebrate and recognize the accomplishments and contributions of Indigenous peoples to USask’s, the Province’s, and Canada’s growth.

It was mentioned that engaging, meaningful, ‘truthful’ teaching and learning experiences helps to remove oppressive barriers for Indigenous peoples on USask campuses. System-wide learning must acknowledge, take lead from, and uplift Indigenous peoples as a central part of the community; and, stereotypes and marginalization must be challenged.

SYSTEMS & STRUCTURAL CHANGE (POLICY & PROGRAM TRANSFORMATION)

Systems and structural change needs to be action-based, be respectful of, involve and engage Indigenous peoples. At this time, systems and structural change needs to be focused on: racism and oppression; the recruitment, hiring and retention of Indigenous faculty, staff and leaders; the University Standards for tenure, promotion and merit; policy for Indigenous staff; financial and HR resourcing for Indigenization and decolonization; and, greater connection, continuity and communication across Indigenous portfolios.

- 1. Racism, Oppression and Discrimination.** In general, the Indigenous faculty and staff validated that racism, oppression and lateral violence does exist and has been engrained into the fabric of the University of Saskatchewan. In relation to this, some of the Indigenous faculty and staff noted that it was difficult to separate the University from the larger Saskatchewan context (referring a few times to the Stanley trial and once to the general racial tensions in the province).

Recommendations include:

- a) Formalization and implementation of a policy and a system that results in immediate accountability implications and repercussions for acts of racism and discrimination.
- b) Implementing culturally-sensitive policies, procedures, and grievance reporting and dispute resolution mechanisms with clearly defined consequences that will replace the current grievance processes, policies and procedures for addressing racist issues since the current system often results in ‘victims’ being (re)traumatized, feeling guilty and that they are the offender.
- c) Indigenous and EDI must remain distinct, I_EDI (underscore intentional).
- d) Acceptance of Indigenous peoples’ experiences of racism and oppression as being different, in many ways, from other people groups in Canada.

- 2. Recruitment, Hiring and Retention of Indigenous Faculty, Staff, and Leaders.** Many stories were focused on this topic. Foremost, there were concerns of identity fraud and frustration of selection outcomes – non-Indigenous people being chosen over Indigenous people for Indigenous specific positions.

Recommendations include:

- a) Ensure that Indigenous peoples are hired for positions created for Indigenous peoples, or for Indigenous programming, etc.
- b) Where relevant, job descriptions must explicitly state the preference for Indigenous candidates, and in these instances require validation of Indigeneity (e.g., community, Chief and Council and/or Elder letters of support).
- c) For Indigenous faculty hires, the process for validating Indigenous self-identification needs to be clearer to the USask community and they must be consistently implemented. Formalizing and implementing mechanisms for verifying claims of Indigenous identity that recognize these complexities and sensitivities is of importance. It was also noted that these issues are difficult to rectify without policing identity and causing lateral violence.

It was acknowledged that USask does attract and hire Indigenous faculty, staff and leaders, but the current environment does not sustain and retain these hires. Systemic racism which

prevents the success and growth of Indigenous faculty, an unwillingness to think creatively and collaboratively across the colleges and departments to reconfigure positions (e.g., cross-appointments), along with negative and racist attitudes on campus were repeatedly offered as reasons Indigenous scholars have recently left the University.

- 3. University Standards for Tenure, Promotion and Merit.** First, many felt that the requirements for tenure and promotion were intensive and difficult to meet while also taking on additional roles (e.g., committee and advisory work and/or commitments to Indigenous community driven research projects or partnerships) that support Indigenization at USask. Second, Indigenous faculty who are engaged in Indigenous scholarship guided by Indigenous knowledges did not feel valued and experienced tremendous challenges with the tenure and promotion processes. Finally, the tenure and promotion processes do not yet fully recognize and embrace Indigenous praxis and scholarship. Indigenous faculty shared stories of colleagues, review committees and leaders that did not understand or respect Indigenous ways of being, knowing and doing, and of Indigenous faculty having to appeal tenure and/or promotion decisions. Others stated that they were hesitant to speak out against racist behaviour in their department because they feared risking tenure and their career.

Recommendations include:

- a) Actively working towards deconstructing the ‘white scholar’ model.
- b) Timely completion of university, college and departmental standards for tenure and promotion inclusive of Indigenous scholarship.
- c) Demonstrations of respect and recognition for leadership, education, art and scholarly works done by Indigenous faculty.
- d) Appreciation and recognition of the complexity and sophistication of Indigenous pedagogies and research methodologies.
- e) Compensate Indigenous staff and faculty for work that is outside the scope of their job profiles (e.g., committee work, conducting and planning workshops, cultural and language teaching, establishing connections and maintaining relationships with Indigenous Elders, Traditional Knowledge Keepers, community members and leaders).

Many felt that Indigenous faculty must be valued not only for their Indigenous knowledges but also for their expertise that they have earned in a specific discipline. Some participants shared stories about individuals being called on for ‘Indigenous’-related issues or education, and never for their subject area expertise. One person commented that Indigenous faculty must be encouraged to teach beyond Indigenous studies and education, and within the entire spectrum of their discipline.

4. Policy for Staff. It was mentioned by some of the staff participants that they felt that they could not ask for permission from their immediate supervisor to attend the consultation sessions (or other gatherings intended for Indigenous persons on campus), as it was not seen as being directly related to their job responsibilities. It is recommended that

- a) a policy that permits Indigenous staff to attend health and wellness, learning workshops and networking events be implemented.

Based on participant stories, it is recommended that Indigenization, reconciliation, decolonization programming and initiatives be core funded to: demonstrate the commitments that USask has made in these areas; send a strong message to the whole USask community; and, ensure growth and sustainability. More financial resourcing (e.g., staffing Indigenous student services) and scholarships for Indigenous students in certain colleges (i.e., STEM programs) was also expressed, as was more culturally informed decision making in finance. This would mean an equitable practice to budget allocations. It is recommended that there be

- a) implementation of culturally informed decision making in finance.
- b) university-wide financial and people resourcing for Indigenization, reconciliation and decolonization that is supported by core and permanent funding.

Greater connection, continuity and communication across Indigenous and reconciliation portfolios. Some participants indicated that they were not clear of the relationship between units and colleges as they related to Indigenization, decolonization and reconciliation initiatives. Therefore, it is recommended that

- a) more cohesive, collegial, streamlined and collaborative approaches between departments, colleges, and units engaging in Indigenization, decolonization and reconciliation strategies, goals and initiatives, be realized.

Participants indicated that the accountability measures (i.e., evaluation processes) for Indigenization, reconciliation, and decolonization at university, college, and department levels need to be formalized and specific (e.g., percentage of Indigenous leadership representation at department, college, and university administrative levels, percentage of Indigenous and anti-racist programming and courses etc.). It is recommended that

- a) college and program reviews that evaluates the quantity and quality of Indigenization, reconciliation, and decolonization initiatives, programming, curricula etc.

WHOLISTICALLY SUPPORTING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

It is important to establish wholistic supports for Indigenous faculty and staff. A caution against pan-Indigenized (one Indigenous perspective negating all other Indigenous people groups) approaches was mentioned, and that “positionality” and specificity of people be encouraged and

recognized (e.g., Nehiyaw, Anishinaabe, Diné, Dakota, Lakota, Nakota, Michif). The dominant themes that emerged to support this category were: fostering a sense of belonging and community; Indigenizing physical spaces to be conducive of cultural, ceremonial, and spiritual practices; and, financially resourcing, formalizing and providing health and mental wellness supports that are trauma informed and guided by Indigenous knowledges and perspectives.

1. Fostering a sense of belonging and community. Isolation, where there are few to no other Indigenous staff or faculty in a department, emerged as a concern. Some participants noted that they missed face-to-face gatherings (prior to the COVID-19 pandemic). Building a community that fosters good relationships between and among Indigenous persons, Indigenous and non-Indigenous persons, and the University and the community as a whole, was identified as a pathway forward.

Events that were aimed to build and foster a sense of community centering on Indigenous cultures (ways of knowing, being and doing) were noted, and these were very much appreciated by the session participants. It is recommended that:

- a) there be more spaces and spaces dedicated for Indigenous staff, faculty, and students to practice in diverse traditional and cultural teachings, socialize, network, and formalize mentorship and/or coaching relationships. These connections can foster a sense of belonging, scholarly collaborative work and research relationships.

2. Physical Spaces. Many positives were mentioned about particular dedicated spaces and events for Indigenous students, staff, and faculty to practice their spirituality, cultural traditions and build relationships. It was hoped that the university, as a whole, be a place where Indigenous faculty and staff feel safe, welcomed, and confident to request, teach, and initiate Indigenous cultural practices. It is recommended that:

- a) there be more physical, spiritual, and emotional spaces and places for cultural expression and practices; physical spaces and places for Indigenous peoples to enact their diverse cultural practices.
- b) there be a stand-alone multi-purpose Indigenous Centre prioritized as part of a capital campaign. The Centre can be used for health and wellness purposes (a place for Indigenous individuals to retreat for renewal and restoration), traditional Indigenous ‘knowledges’ and language teachings, Indigenous research, cultural and celebratory gatherings. Examples of facilities in other universities were mentioned: Nokom’s House, University of Guelph; Skennen’kó:wa Gamig House, York University; First Peoples House, University of Victoria; First Nations House of Learning, University of British Columbia.
- c) USask adopt a university wide policy for smudging throughout USask campuses.

3. Health and Mental Wellness Supports. The overall health and wellness of Indigenous staff and faculty is an important measure of overall institutional wellness, and the fate of non-Indigenous persons on campus (and the community) is tied closely to the well-being of Indigenous peoples on campus and in the province. Numerous references were made regarding the lack of trauma-informed, Indigenous-specific wellness and mental health approaches, practices, and supports. Again, the need for ‘Indigenized’ spaces (e.g., smudge friendly, etc.) to engage in traditional cultural and spiritual practices was expressed. These spaces would contribute to Indigenous faculty and staff’s sense of safety and belonging. It is recommended that:

- a) Health and wellness programming for Indigenous peoples on campus incorporate Indigenous healing methods, and be culturally appropriate and safe, and trauma-informed.
- b) Health and wellness work for Indigenous peoples must not be the responsibility of one person, but a specialized Indigenous Health and Wellness Team that is guided by an Indigenous Health and Wellness Plan.
- c) Elders and qualified Indigenous experts guide, teach, and engage in health and wellness programming. In relation to this, it was stated that knowledge of proper and respectful protocol practices and appropriate honorarium processes (including rates) for Elders be improved.
- d) Indigenous-specific mentorship, especially for junior faculty and students, needs to be formalized. Some participants expressed that opportunities for Indigenous mentorship for junior faculty and students were lacking across the University. For faculty, many felt that their non-Indigenous mentors were not providing them the types of mentorship they need in order to succeed in the institution.
- e) Adequate, long-term people and financial resourcing of wholistic health and wellness programming for Indigenous peoples.
- f) Employee and Family Assistance Program that has Indigenous therapists available, supports Indigenous philosophies and practices on health and wellness.
- g) Address acts of lateral violence that undermine healthy relationships between Indigenous people on USask campuses.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of these consultation sessions was to give Indigenous faculty and staff at the University of Saskatchewan the opportunity to speak their truth about their experiences on campus. The sessions were held by the President, Provost, and Office of the Vice-Provost, Indigenous Engagement.

Stories were honestly and courageously shared by Indigenous faculty and staff. Many of the positive experiences stemmed from good relationships with leadership and colleagues. The negative experiences were personal and sometimes witnessed, and these stories were of isolation/loneliness, discrimination, racism, and exhaustion. In general, there is consultation fatigue, frustration, discouragement and lack of trust. Many Indigenous faculty and staff indicated that they attended numerous consultation sessions over the years, with the hope that the university climate, culture, policies, and practices would change and improve, and that their participation in these gatherings would lead to constructive action, but their emotional, physical, spiritual and intellectual effort was not respected, reciprocated and recognized by the university.

The impact of these experiences was profound. Many felt that these barriers to success contributed to Indigenous faculty and staff leaving the university. The sentiment commonly expressed was that action must be forthcoming to address gaps such as: education and training; physical, spiritual, and emotional spaces and places to engage in traditional practices that support holistic health and well-being; recruitment and retention strategies for Indigenous peoples; culturally appropriate and trauma-informed wellness supports; University Standards (tenure and promotion) inclusive of Indigenous scholarship; financial and human support for Indigenization; and Indigenous specific mentorship.

Forty-seven recommendations emerged from the examination of the stories. There may be more, depending on how the stories are approached and heard. A way of ensuring that messages and lessons are not missed, or are not misinterpreted, is by validating these findings with Indigenous faculty and staff, and perhaps meeting with them to ask: Did I get this right? Did I miss anything? How am I doing? How are we doing? Potential pathways discussed included: mandatory education and training for senior leaders and non-Indigenous faculty; opportunities to build community within and outside of the University; having more Indigenous peoples engaged in decision-making processes; respectful recognition of Indigenous peoples' sophisticated ways of knowing, being and doing; and accountability for those who exhibit racist or discriminatory behaviour.

The stories of safety, success (however it's defined and shared), and aspirations provided encouragement and hope to those who were at the sessions – and, to the senior leaders. We learned that there are some units and departments on our campuses that are supportive of their Indigenous faculty and staff. We have to learn from these cases and spread (adapt or replicate) these kinds of successes across our campuses. The Indian Teacher Education Program (ITEP) was repeatedly mentioned as a supportive and positive space, along with the Gordon Oakes Red Bear Student Centre, and Indigenous Studies was a unit that some Indigenous faculty wanted to join. Other positive notes were those that pointed at the presence of President Stoicheff at the meetings to hear exactly what it is people have to share regarding their experiences including their stories of frustration, hope, and aspirations.

The report was validated by Indigenous faculty and staff. In the validation (critique) process, they asked for a stronger worded document and additional recommendations were requested. One way of strengthening the messages within this report was to increase the sense of urgency and pressure for change was by replacing the word 'should' with 'must'. The next step would be to create and implement an action plan with a timeframe, and define evaluation measures for accountability. To actively develop trust and relationship, regular meetings with the Indigenous community (faculty, staff and students) must be a priority for senior leadership.

APPENDIX

RECOMMENDATIONS

LEADERS & LEADERSHIP

Leaders are expected to:

1. frequently and actively engage and work with Indigenous faculty and staff to advance Indigenization.
2. actively address systemic racism, and incidents of microaggression and discrimination towards Indigenous faculty and staff as they happen.
3. be bold and action-oriented when it comes to Indigenization and decolonization; be accountable by regularly evaluating implementation of Indigenous and reconciliation initiatives. Indigenous faculty and staff provided numerous examples of inaction, tokenistic gestures, and unaccountability to Indigenization, decolonization and reconciliation efforts.
4. ensure that Indigenous peoples are represented in leadership roles, have a voice in decision-making, and have meaningful roles on committees (beyond tokenism). Many believed that non-Indigenous faculty and leadership must not be making decisions that directly affect Indigenous faculty, staff, and students without Indigenous input.
5. delve deeper into, and evaluate, the high-level initiatives that are already implemented at the University of Saskatchewan so positive day-to-day changes for the Indigenous community on campus can be visible and felt.
6. be aware of the implications of their decisions and actions on the Indigenous community; hence, valuing the wealth of expertise of all Indigenous staff and faculty by treating all with respect, dignity, fairness, and appropriate recognition of their academic and work achievements.
7. hold regular meetings with Indigenous faculty and staff to discuss challenges, identify and create plans to build upon successes.
8. engage in merit processes that include the evaluation and recognition of Indigenization, reconciliation and decolonization advancement within their units; and, many participants noted that Senior Leaders (Deans, Vice-Provosts, and Vice-Presidents) must be evaluated on and awarded for Indigenization, reconciliation, and decolonization work and quality of relationships with Indigenous peoples.

EDUCATION & SYSTEM-WIDE LEARNING

9. Clear and consistent working definitions and frameworks of concepts such as Indigenization, reconciliation, decolonization, anti-racism, culture, cultural spaces, and trauma. These can be drawn and expanded upon using existing documents such as the University Plan and Indigenous Strategy.
10. Indigenization of university and college communications. This would include information and teachings regarding Indigenous symbols, phrases (e.g., land acknowledgement), images etc. that are very visible and easily accessible; highlighting and introducing new Indigenous hires on various social media platforms.
11. Resistance of pan-Indigenous actions through demonstrations of appreciation and visible expressions recognizing the diversity within and between Indigenous peoples at USask (e.g., urban, rural, remote, First Nations, Métis, Inuit etc.).
12. Mandatory anti-racism and anti-oppression training for senior leaders.
13. Anti-racism and anti-oppression training must be encouraged for all non-Indigenous community members (staff, faculty, students).
14. Mandatory anti-racism/anti-oppression training for all new hires.
15. Leaning into, and learning from, Indigenous peoples and enacting concepts such as *nīkānītān manācihitowinihk | ni manachīhitoonaan* (“Let us lead with respect”); this knowledge can support the organizational climate and cultural transformational change that is needed.
16. Compulsory/mandatory anti-racist/anti-oppression courses and programming at undergraduate and graduate levels.
17. Members of the campus and broader Saskatoon community be given opportunities and be encouraged to learn about and embrace Indigenous cultures, knowledges, and histories.
18. Indigenous artifacts displayed at the university be connected to the appropriate teachings and information to encourage further learning.
19. Celebrate and recognize the accomplishments and contributions of Indigenous peoples to USask’s, the Province’s, and Canada’s growth.

SYSTEMS & STRUCTURAL CHANGE (POLICY & PROGRAM TRANSFORMATION)

20. Formalization and implementation of a policy and a system that results in immediate accountability implications and repercussions for acts of racism and discrimination.
21. Implementing culturally-sensitive policies, procedures, and grievance reporting and dispute resolution mechanisms with clearly defined consequences that will replace the current grievance processes, policies and procedures for addressing racist issues since the

current system often results in ‘victims’ being (re)traumatized, feeling guilty and that they are the offender.

22. Indigenous and EDI must remain distinct, I_EDDI (underscore intentional).
23. Acceptance of Indigenous peoples’ experiences of racism and oppression as being different, in many ways, from other people groups in Canada.
24. Ensure that Indigenous peoples are hired for positions created for Indigenous peoples, or for Indigenous programming, etc.
25. Where relevant, job descriptions must explicitly state the preference for Indigenous candidates, and in these instances require validation of Indigeneity (e.g., community, Chief and Council and/or Elder letters of support).
26. For Indigenous faculty hires, the process for validating Indigenous self-identification needs to be clearer to the USask community and they must be consistently implemented. Formalizing and implementing mechanisms for verifying claims of Indigenous identity that recognize these complexities and sensitivities is of importance. It was also noted that these issues are difficult to rectify without policing identity and causing lateral violence.
27. Actively working towards deconstructing the ‘white scholar’ model.
28. Timely completion of university, college and departmental standards for tenure and promotion inclusive of Indigenous scholarship.
29. Demonstrations of respect and recognition for leadership, education, art and scholarly works done by Indigenous faculty.
30. Appreciation and recognition of the complexity and sophistication of Indigenous pedagogies and research methodologies.
31. Compensate Indigenous staff and faculty for work that is outside the scope of their job profiles (e.g., committee work, conducting and planning workshops, cultural and language teaching, establishing connections and maintaining relationships with Indigenous Elders, Traditional Knowledge Keepers, community members and leaders).
32. A policy that permits Indigenous staff to attend Indigenous health and wellness, learning workshops and networking events be implemented.
33. Implementation of culturally informed decision making in finance.
34. University-wide, financial and people resourcing for Indigenization, reconciliation and decolonization that is supported by core and permanent funding.
35. More cohesive, collegial, streamlined and collaborative approaches between departments, colleges, and units engaging in Indigenization, decolonization and reconciliation strategies, goals and initiatives, be realized.

36. College and program reviews that evaluate the quantity and quality of Indigenization, reconciliation, and decolonization initiatives, programming, curricula etc.

WHOLISTICALLY SUPPORTING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

37. More spaces and spaces dedicated for Indigenous staff, faculty, and students to practice in diverse traditional and cultural teachings, socialize, network, and formalize mentorship and/or coaching relationships. These connections can foster a sense of belonging, scholarly collaborative work and research relationships.
38. There be more physical, spiritual, and emotional spaces and places for cultural expression and practices; physical spaces and places for Indigenous peoples to enact their diverse cultural practices.
39. A stand-alone multi-purpose Indigenous Centre be prioritized as part of a capital campaign. The Centre can be used for health and wellness purposes (a place for Indigenous individuals to retreat for renewal and restoration), traditional Indigenous ‘knowledges’ and language teachings, Indigenous research, cultural and celebratory gatherings. Examples of facilities in other universities were mentioned: Nokom’s House, University of Guelph; Skennen’kó:wa Gamig House, York University; First Peoples House, University of Victoria; First Nations House of Learning, University of British Columbia.
40. USask adopt a university wide policy for smudging throughout USask campuses.
41. Health and wellness programming for Indigenous peoples on campus incorporate Indigenous healing methods, and be culturally appropriate and safe, and trauma-informed.
42. Health and wellness work for Indigenous peoples must not be the responsibility of one person or a few individuals, but a specialized Indigenous Health and Wellness Team that is guided by an Indigenous Health and Wellness Plan.
43. Elders and qualified Indigenous experts guide, teach, and engage in health and wellness programming. In relation to this, it was stated that knowledge of proper and respectful protocol practices and appropriate honorarium processes (including rates) for Elders be improved.
44. Indigenous-specific mentorship, especially for junior faculty and students, needs to be formalized. Some participants expressed that opportunities for Indigenous mentorship for junior faculty and students were lacking across the University. For faculty, many felt that their non-Indigenous mentors were not providing them the types of mentorship they need in order to succeed in the institution.

45. Adequate, long-term people and financial resourcing of wholistic health and wellness programming for Indigenous peoples.
46. Employee and Family Assistance Program that has Indigenous therapists available, supports Indigenous philosophies and practices on health and wellness.
47. Address acts of lateral violence that undermine healthy relationships between Indigenous people on USask campuses.