The Story of ii' taa'poh'to'p

University of Calgary's Journey Towards an Indigenous Strategy

Grandparents of ii' taa'poh'to'p

THE NEXT WAR: INDICATIONS INTELLIGENCE IN THE EARLY COLD WAR

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ISBN 978-1-77385-631-5

Understanding the Landscape

Dru Marshall, Shawna Cunningham, Jackie Sieppert, Jacqueline Ottmann

Four Stories

TWO SYSTEMS

My grandmother would say "Creator gave the [Western] written system their administration, and they gave the oral [Indigenous] system their administration. They're both equal, but we have to acknowledge them like the wampum belt with two canoes—not crossing each other. And if we can do that, then we can work together."

Reg Crowshoe

MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING AND RESPECT

This strategy is not about integration or assimilation. It is not because we find comfort in being the same but because we find inspiration in being different. It is about two cultures walking parallel paths—beside each other—and creating ethical space between us that allows for authentic dialogue to unfold to develop mutual understanding and respect. It is not about the next five-year period but about how we mutually coexist—together—well into the future.

Dru Marshall

A STORY OF HOPE

This Indigenous Strategy was a dream come true for many Indigenous people who were and are connected to the University of Calgary—students, staff, faculty, Elders, leaders, and community members. We heard stories of hope, anticipation, and longing to be recognized, acknowledged, and appreciated in ways that uplifted and centred Indigenous ways of knowing, being, connecting, and doing. The energy generated by the process of creating the strategy was tangible and highly motivational. We had the sense that we were on the cusp of something significant for the University of Calgary—that a shift was about to happen. The whole process was purpose driven.

Jacqueline Ottmann

MOMENT OF ENLIGHTENMENT

There was a moment of enlightenment early on. We were sitting in circle with the Elders at Red Crow Community College, and we were asking for guidance on the development of the strategy. We shared what we were planning to do and how we were hoping to approach the strategy. The late Kainai Elder Andy Black Water provided some words of wisdom and guidance that really resonated with those of us who were there to listen. He said something like this: "Whatever you do, don't create something that people are afraid of. Don't create something where people look at us with pity. We don't want to be pitied. We have pride in our cultural ways, and we want to be engaged. We want to be part of something." These words resonated throughout our journey.

Shawna Cunningham and Jackie Sieppert

Our Intent

Our intent in writing this book is to share our story about the development of the University of Calgary Indigenous Strategy, capturing our ongoing journey toward reconciliation and our path toward becoming and maintaining good relatives through a lens of reciprocity. We tell the story from both an organizational and an individual point of view. The University of Calgary embarked on an intentional and inclusive two-year journey to develop our Indigenous Strategy, now called *ii' taa'poh'to'p*. We undertook our journey in relationship with, and guidance from, Indigenous people, leaders, and community partners to ensure that we proceeded in "a good way." Early on, the university decided to develop the strategy through cultural parallels. Parallel conceptual and cultural models were designed and developed as a conscious commitment to the process of reconciliation in all forms but with an intentional focus on educational reconciliation. We learned several lessons along the way that we thought were timely and important to share given the call for reconciliation in Canada. Although we are an educational institution, we believe that these lessons are transferable to other organizations embarking on their own journeys toward truth and reconciliation.

This book reflects our lived experiences through evaluative and reflective lenses. We hope that you find valuable teachings within the book that will both inspire and inform your own journeys. In the spirit of truth telling, we also wanted to share the struggles and tensions encountered in our organization, and within ourselves, as we completed this journey.

We have written this book in a way that allows you to navigate the content how you choose. You can move back and forth to different places in the book. Certain concepts also emerge repeatedly. As in teachings by Elders, we tell and retell stories to reinforce the concepts and to add depth and breadth to them. These concepts include the importance of systems of Indigenous knowledge, parallel paths, storied experiences, Indigenous voices, and time to develop respectful relational processes.

We hope that you enjoy the journey!

Our Starting Point

Historically, and throughout Canada, increased representation and meaningful inclusion of Indigenous students in higher education were most often the result of emergent Indigenous initiatives such as Native Studies programs, student access programs, culturally relevant student services/centres, and community-based recruitment. These initiatives often unfolded in relation to one another in Canadian postsecondary institutions (Pidgeon et al. 2013). Together, these initiatives actively demonstrated to the community an institution's commitment to create a place of welcome, inclusion, and cultural relevance for Indigenous students, community members, and knowledge systems. For Indigenous students, cultural relevance is noted when institutions offer a wide variety of high-quality Indigenous-focused academic programs and courses, culturally informed holistic services, designated gathering spaces for Indigenous students and community members, a visible active and reciprocal presence in Indigenous communities, hosted cultural events of value to the community, and an active meaningful presence of Indigenous faculty and staff. These markers speak to wise practices, demonstrating an institution's commitment to Indigenous people's education and meaningful inclusion. Indigenous representation in public postsecondary education is what most institutions tended to strive for both before and after the release of the *Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada* (TRC 2015). However, without an overarching institutional Indigenous Strategy, the good initiatives listed above often happened in silos or were fleeting in nature, responding to an immediate need rather than a sustainable long-term vision. The following passage from the former director of the University of Calgary Indigenous student centre and co-author of this book is a reflection on the changes noted at the university since the early 2000s and after the launch of the Indigenous Strategy:

> In November of 2000, I was hired as the director of the Native Centre (now Writing Symbols Lodge), the University of Calgary's Indigenous student support services centre. Upon arrival, I was handed a mandate that included not only the provision of culturally relevant student services for Indigenous students but also recommendations for the centre

to be responsible for the administration of an existing transitional program offered on site at a First Nations college, a directive to create and offer a similar campus-based transitional program and manage Indigenous community relations and engagement on behalf of the institution. What I experienced when I arrived in the role was not outside the norm in public postsecondary institutions. Alongside existing Native Studies programs, the centres were known as institutional hubs for indigenization on campus, commonly operating with limited financial and human resources and broad mandates. In 2000, there was no formal process in place for Indigenous students to self-identify. Indigenous representation was not a focused priority in higher education at the time. Additionally, there were maybe two or three full-time self-identified Indigenous faculty members and a handful of Indigenous sessional instructors. Indigenous people were generally under-represented.

Since the launch of the Indigenous Strategy in 2017, representation at the University of Calgary has steadily increased, with admissions, access, and bridging programs for Indigenous students and strategic inclusive hiring practices for Indigenous faculty and staff. There have been three cluster hiring programs for Indigenous scholars and special incentive programs to attract Indigenous postdoctoral scholars. Collectively, these latter two initiatives have resulted in Indigenous-led and -focused research.

In terms of academic programs, the university has some well-developed innovative programs that started to unfold in the early 2000s. In 2002, the Faculty of Social Work launched its community-based learning circles program, offering a tailored Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) degree in partnership with selected rural communities and First Nations colleges. For the BSW program offered in First Nations communities, community instructors and Elders were engaged in curriculum development and delivery, enriching the curriculum with Indigenous worldviews and languages. In 2004, the university launched a minor in International Indigenous Studies, which grew into a full degree program offered through the Faculty of Arts. The Faculty of Education (now the Werklund School

of Education), upon request from the community (e.g., Siksika Nation, Tsuut'ina Nation, Stoney Nakoda Nation), also began offering professional development and degree programs on site and in partnership with select First Nations colleges at both the bachelor level and the master level. These kinds of continuing education, community-based programs, and academic partnerships have continued to grow since the launch of the Indigenous Strategy, with a more mindful approach relative to community reciprocity and what constitutes an equitable partnership in academic programming and inclusion of Indigenous pedagogies in teaching and learning. We must go far beyond a transactional partnership model to a more relational model, so there is much more work to be done in this realm.

Preceding the university-wide Indigenous Strategy document were faculty-based Indigenous Strategies, such as the Werklund School of Education's Indigenous Strategy, *Moving Forward in a Good Way*. This strategy was unanimously passed by the faculty council in March 2015 (three months before the national TRC report was released) after two years of collaboration, community consultation, writing, and verification. The president and provost paid close attention to this process and others within the university for insight into successful strategic frameworks involving Indigenous relatives.

Prior to the launch of the Indigenous Strategy at the University of Calgary, most of the well-intentioned efforts to be more inclusive of Indigenous people, practices, and pedagogies unfolded in isolation from each other and were not sustainable. There was no overarching institutional commitment or strategy to guide and coordinate our work "in a good way" that would last long into the future.

Grounding Ourselves

We embarked on our developmental journey by familiarizing ourselves with the landscape to better shape and inform our process. This required an understanding of key national and international documents and our current institutional climate (strategic environment) to better articulate the rationale, significance, and process of creation for an Indigenous Strategy and to determine institutional readiness.

GUIDING DOCUMENTS

Our journey toward the creation of an Indigenous Strategy for the university was "guided by documents that recognize common themes and recommendations, based on the principles of community and institutional capacity building within the current socio-cultural landscape" (University of Calgary 2017b, 34). There were three key documents:

1. the final report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) (Government of Canada 1996);

2. the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) (United Nations 2007); and

3. the *Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada,* Volume 1 (TRC 2015).

The following excerpt from the *ii' taa'poh'to'p* document provides an overview of these guiding documents:

> The Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada released in 2015 . . . builds upon the work of [the] Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous peoples in impactful ways. Over a six-year period, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada conducted hearings across the country, serving as witnesses to the stories of residential school survivors and their families. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final report was over five hundred pages, which included 94 Calls to Action. The calls to action challenged individuals, organizations, and institutions to take an active role in the process of reconciliation. These calls to action include several clear statements pertaining to education and the inclusion of Indigenous peoples and perspectives in teaching, learning, and research. The Commission called notably for the following measures: Indigenous course content and cultural awareness training to become mandatory; funding must be provided to integrate Indigenous epistemologies, methodologies, and pedagogies into classrooms; a dedicated

senior-level leader should be responsible for the facilitation of Indigenous content in education; educators and students must be made aware of the legacy of residential schools and the assimilationist policies of the past; community Elders and Indigenous spiritual beliefs should be integrated into educational programming; and a funded national research program should advance the understanding of reconciliation.

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP, 2007) also serves as an important foundation for the University of Calgary Indigenous Strategy. The UNDRIP asserts that Indigenous groups have the right to control and establish their own educational systems and have linguistic and cultural autonomy. UNDRIP also asserts that Indigenous people have the "right to all levels and forms of education of the State without discrimination" to be provided "when possible" in their own language.

The Final Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, released in 1996 after five years of inquiry and deliberation, insisted on the necessity to define a new contract with Indigenous people that would respect the principle of "nation to nation, people to people relationships." The Report also emphasized the critical importance of traditional knowledges, Elders, and Indigenous spirituality, and how these are often ignored in Canada's education system.

In response to the TRC, Universities Canada, which represents 97 universities across Canada and educates more than a million students each year, agreed to mandate 13 principles for Indigenous education. The 2015 Universities Canada report began by recognizing that Indigenous students continue to be underrepresented in Canadian higher education institutions. This issue was identified as an urgent issue for Canada. Universities Canada argued that closing the educational gap will strengthen Indigenous communities, contributing to self-determination, the informed citizenship of Canadians, and Canada's long-term economic success and social inclusion. Universities Canada declared that higher education offers great potential for reconciliation and a renewed

relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada. It also suggested that the "cohabitation" of different scientific approaches and methodologies on campuses, including in priority Indigenous knowledges, has the power to open a dialogue between people of diverse cultural groups, enhancing our shared knowledge. (University of Calgary 2017b, 35–36)

These grounding documents served as road maps, guiding and affirming the importance and value of education for Indigenous people, the importance of relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people based on mutual respect and benefit, and the meaningful inclusion of Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing. Our journey was informed by the recommendations in these documents and affected by the Indigenous stories of the experience of colonization, including human and Indigenous rights violations, current socio-cultural inequities, racism, and genocide. Each of the documents alludes to or directly identifies parallel development as the way forward for building or rebuilding our spaces and places—our organizations, institutions, and societies—and for beginning or restoring relationships.

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT

Some institutions in Canada started to envision and launch Indigenous Strategies prior to the release of the *Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada* in 2015. In 2010, Simon Fraser University, for example, was one of the first institutions to launch an Indigenous Strategy. The release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report shone a much-needed national spotlight on the dark history of colonization and the resulting socio-cultural gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada in all sectors of society. The report incited an overarching call for *Reconciliation through Education* (see NCTR 2024) combined with numerous specific calls to action targeted at the transformation of postsecondary education systems and programs. As the honourable Dr. Murray Sinclair, the former chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada noted, "education is what got us into this mess and education is key to getting us out of it" (NCTR 2024). The development of the University of Calgary Indigenous Strategy started

in late 2015. This late start, as some would say, was an advantage since our work was motivated and informed in part by the *Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*, and we were able to learn from other postsecondary institutions from across the country that had already launched Indigenous Strategies.

In addition to examining the external environment, and grounding ourselves in the key documents described above, we assessed the internal environment by asking ourselves who are we? Where do we come from? Where are we going? What are our responsibilities? Having a clear understanding of the overall strategic direction of our institution was an important starting point. The University of Calgary is one of Canada's leading research-intensive universities—a young, bold, and dynamic institution that embraces opportunity. A reflection of the city in which it resides, the university is consistently highly ranked in national and international assessments. The success that the university was experiencing in 2015 was driven largely by a commitment to the inspirational and aspirational *Eyes High Strategy* (see University of Calgary 2017a), first developed in 2011, re-energized in 2017, and concluded in 2022.

The *Eyes High Strategy* set the bar for forward momentum at the university, and two accompanying operational documents, the Academic and Research Plans, served as road maps to achieve the vision. In 2012, ten priorities were identified between the two plans, and these priorities guided all human, capital, and financial resource allocations on campus. Together, the *Eyes High Strategy* and Academic and Research Plans were used to drive annual plans, set agendas at both the Academic Senate and the Board of Governors meetings, describe institutional impacts in government reports, and respond to government and community requests. In this way, strategic planning and action at the University of Calgary were highly integrated.

The Academic Plan had seven priorities, one of which was *connection with community*. Within that priority, connections with Indigenous communities were identified as a key objective. The Academic Plan also highlighted that,

> as a result of the focus on the identified academic priorities, graduates of the University of Calgary will have experienced high quality, engaging academic programs and will

be thoughtful, communicative citizens and leaders of their respective communities, with abilities to think critically and creatively to solve issues of the day. They will understand the value of collaboration and partnerships and will be used to working with others who are considered traditionally outside of their fields of expertise. They will also appreciate different cultures and see value in diversity—of opinion, thought, gender, race, and culture. They will appreciate the limited resources available on Earth, and work and live to create a sustainable future. (University of Calgary 2017a)

We understood that we had to reimagine and rebuild our relationships with Indigenous communities.

The Academic Plan drove the production of several subplans, including international, sustainability, teaching and learning, and mental health strategies. In addition, as part of our overall strategy, in late 2015 the university embarked on a journey to establish an Indigenous Strategy.

WHY AN INDIGENOUS STRATEGY?

It was within this broader external and internal strategic context that the Indigenous Strategy was undertaken at the University of Calgary, particularly to connect, in meaningful and transformational ways, the university to Indigenous peoples[1] and communities. Indigenous peoples have been consistently under-represented, and Indigenous knowledge systems have been continuously dismissed and misinterpreted in university settings. Indigenous peoples, generally and historically, have not been well supported and set up for success within colonial education systems (TRC 2015), including universities. In our strategy, we noted that

the clear and compelling imperative for the development and realization of the University of Calgary's Indigenous Strategy is based on an authentic foundation of compassion encouraged through cross-cultural learning opportunities that promote awareness, education, and understanding. Building

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1   We use "Indigenous peoples" as an inclusive term to refer to the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples in Canada.

knowledge and understanding of Indigenous perspectives, worldviews, histories, cultures, and belief systems is essential to enabling and realizing steps towards true reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. Educational institutions have a profound responsibility in initiating, securing and sustaining reconciliation. (University of Calgary 2017b, 2)

The Indigenous Strategy also served as the institutional response to the TRC Calls to Action (2015) and to other major reports written years earlier, as noted above (see Government of Canada 1996; United Nations 2007).

INSTITUTIONAL READINESS

At the University of Calgary, we were used to developing and implementing strategies and plans and, by most measures, successful in doing so. However, it was clear that the process to develop an Indigenous Strategy would be different. Key lessons learned during this strategic process related to ways of doing: Indigenous peoples are generally relational and emphasize transformation, whereas universities tend to be siloed and transactional. Universities rely on written tradition, whereas Indigenous peoples follow oral tradition that spans generations to transfer and safeguard knowledge. Universities rely on set Eurocentric rules and procedures to conduct meetings and engage in decision making, whereas Indigenous peoples rely on cultural protocols and oral practices (e.g., smudges, pipe ceremonies, songs) to open, guide, and close decision-making processes in "a good way." Institutional ways of doing rely on processes of payment not congruent with Indigenous protocols for honouring and gifting Traditional Knowledge Keepers (e.g., tobacco, blankets, honoraria). There was much for all to learn, and it took time to do so. Where most strategies had been developed in six to eight months, the Indigenous Strategy took nearly two years. We took that time because we wanted to get it right. We engaged in a parallel process that honoured both Indigenous and non-Indigenous ways of doing, being, connecting, and knowing. We did not want to create a strategy about assimilation or integration. Rather, we wanted to engage in a more respectful and inclusive process by building an understanding of cultural parallels and then walking parallel paths on our journey toward developing the Indigenous Strategy.

Importantly, we had to re-establish—and in some cases establish—relationships with Indigenous peoples. We were fortunate to have a group of respected and wise Traditional Knowledge Keepers who were patient and willing to take the time to work with us to ensure success of the strategy. While committee members who worked on the strategy went through significant personal and professional education, it did not take long for us to realize that our institution—board members, faculty, staff, and students—also needed to be educated. We found through our processes that there was a general lack of knowledge about Indigenous peoples in Canada and, in some cases, blatant discrimination and racism against Indigenous students, scholars, and staff. These were among our darkest days. Despite a prevalent climate of intercultural illiteracy across the institution, we persevered and encouraged everyone to learn Canadian history, and the history of these lands prior to settlement, from Indigenous perspectives—history that we all should know through the experiences and traditional teachings of Indigenous peoples but were not taught in our colonial education systems.

Because of the focus on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, we were more ready institutionally in 2015 than we would have been in 2012, but we still had a long way to go. There was an increased awareness of Indigenous issues, but we lacked an overall institutional understanding.

INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE FOR STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

Strategy development at the University of Calgary typically involved a task force composed of a Steering or Management Committee (eight to ten people) and a Working Group (thirty to forty individuals). The Steering Committee, usually co-chaired by a member of the executive team, along with a senior professor who is an expert in the strategic thrust, was responsible for the overall direction, establishing terms of reference for committees and ensuring that documents were ready for the approval processes within the university. The Working Group, usually co-chaired by a member of the senior leadership team and a staff member with significant expertise in the strategic focus, was responsible for obtaining and processing information, writing and editing key documents, and carrying out the direction provided by the Steering Committee. All strategies involved

significant internal and external community consultation. In the case of the Indigenous Strategy, Traditional Knowledge Keepers were added to the development structure and became important and integral members of both the Steering Committee and the Working Group.

Once a strategy is developed and deemed ready for the process of approval, there are two branches of governance approval at the University of Calgary. In the first instance, the strategy is approved by the academy. This requires that the document be taken through several subcommittees, typically twice, once for discussion, and once for recommendation for approval, on the way to the Academic Senate of the university. This iterative process is educational, resulting in improved strategies as feedback from the academic community is incorporated as the documents move through the process. Once approved by the Academic Senate, the strategy is also approved by the Board of Governors. In a fashion similar to the academy, the document is moved through several subcommittees of the board—again twice—prior to formal approval by the full board. Following approval of both the Academic Senate and the Board of Governors, there is a formal launch of the strategy, to which both internal and external community members are invited to attend. In the case of the Indigenous Strategy, Traditional Knowledge Keepers and Indigenous scholars and leaders were present at Academic Senate and Board of Governors meetings to provide support, advice, and guidance related to systems of Indigenous knowledge and ceremonial ways. In addition to university approval processes, Indigenous ceremonial validation was invoked throughout our journey as part of our parallel approach.

Sharing Our Journey

As we share our journey of the development of the University of Calgary Indigenous Strategy, now called *ii' taa'poh'to'p*, we do so in a parallel way by sharing cultural teachings, our personal narratives or storied experiences, excerpts from the strategy document, and lessons learned along the way. The creation of our Indigenous Strategy was unique since we included Traditional Knowledge Keepers in the developmental structure. They grounded and shaped our developmental journey and infused and animated the strategy document through Indigenous ways of knowing, doing, being, and connecting.

The next chapters follow a journey format. The chapter called "Setting Out" focuses on how we embarked on our journey. "Coming into Circle" shares key epistemological teachings from Traditional Knowledge Keepers, embedded in the strategy and shared through conceptual and cultural frameworks. "Our Four-Stage Journey" describes our journey framework and the parallel paths that we walked to create the strategy. "What We Heard" recounts our community dialogues that helped to inform and shape the strategy. "Creating the Strategy" addresses how we approached, reflected on, and compiled thematic content of the strategy based on what we heard. "Empowering the Spirit of *ii' taa' poh' to'p*" shares our parallel process of institutional approval, ceremonial validation, cultural celebration, and implementation. The chapter titled "Reflections" captures transformational moments, milestones, challenges, and lessons learned.

Transitional Story

OLD CAMP, NEW CAMP

When we were talking about the strategy at the university, I was wondering how do a group of people transform, and how does that transformation come about? What's the story? So, as I thought about oral narratives of knowledge, I came upon the one that we use. That was the Lone Chief story about moving to new camp. So how did we move to new camp and include the environment and everybody that we were related to? There were three camps involved: old camp, present camp, and new camp. How did they all move and change, and how did those three concepts come about? New camp is what we always tried to get to, because we're always at present camp, and we all came from old camp. When I was listening to the story, there was an old-timer and an old lady one time who were in present camp. When the group decided to move to a new camp, they were getting to the age where they couldn't haul their stuff, and they needed help. Everybody got ready and started moving. The scouts had already gone out to find someplace safe where they could temporarily camp until they got to the new camp. So the old man and old lady were caught being last. And in them days, they travelled with dog travois. One of their dogs, a female, just had pups, and they couldn't take the pups with them, and they couldn't use the female on the journey, so they just left them there. They took what they could—their tipi and all that—and left whatever else was there. They then followed the whole camp to the present camp.

When they all got there, the old-timer was thinking about his dogs. "I left my dogs and some of my stuff at old camp," and he was talking about relatives and how he let them down, how he couldn't look after them, and so on. He felt bad about it. So the next morning he told the old lady, "Well, we're going to be here a few days, so I'm going to go back and see if I can find the dogs and some more of our stuff, and they can come back." So he went back to old camp. When he got back to old camp, all that was left, and all he

could see, were the tipi rings of the lodges in the camp. He knew where his lodge was, but there was just the tipi ring left.[1]

So it was in the evening, and he called his dogs—the female and the pups—but none of them was around. So he made a fire and made himself something to eat. He said, "Well, I'm going to sleep where I used to sleep. Even though there's no tipi, it's a warm night. I'm just going to sleep outside." So he had something to eat. Then he left some food out for the dogs in case they came, and he went to sleep. In his sleep, he dreamt that he was in his tipi. The tipi was up, and he was home. And this young man came in, and he said, "Lone Chief is inviting you to a feast and a dance." And the old man said, "Okay, tell Lone Chief I'll be right there." And then he went out, and he thought to himself "I'm too tired. Maybe I'll skip this one." And he lay down again. Then another young man came in and said, "Lone Chief's inviting you." So four times he was asked. In our way, if you're asked four times, then you have to go. So, after the fourth request, he said, "Oh, okay, I guess I have to go, because there's four of them." And that's where that cycle of four was represented.

He followed the last young man, and came out of his tipi, and walked across camp. All the other tipis were up. He followed them into Lone Chief's camp. When he went in, it was a big camp. Lone Chief sat up front with his wife, and all the other young men were on each side. He went in, and Lone Chief asked him to sit beside him. He sat up at the front beside Lone Chief. Lone Chief said, "All these young people came together to help the old people. The ones who are having a hard time. You should have asked us. When you guys were going to move, you should have told us that you didn't have help. We would have given you help." And then he said, "But now, tonight, we're going to make it formal. We're going to have our relatives come in." And the relatives were all the animals and plants. "They are going to come into this lodge, and we're going to put together a framework of an organization, a society, so this society can go with your camp, and we use it [the society] to help all the old-timers." So they formed what they call the Brave Dog Society. They talked about how they would dress, how they would use paint, what kind of rattles they would use, and how they would sit in a circle. They talked about who would become the leader, who would

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1   Tipi rings refer to a circular pattern of rocks left on the ground, marking a place on the land where a tipi and tipi encampment once stood.

be the communicator, who could look after logistics, and who would be the members. All that organizational structure comes from an oral tradition. Each time they came together in circle, they sang the song for their society, and then Lone Chief gave that song to the old man, and he accepted it.

The [ceremony] went on all night, and then they had something to eat. And then the old man said, "Well, I'm going to go back to my camp. I've got to rest because I'm heading out to new camp" or what will become present camp. And then he left the old camp or Lone Chief's camp. He went across to his own lodge, and he fell asleep. And the next morning he woke up, and just the fire was there. There was no lodge. He was out in the open, and he was sleeping inside the rock circle of his tipi, but the dogs were all back. The pups and the female were all back by the fire. So, anyway, he picked up what he needed. He picked up the pups, and then he started hauling them back from old camp. The female followed all the way back to "new" becoming "present-day" camp. As he was walking back to this camp, he heard these brave dogs singing their song. He then realized that he had put the pups in a bag and thrown them over his back. They were singing. He listened and learned those songs all the way back. He finally got to the new "present-day" camp, and everybody came back out. They said, "Somebody's coming into camp." So the scouts came out, and here they recognized "That's the old man who was here and left already." So they were glad to see him. And he said, "Don't touch me, because I went through a transformation."

Lone Chief was actually a dog, and the young people in this camp were all dogs, and he told his people, "They transferred to me the strategic plan for the Brave Dog Society. So now I'm a member of the Brave Dog Society. You can't touch me. You need to build a sweat lodge for me. Once I have come out of the sweat, you can touch me." He said, "The young people in camp have to build the lodge for me." So the scouts went back, and they brought all the young people out, and they built a sweat lodge for him, and he started telling them the story. He started transferring to the leadership of the Brave Dog Society. He organized them all into that framework, and then they prepared a sweat lodge for him. He went in, and the leaders went in with him. He transferred the society framework to them, and then they became Brave Dogs. So, every time they make a sweat lodge or a smudge inside a camp, the leader of Brave Dogs would say, "Okay, I'm making this smudge. I'm transforming all of you into dogs. You're all related. You are all

relatives now: grandparents, older brothers, younger sisters, and so on. In this circle, you become the Brave Dog Society relatives."

He shared this new framework with the rest of the camp, and other young people wanted to join this new society. So, when they were planning for new camp, and how to get to the new camp, they said, "We'll have an extra society that's going to help all the old people move." So, when I thought of that story, the old camp was where we looked for stories [when developing the University of Calgary Indigenous Strategy]. We consulted with everybody, and we met with the Elders and the university. So that was the knowledge that old Chief had. Before he was inviting this old man, he was collecting all those stories. When he brought the stories to present-day camp, he said, "Don't touch me until I go through a ceremony of bringing home the stories." When you bring home the stories, you have to analyze them. And, as he was analyzing them, that's when he made the framework for the new society to follow and transform into. And the seasons were part of that group. So then there was an annual visitation to that ceremony so that they can have it four times.

And that's how they moved to present-day camp. But they're using that as a framework for new camp when we're planning for new camp. So, when we say we're going to always be in transition, that means we're always going to be moving to new camp. We need to develop these [frameworks] at present-day camp and practise them as we [transform]. . . . Then they [frameworks] will work for new camp. So that was going back to an oral narrative of how we would look at oral systems of building strategies and transforming people to move ahead. But, at the same time, the environment and life exist all the time. It's going to be rotating all the time. And that new camp is always in that future rotation. You'll be always working toward it.

Oral Teaching, Piikani Elder Dr. Reg Crowshoe