

THE NEXT WAR: INDICATIONS INTELLIGENCE IN THE EARLY COLD WAR

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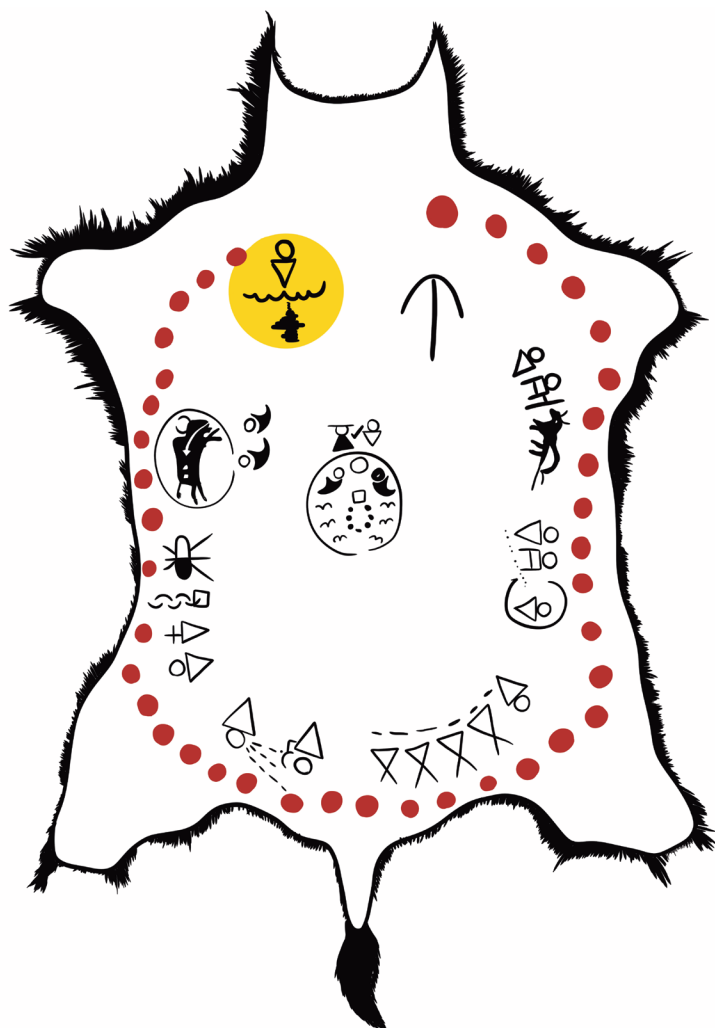
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Reflections

*Jackie Sieppert, Dru Marshall, Shawna Cunningham,
Jacqueline Ottmann*



Four Stories

LOSS AND LEGACY

I have learned about the impact of loss, about the legacy of residential schools. As a father, I have experienced the relentless, unforgiving loss of a child. Yet I must say I have no capacity to imagine the loss endured by Indigenous families who have seen their children removed without notice or reason. Families who were not allowed to see their children. Families who witnessed a conscious process of assimilation that stole their children's love, culture, identity, and future. Families who learned their children were abused in so many ways. This is why I am—as a social worker and father—so passionate about our Indigenous Strategy. I am an ally, one who cares deeply about creating hope and new futures for those children and their families.

Jackie Sieppert

WAY OF BEING IN THE WORLD

The experience I gained as a non-Indigenous person through the journey has been profound, and it has transformed my professional practice and understanding of community engagement and, on a more personal level, my way of being in the world. Through additional opportunities to co-create and work in parallel ways with Elders Reg and Rose along with other Elders in the Treaty 7 region, experiential knowledge and practical wisdom emerged. I was fortunate to work on a range of local, regional, national, and global community engagement initiatives with Elders Reg and Rose, Dr. Cunningham, and other university and community leaders. Although my professional role allows me to share this emergent knowledge in diverse professional settings, I also feel a deep sense of responsibility to build upon these unique experiences through my doctoral program and emerging research interests. As I have come to believe, Elders Reg and Rose and other Indigenous leaders welcomed me as a good ally and relative in the hope that I will continue the journey, building

greater understanding and awareness among other non-Indigenous people and Western leaders.

Susan Mide Kiss

FEELING SAFE

The concept of safety was also really important in our overall process—perhaps another way to say that is that sanctified kindness was critical. I know I felt safe enough to feel stupid and to ask questions that some might have interpreted as being stupid or perhaps questions to which I should have known the answers. There was a willingness to have that space created and saved, a willingness to show kindness in the approach to how people were treated, that I thought was critical in our frank conversations. And I hope we (those of us at the university) reciprocated and did our part by being open to different ways of doing things.

Dru Marshall

TIME

We felt the clash with the concept of time throughout the creation of the strategy, but especially in the beginning, when there was a strong sense of urgency to complete the entire Indigenous Strategy in six months, in a linear, structured, predictable way. As Anishinaabe-kwe and someone who was raised in a community with rich cultural traditions, I felt this approach would not be received well by the Indigenous community. It would have been perceived as more of the same—a colonial approach by a mainstream institution. Indigenous people understand time as non-linear, and space must be given to allow for the convergence of events to fall into place before a step forward is taken. We calmly wait for all the people to arrive, for protocols to be fully respected, for certain seasons to arrive, and for things to feel right. During the waiting, there's storytelling and a lot of laughter. Learning and relationship building continue during these moments of pause. "Indian" time is not being dismissive of the importance of a person, leader, community, project, or initiative. It is a respectful and anticipatory pause for a "coming together" to become apparent. It is a humbling experience, one that requires surrender, vulnerability, humility, and recognition of the spiritual dimension. Chaos, order, chaos. The Indigenous Strategy had us move through and feel this creative force, especially during times of seeming inaction.

Jacqueline Ottmann

A Look Back: About the Journey

What a spectacular journey we are on! The spirit of *ii' taa'poh'to'p* carried us on parallel paths that unfolded naturally, were guided in ceremony, and were driven by university leadership. We are very proud that on this journey we have committed to creating paths marked by mutual respect, common goals, and commitment to authentic relationships. Together, we will create relationships that benefit both Indigenous and settler communities.

We continue to walk on parallel paths as relatives and to learn from one another. As Kris Frederickson, one of our board members, highlighted in an email to the Board of Governors early in our process to develop an Indigenous Strategy, the *Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada* (TRC 2015) provided us with a simple choice: either to do something to improve the relationship with Indigenous peoples or to do nothing to improve the relationship. For us, ignorance was no longer an excuse for inaction. We chose to do something to improve the relationship. Our role also included improving the relationship between Indigenous peoples and the education system. We chose not only to engage in efforts at reconciliation but also to create a strategy that would guide the transformation of our institution into the future. We engaged in this meaningful and inclusive journey with an understanding of the commitment, responsibility, and ongoing stewardship that came with that decision.

Collectively, we have decades of experience as leaders at different levels within the university. Despite that experience, each of us has described the journey to develop the University of Calgary Indigenous Strategy as one of the richest and most impactful learning experiences of our careers. Since launching the strategy in 2017, we have responded to numerous inquiries and presented the story of *ii' taa'poh'to'p* to several organizations, so we know that there are individuals interested in our story who hope to learn from our experience as they embark on their own journeys. We thought that it is important in this chapter to share our lessons learned through deep reflections on our personal and professional experiences, including how the strategy was pulled together and whether it has made a difference.

THE JOURNEY PROCESS

We have been fortunate to be involved in different strategic planning processes, some at the institutional level, others in key strategic areas (e.g., international partnerships and collaborations, teaching and learning, mental health). These processes are cyclical and iterative, particularly during implementation. That is, you start at a place, you know where you want to get to eventually, and you set out on your journey. At various points, you recognize that you don't have everyone with you, or you notice that a key policy or practice has not changed to reflect the new direction, so you circle back and pick people up or change the policy or practice that needs changing. Sadly, some people choose to leave, go in an entirely different direction, not move at all, or stay on the familiar path. With change comes responsibility and choice.

The difference with our Indigenous Strategy is that this kind of iterative process happened during the design phase of the strategy and continued to unfold throughout its implementation. This was partly because we learned how to walk parallel paths, requiring an iterative “checking in” to ensure that we were on the journey together. Through the process of checking in, we took time to get to know one another and developed a deep sense of trust with each other. As our Elder, Dr. Crowshoe, would say, our process included “becoming relatives.” In this relational approach, there was the sense of a shared journey with an improved set of relations that would outlast all of us involved in the development of the strategy—which is part of what we ultimately set out to do. Through this journey, we have become a circle of relatives.

The idea of being more relational with each other was different from other university strategies, which typically are transactional and time bound rather than relational and generational. Previous strategic processes tended to last six months and resulted in a document meant to guide institutional actions for three to five years before being updated or shelved for another strategic priority. We soon realized that our initial six-month time frame would not work because, fundamentally, this was about a relationship- and trust-building process. If we were to create relationships in a good way, then that six-month window would have to be extended, and we would have to stop worrying about time. And that is exactly what we did. We needed extra time. A critical aspect of our leadership role was

to translate conversations about delays into discussions that leaders at the university would fully understand. Time, so often compressed within university schedules, required understanding from a completely different worldview, one that supported taking the time and space necessary to do this in the right way and in a good way. Thus, the development of the Indigenous Strategy took longer (approximately two years) because it was meant to be a living document that would last for generations to come.

The journey also created a new understanding of the fundamental importance of ceremony for both cultures. There were several moments when, both individually and collectively, we were stalled and didn't know where to go next. In those moments, we stepped back and engaged in ceremony to find a way forward. Every time we did that, we emerged on the other side of the ceremony with a renewed spirit, far less uncertainty, and a collective commitment to continue working on the strategy. Through this kind of intentional spiritual practice, the next steps would unfold and flow naturally, and people would jump back in. Before long, we would be past the blockage and on to the next step. So ceremony saved us on several occasions. Our ceremonial framework and ever-present spiritual guidance from Elders were not just important to the process but also a profound and enlightening core of what we were doing.

For those who expected or anticipated a typical university process, the idea of ceremony and relationality created anxiety and skepticism. As they learned that this would not be a standard process and that ceremony would be an integral part of the strategy, they experienced fear. However, it was ceremony that helped them to trust the process. Ceremony grounded and connected us to spirit.

The degree of cultural immersion in the ceremonial framework for *ii' taa'poh'to'p* offered life-altering moments for many of us. These moments affected individuals on deep individual and collective levels. At the individual level, each person involved in the developmental journey holds a distinct story about what the journey looked and felt like as well as its resonant teachings. At the collective level, these unique, storied experiences contributed to a shared story. To this day, we have conversations with members of the Steering Committee and Working Group who talk about their experiences working on the strategy with great emotional attachment, often leading to tears about the strategy that we created together with guidance from Elders and the emotional, physical, and spiritual

journey that it took to get us there. Through the ceremonial framework, and our collective experiences, we became relatives, and the Indigenous Strategy became a shared story of vision, purpose, and responsibility.

This process of developing a powerful, shared story was a highlight of our journey together. The remarkably diverse members of our Steering Committee and Working Group—drawn from every corner of the university community along with Indigenous community members and Traditional Knowledge Keepers—became a committed and closely aligned collective. Many of those individuals became passionate advocates for the strategy in part because of the ceremonial process and spiritual journey experienced. The strategy became a living entity, and by the end those involved in the process would do whatever they could to ensure that it was successful. Their individual story threads, based on memories and lived experiences, came together to form a collective story tapestry, one that continues to unfold and deepen as we gather, witness, and reminisce about our shared journey. The tapestry is remarkable and has incredible energy.

LESSONS LEARNED

Most of us considered ourselves educated, yet the settlers working on the Indigenous Strategy were stunned at our lack of knowledge of the history of Indigenous peoples in Canada. How could we not have learned about residential schools and the resulting intergenerational trauma through our education system? At the start, we were all proud to be part of a country that did not have the overt racism that you might see in the United States, South Africa, or Australia. In fact, though, we learned that the covert or hidden racism toward our Indigenous relatives is much worse in many ways. We learned that we have refused to acknowledge or accept our roles as settlers in the pain, suffering, abuse, and intergenerational trauma that have resulted from the breakup of Indigenous family units. As a result of this learning, we felt a deep sense of responsibility to move forward in a mindful and respectful way—honouring the parallel paths and creating time and space to truly listen to community and take guidance from Traditional Knowledge Keepers.

Related to the above lesson, we learned the importance of the value and appreciation of differences in people. Settlers who were part of this journey learned so much from and about Indigenous peoples, in particular

their resilience and grace in the face of so much pain and suffering and their generosity and willingness to share their lived experience and stories of trauma. Their strength of character was something that we could only wish to emulate someday, and we will be forever grateful for having been entrusted with the knowledge to help change how we do things going forward.

Another lesson refers to the concept of relationality. We are so busy with our lives—with our jobs and families and other minutiae—that we have become transactional in almost everything that we do. We quickly learned at the beginning of our journey that a transactional approach would fail. We had to spend time getting to know one another before we could begin to talk about how we would move forward. This took time but resulted in deep bonds and built trust among us. We could all benefit from being more relational in life in general: if we seek to get to know one another, then we will have a deeper understanding of why we think in the ways that we do, and perhaps those relationships will provide more grace, compassion, and empathy during times of contention.

We also learned never to make assumptions about people's prior knowledge. This should not have been surprising given all that we learned as leaders of the process. However, in presenting the strategy to our key governance groups early in the process, we realized that we had to spend some time educating people on critical parts of Canadian history related to Indigenous peoples, particularly regarding colonization and the resulting intergenerational trauma of residential schools. People also needed to learn about the rich, complex, and sophisticated Indigenous philosophies, methodologies, pedagogies, and intellects. This was never more apparent than in our first meeting with our Board of Governors early in the process. We realized that the discussions and exercises that we had planned would not work because people did not have the prerequisite knowledge. This helped to set the stage for requirements for future meetings with our campus community.

We would also like to highlight a lesson related to time. Many institutions, and indeed some people within our community, heavily criticized how long it took us to develop our strategy. However, we believe that the time was well spent given the trusting relationships that developed with our Indigenous relatives. We knew that those relationships would serve us well in the future, and that has been the case. It was vital to take the time

that we needed to get it right and to do things in a good way; we needed to be mindful of creating a safe place for everyone, including both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. When we needed that time, ceremony gave us space in which to reflect, be considerate, and build relationships with one another, loop back when needed, and honour and celebrate milestones. As those of us involved in the strategy development have discussed, we were behind other institutions when we started but have been told that we leapfrogged others by the time the Indigenous Strategy was launched because of the process that we used. The key lesson, as Jacqueline Ottmann reminded us, was that sometimes you must “go slow to go fast.”

The teaching offered by Elder Andy Black Water early on in our journey, which centered on fear, was crucial to the development of our strategy. His advice to avoid creating a strategy that induced fear or could be used for punitive purposes gave great pause and helped us to envision a strategy that embraced kindness, ethical space, parallel paths, and transformative reconciliation. At a basic level, that lesson changed our thinking, and we did not call for mandatory courses for students and staff. Black Water also mentioned that we shouldn’t create a strategy that evokes pity; rather, it should reflect the beauty and richness of Indigenous cultures. As a result, our strategy was informed and shaped by Indigenous knowledge systems and ceremonial ways of doing. The teachings imparted by Elder Black Water provided insights into finding ways for the university and Indigenous communities to walk together on parallel paths. We had to move forward in a way that placed both communities, and everything that is part of them, on an equal standing. In doing so, we had to embody encouragement and a positive spirit.

Finally, a fundamental lesson learned on this journey was deeper and more transformative than any of us had expected. We developed a keen sense of how easy and comfortable it is to revert to what we know (i.e., Eurocentric frameworks for strategic development). These frameworks—from consultation models to designing and writing a strategy—contain many unseen assumptions, biases, and micro-aggressions. In essence, this lesson was about creating and respecting the ethical space between two disparate cultures. The parallel paths and adoption of the four-stage journey framework naturally bound us to a type of Indigenous ethical framework in which we were constantly reflecting on, rethinking, and validating our stories, processes, and progress along the way. Creating an ethical

space demanded commitments to genuinely work with the community and an indigenized community-based model for strategic development. We had to make conscious decisions to decolonize our minds and be open to a different, more inclusive, and relational process. We learned that ceremonial Elders would help us to develop that relational understanding and continue to offer gentle and, at times, firm guidance to ensure that we stayed on a good path.

TRANSFORMATIONAL MOMENTS

There were many transformational moments during the journey to develop the strategy. We were so culturally immersed in the journey that we lost track of the linear timeline, and deadlines took a back seat to the significance of the experience as it unfolded daily. Throughout the process, ceremonial validations from Elders brought deep meaning to the work and gave us the inspiration and support that we needed to keep moving forward. Institutional approvals that came to us one committee after another, as we moved the strategy through governance, brought us such a feeling of invested accomplishment and pride. The constant reminders about the importance and meaning of the strategy made the whole process transformational at individual and collective levels. However, many unique, transformational moments also occurred at unexpected times and in exceptionally surprising, profound ways.

One of the first pivotal moments happened at the public dialogue at Fort Calgary, marking the beginning of our commitment to listening deeply. This gathering invited community members and representatives from social services agencies, the employment sector, and other educational institutions to engage in conversations about the relationship between these organizations and/or services and postsecondary education, with particular focus on the University of Calgary. Several people there perhaps had never imagined that they could be part of a postsecondary system; some might have dreamed about it at one point but never got the support to arrive at a university. During the dialogue, one of the Indigenous participants stated that it was the first time the university had come to the table and asked about their experiences with education. In that moment, we learned to become active listeners. It was incredibly powerful and humbling to hear their dreams and how our society had derailed those dreams.

At that first public dialogue, we incorporated beading opportunities at the tables to make those conversations easier. What we didn't expect is that people who made bracelets would then gift them to fellow participants at their table. This gifting continued into the dialogues and focus groups that followed. Small river rocks placed on each table represented our ancestors. We asked that everyone at the event take a rock, return it to the land, and reflect on and ask about what that process looked like. These small initial steps served as reminders about the importance of cultural traditions and the need to move beyond Euro-centric ways of interacting. The conversations also allowed participants to connect in highly meaningful ways, setting the stage for later processes on our journey.

During the process, there were vigorous debates among our committees about how to best help members of the university understand and better connect with Indigenous communities. We often asked Elders about how to do so. What stood out in those moments was that, as a university and as members of the Working Group and Steering Committee, we had to walk in and say, "This is where we are at. This is what we are thinking. Here's where we are on the journey." And that had to be done with humility. Cultural humility on this journey was so important. And we had to be ready to hear Elders say, "We don't think you're there," or "You need to think about it differently," or "Here's how you might move ahead." So it was that willingness to move beyond old concepts such as cultural competence to cultural humility. We had to be willing to be vulnerable. To us, our strategy reflects an authentic relationship with and a true commitment to reconciliation, because we approached the work with cultural humility. Cultural humility was critical.

In our discussions with Elders, one comment made in passing by an Elder resonated with us. The Elder referred to all of the "square corners" on the campus, which reflected how we had been "trained to think." It's a very structured approach to the world. The Elder added, "We don't think in square corners, we think in circles, and you need to understand what that means." As we continue to reflect on that statement, it's clear that those words reveal very different foundational assumptions about how the world works, how we all interact with one another, and how our obligations to one another unfold. So that simple statement still has us thinking about how to change the ways in which we interact with the world. How do we live in this world in ways that get rid of square corners? There are

multiple ways of looking at the world, and we often think that our own way is the right way. However, it became apparent throughout our process that there is more than one way in which to view the world.

As we approached validation and approval of the strategy, a final transformational experience occurred, comprising the Elders' gifts of the *ii' taa'poh'to'p* name for the strategy, the honour song, and the pipe ceremony. These gifts represented a deeply moving confirmation that we were embarking on this journey in a good way. We were acknowledged with the transfer of those gifts, and they reinforced the parallel paths, suggesting that we were finding different ways to tell the stories of this journey and the university. Regarding the strategy, the Elders contended, "We're not just giving it a stamp of approval but also acknowledging that we are on these paths together." For all of us, the ceremonies became incredibly powerful. And for those of us who are non-Indigenous, the ceremonies imbued meaning that extended far beyond typical university committee approvals and endorsements. It was more of a relational approach to moving this work ahead and acknowledging the humanity of the journey.

It was an incredible moment when everything started to come together in real time: the strategy document, the name, the symbols, the stories of how we got there, and finally the launch. The launch was emotional and engaging. It included the transfer of the full strategy in a pipe bag, blanket ceremonies, and an unexpected naming ceremony to honour our provost. The community response to the strategy was perhaps the most transformational aspect of this journey. We did not expect such amazing support from the community during the launch or the outpouring of heartfelt emotions from members of the campus and surrounding community. It was then that we knew we had developed the Indigenous Strategy in a good way.

IMPACT OF THE STRATEGY: INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE SHIFTS

Early in our process, members of the Working Group and Steering Committee began to talk about the long-term nature of our journey. We began to call this a generational strategy. This was a journey that the university would still be on ten, twenty, or even fifty years down the road. When we think about it in those terms, it's natural to say along the way that there will be many transformations and renewals long after all of us

are gone. The university's Indigenous Strategy, *ii' taa'poh'to'p*, will still be a strategy with spirit and life. Although it is a generational strategy, different priorities and tactics will be highlighted and used annually. The strategy will need constant attention and renewal as we continue to walk parallel paths. The university must commit to this in a generational way.

For decades, communities in general and Indigenous communities in particular have seen university personnel show up for conversations and essentially say that "We are the experts. We know what we're doing. Listen to us. We'll guide you." In our strategy process, the dialogues rolled out by non-Indigenous people in a very different way. We showed up and said, "We don't know, and we need you to guide us. We need your help. We need to understand, and we need direction on how to move forward." And that was a new experience for everybody at those dialogues, on both the university side and the community side. Again, such a starting point goes back to the notion of humility. That openness, that ability to say we don't know, allowed us to have a conversation that probably would not have happened otherwise.

In embarking on this journey, we knew that creating a strategy that would fundamentally and ideally change the university would be difficult. Deep systemic transformation takes time. It moves slowly and requires many difficult conversations. So we must comment on the presence of resistance and racism on our campus. We saw several racist comments in the online survey. They were hard to read and process. However, what stood out just as vividly were several "resistant" conversations as we worked our way through the university process, comments such as "Well, that's not how we do things" or "We can't do some of those things because. . . ." For us, a big part of the resistance that we heard reflected a reliance on Eurocentric systems without a realization that these systems are dominant or that there might be a different way to do things. A fundamental component of the strategy process was to say that "Things don't have to happen this way" or "We need to reimagine how we do things." We encountered some isolated yet significant pockets of resistance that have continued in the implementation phase. Resistance to meaningful change is deeply rooted in colonial structures and mindsets, requiring ongoing and often difficult conversations. Many of these conversations have led to transformations.

The strategy has inspired systemic changes across the institution. We have engaged in new and extensive professional development opportunities to increase individual and collective intercultural capacity.¹ Hiring of Indigenous leaders to guide strategy implementation and increasing the number of Indigenous professors and postdoctoral scholars have provided both increased visibility and energy to the journey. When you increase the number of knowledgeable, committed people, and you create an environment of cultural safety, you increase the chances for change. This is certainly happening at the University of Calgary, and the impact of the new leaders is felt every day. Many faculties and business units have developed micro-strategies that contribute to and expand on *ii' taa'poh'to'p*. Faculties have responded to the strategy by engaging in thoughtful curricula reviews and encouraging pedagogical practices that align with Indigenous worldviews. Several have also co-created and launched new academic programs in partnership with Indigenous communities to better reflect and serve them and their students, with more programs currently in development. There is a deep institutional commitment to decolonize the research process and honour Indigenous worldviews, methodologies, and ownership of Indigenous knowledge as intellectual property.

Although *ii' taa'poh'to'p* has sparked many concrete shifts across the university, we know that changing institutional culture demands more than just a list of actions. Culture also reflects how people experience a place or organization and how they feel during their experiences. Here, too, we sense a shift at the university. For example, there is a powerful sense of community in hearing the university's honour song—it is highly emotional and inspiring. You can feel the life and spirit in that song, and we are so proud to know that it is becoming part of our institutional culture.

A Look Ahead: Legacy and Hope

When we presented *ii' taa'poh'to'p* for approval at the university's Academic Senate, a faculty member came up to our group afterward and said, "Well, this is all great, but why bother? Why are we doing this?" We have heard versions of that question multiple times. Sometimes it is just a question

1 See the end of Chapter 7 for some examples.

about why, and at other times the question is framed in a way that suggests “Isn’t this just part of equity, diversity, and inclusion? Why do we have to focus on Indigenous people specifically?” Our collective response is that people need to fully understand the experiences of Indigenous peoples in Canada. We need to understand the history and impact of colonization and reflect honestly on what happened at residential schools. We need to understand all the ways that Eurocentric culture has dominated, marginalized, and assimilated Indigenous peoples in Canada. This is an obligation that we all have as treaty people, and for us at the university part of that obligation is that efforts at reconciliation become entwined with the fabric and culture of our institution.

In retrospect, how we approached the development of *ii’ taa’poh’to’p* was unique. It inspired and compelled people to take note and imagine a different way of approaching Indigenous engagement and meaningful inclusion grounded in Indigenous worldviews through relational ceremonial practices that evoke an ethical way of doing and being together in a good way. We hope that over the long term this results in the inclusion of Indigenous ways of knowing and doing in policies and procedures. We also hope that our process serves as a template for other intercultural strategies and initiatives.

For all of us who shaped *ii’ taa’poh’to’p*, it represents a commitment by our whole institution. At its core, the strategy recognizes that our relationships and the unfolding of life’s events are guided by natural cycles of transformation and renewal. We have tried to build these principles into *ii’ taa’poh’to’p*, acknowledging that it is more than just a plan: it is a relational process that involves our children and the children of generations to come. It is a process that recognizes we are part of an inextricably interconnected universe, with countless reciprocal acts of generosity, compassion, and love. We hope to see the strength of these connections woven into the very fabric of the university’s identity. In this way, the university will move from being transactional to being more relational. If we continue to follow our parallel path, then we are confident that we will earn the right to be called a good relative.

At the beginning of our process, we were asked which metrics would define success for the strategy. We simply stated when the Indigenous communities see the University of Calgary as a safe and welcoming place for them and their students and when there is a mutually beneficial

relationship between the university and Indigenous communities regardless of who is in charge. We have started on that journey together and have taken many steps toward that goal. We hope that our work continues for many generations to come. We hope that understanding becomes embedded in who we are as a university and, as a result, that we become better at understanding individual and cultural differences. Ultimately, we want everyone to recognize that there is a place for all at our institution.

Impacts and cultural shifts created by the strategy continue to evolve as we learn and become better relatives. To document the journey and track our progress on it, there are now annual *ii' taa'poh'to'p* reports.² Reflecting on these reports to date, we continue to make progress on this journey. Responsibility for change and efforts at reconciliation have been firmly embedded in the institution. These efforts are not perfect, and we still have a long way to go to become that place of welcome, cultural safety, and cultural humility. We still have a lot to learn about reconciliation, but we recognize that we have the responsibility and commitment to learn as those conversations unfold.

Grandparents of the Strategy

The university has created what many have considered a beautiful strategy, with a narrative that includes not only practical elements but also a good story about our shared history, how we got to this place, and our collective path forward. It is a relational “storied” strategy infused, enriched, and validated by ceremony and grounded by Indigenous ways of knowing, being, connecting, and doing.

As Elder Dr. Reg Crowshoe reminded us in an oral teaching, those who led and were part of the creation of the strategy will forever remain the grandparents of *ii' taa'poh'to'p* and will be invited back to remember, share, and celebrate its progress, success, and milestones. On this journey, we remain relatives of each other and *ii' taa'poh'to'p*. As grandparents, we are responsible to pass on the teachings, to share our story, and to continue guiding others who come into our circle when we are called upon.

² The annual reports are located on the Indigenous Strategy website at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/indigenous/about-ii-taapoh'to'p/our-journey/annual-reports>.

We have followed up on our collective responsibility to share the story of *ii' taa'poh'to'p* in part by writing this book.

Like *ii' taa'poh'to'p*, the earth is alive. It witnesses our intentions, our actions, and our legacies. The path that you choose must be one of sanctified kindness, for kindness is the heart of reciprocity and humanity. We ask that you walk softly upon the earth. We are all related.