

THE NEXT WAR: INDICATIONS INTELLIGENCE IN THE EARLY COLD WAR

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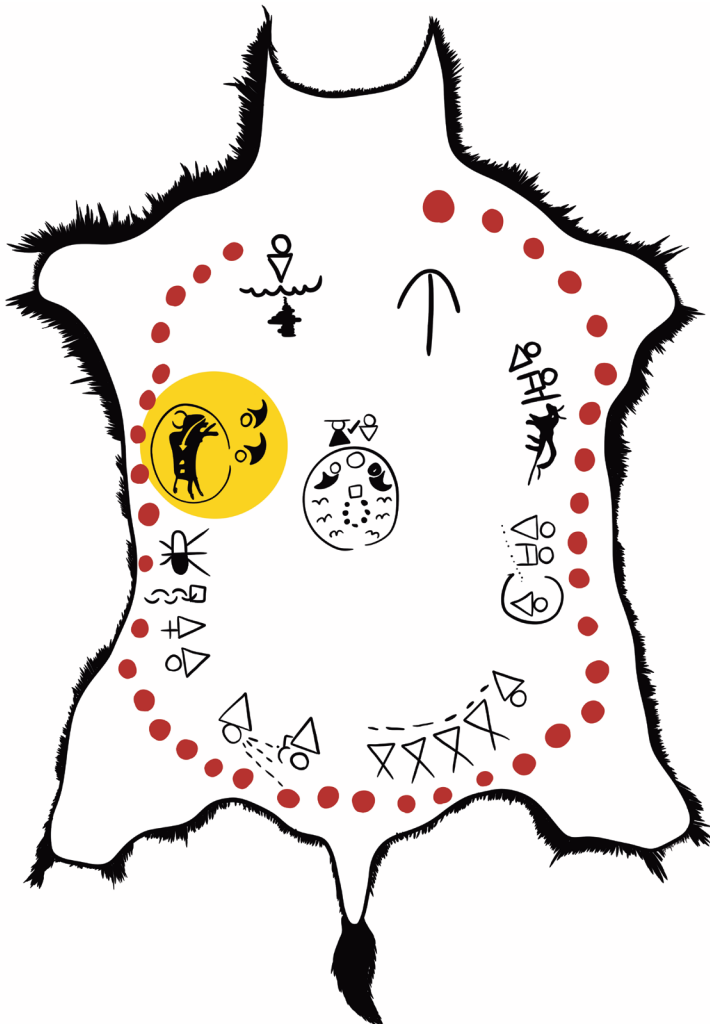
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Empowering the Spirit of *ii' taa'poh'to'p*

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



Four Stories

MAGIC DUST

When we're talking about living in the same environment, the bio-ecosystem, we're a part of it. So, being a part of that ecosystem, we need to understand ipisatska'sat [Blackfoot] or magic dust. Magic dust is an oral narrative about how we came together. Magic dust is like the structure of biogenetics, which for us is an oral natural law. The concept of íkimapiiyipitsi captures the idea of how biogenetics connects to biospecies. It was the whole universe. From the natural law of species, we use the system of relationships and relatives to be responsible to natural laws. We become relatives because we all live in the same environment. The land animals, the plants, human beings, the seasons. And that's why sometimes it's so hard for some of our Elders when they're talking about or sharing stories. They'll talk about our territory, but they won't talk about ownership of land. Ownership of land? How can you own land when you and the land are a part of the environment? We all need to survive within the environment. When you need to do something, or you need to survive, you need to come together as relatives. As soon as you come together as a group to achieve whatever you need to achieve, or whatever we need to do to survive together, then we become relatives. After we come together, everything is your relative, even Napi and Weesageechuk¹ are part of your relatives at that time. Even the snow, the rain, the grass, and the four seasons become your relatives, and we all look after each other. Before going to residential school, I never really heard of the end of the world. We always believed that we look after each other [all our relatives], and the environment looks after us all the time. The process of transformation happens all the time, and it will consistently happen.

Reg Crowshoe

1 Napi is the name of the Blackfoot trickster; Weesageechuk is the name of the Cree trickster.

CULTURAL SOLUTIONS

I have been translating back and forth between two cultures for over forty-five years, hoping somebody would hear me. It seems like I say the same thing over and over again. To me, cultural translation is like breathing because I have done it so many times. People continue to ask me to culturally interpret between Western and Indigenous cultures and knowledge systems to find the parallels in ways of knowing, doing, and being. Cultural awareness training never got us anywhere. We need to go much further and start looking for cultural solutions. How can we look at cultural parallels to explore solutions so we can take on our challenges together?

Reg Crowshoe

OUR OWN TIPÍ

By the time we got to the final transfer ceremony at the end of June 2018, we were in our own painted tipi. We were experiencing the transformation that the whole Indigenous Strategy Task Force had deliberately sought, talked about for hours, struggled to find the written words and symbols, and anticipated for months. It was so beautiful to be immersed in a unifying Indigenous tradition during this transfer and to watch other people who had been part of the journey come together in ceremony. There were tears. It was so emotional and so beautiful. This final transfer ceremony was a validation from the Elders and signified the release of ii' taa'poh'to'p to the University of Calgary. The journey and the strategy itself meant so much to them and to us. A deep sense of honour and accomplishment is something that we will always carry along with the knowledge that we were part of making history. The Elders bestowed cultural gifts that will forever be connected to ii' taa'poh'to'p. Our strategy is infused with spirit and the blessings of the Elders. In essence, ii' taa'poh'to'p is a covenant between Indigenous peoples and the university because ceremony was engaged, and the Creator was a part of the entire process. We must consider the weight of this responsibility and carry it with care seven generations into the future in a good way. ii' taa'poh'to'p means so much to us, to the campus community, and to the ceremonial Elders who guided us.

Grandparents of ii' taa'poh'to'p

THE IMPORTANCE OF CEREMONY

I think that hearing the honour song brings us back to that transfer ceremony. It puts us in a ceremonial place. And I would say that, because ii' taa'poh'to'p is infused with ceremony, we are still in ceremony as we move through this strategy. It is not just an Indigenous Strategy. It is a ceremonial strategy. We have continued with ceremony as we moved beyond development into implementation. We continue to mark our progress through ceremony and are honoured, at key times, with cultural gifts from ceremonial Elders, like the UCalgary honour song, our cultural symbols, the ii' taa'poh'to'p painted tipis, and our buffalo robe Winter Count. Ceremony remains part of our parallel paths.

Shawna Cunningham

A Living Document

The University of Calgary Indigenous Strategy was created as a living document, meaning that we wanted to ensure that it would not sit on a shelf only to be consulted for direction or course correction now and then. The strategy included clear statements of commitment to embed the spirit of *ii' taa'poh'to'p* into the fabric of the institution. As we moved through each stage of development, we intended that the strategy would live beyond those involved in its creation and expand beyond an institutional response bounded by the Calls to Action noted in the *Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada* (TRC 2015). The strategy was designed to guide us on a progressive, albeit non-linear, journey toward reconciliation through meaningful inclusion and mindful acts of decolonization and indigenization of the academy, encompassing teaching, learning, research, and community engagement. From the beginning, we felt a deep sense of responsibility to ensure that we approached and envisioned our strategy mindfully, that we did this right, and that realization of the strategy would result in a paradigm shift at our institution. Ultimately, we wanted the university to become more inclusive, welcoming, and accepting of Indigenous peoples and knowledge systems. We wanted a strategy that would thrive for generations to come.

Parallel Approval Processes

Flowing naturally from the process of strategy development, moving toward approval and validation of the strategy demanded a parallel approach. The Indigenous Strategy moved through two different processes of approval and validation in synchronous yet distinct systems. In the parallel process, there was still the significant task of writing a full strategy document to be reviewed and approved through the usual university processes. The writing effort was collective. A small subcommittee of the Working Group and Steering Committee co-chairs worked through April, May, and June 2017 to write an initial draft of the strategy. Equipped with the data and stories from the Working Group's consultation processes, the conceptual model, and the validated cultural model, the writing group used an iterative process, with constant recasting and reorganizing of the material. Several members of the Working Group contributed materials for inclusion and offered feedback on various sections of the final document.

At the same time, key concepts and ideas were tested and debated with Elders and members of both committees. In the end, the four co-chairs took primary responsibility for integrating all the relevant materials to ensure that the strategy document was both coherent and complete. In late spring 2017, a full document was ready for discussion across the university. The parallel approval and validation processes reflected the significant commitments made by the University of Calgary.²

Elder Andy Black Water gifted the name *ii' taa'poh'to'p* for the strategy, reflective of places in the landscape that were known as safe havens to the people who were in the midst of a journey—often valleys or sheltered sites close to fresh water. For many of us, this name embodied multi-layered metaphorical meaning relevant to our educational institution. The University of Calgary must aspire to become a place where individuals feel safe and welcome. Through its name, the strategy serves as a constant reminder of what we need to do to redress and reconcile the historical impacts of the residential schools on Indigenous peoples, who were not safe spiritually, culturally, emotionally, or physically in the Eurocentric colonial education system. The name is a call to action, foreseeing the journey ahead and reiterating our obligation to transform the education system. We have a continual obligation to strive, to earn and come into the name *ii' taa'poh'to'p*.

Along with the name, we were gifted cultural symbols for the strategy. Using such symbols, Elder Reg Crowshoe translated the conceptual model, which included four visionary circles—ways of Being, Knowing, Doing, and Connecting—alongside key concepts of transformation, renewal, and shared ethical space into a cultural model. The symbols, representing Indigenous ways of sharing and conveying the storied meaning of *ii' taa'poh'to'p*, were designed and transferred in ceremony with permission from Traditional Knowledge Keepers. As noted previously, we were granted special permission to include a buffalo symbol designed by Amelia Crowshoe to ground the cultural model. The final version of the cultural model was validated in a ceremony deeply rooted in oral traditions. The process of creating and incorporating the cultural model to convey the

2 In June 2017, the university was granted permission from Elder Andy Black Water to record two videos—one in Blackfoot and one in English—in which he generously shared the meaning of the word *ii' taa'poh'to'p*.

story of *ii' taa'poh'to'p* was a profound and distinguishing feature of our journey.

From the beginning of our process, key documents were bundled and placed in a pipe bag and transferred to the Office of the Provost as the primary keeper of *ii' taa'poh'to'p*. The pipe bag initially included institutional terms of reference and the Indigenous framework. Later additions included the name, cultural symbols, and strategy document. The provost, Dr. Dru Marshall, then stewarded the Indigenous Strategy through the final stages of formal university approvals, which took place between June and October 2017.

UNIVERSITY APPROVAL PROCESS

Formal adoption of a strategy requires several steps at the university. For *ii' taa'poh'to'p*, the typical steps of approval were completed concurrently with ceremonial validations and transfers. The first steps typically are consultative and, in some cases, informal. We took the strategy to several groups on campus for informal discussions (e.g., the executive leadership team, deans' council, Faculty of Graduate Studies). Each group was encouraged to ask questions about implications of the strategy, provide feedback on its ideas and recommendations, and make suggestions for the next steps. We considered that feedback and, where possible, incorporated it into the strategy document. Those conversations helped to clarify and enhance the structure and expression of the strategy. The conversations proved to be invaluable in identifying hidden assumptions and misperceptions that could cloud understanding of the strategy. Critically, discussions also helped to educate members of the university community on the importance of the strategy.

As we finalized the *ii' taa'poh'to'p* document, it moved through the formal university approval process. This process is cyclical: typically, documents are taken to a series of committees once for discussion, debate, and critical feedback and then to second meetings of the same committees for approval. The University of Calgary has a bicameral governance system, with the main governing bodies being the General Faculties Council (GFC), often referred to as an academic senate at other institutions, which has key responsibility for the academic matters of the university, and the Board of Governors (BOG), which has overall responsibility for the



The presentation of the completed Indigenous Strategy from the Provost to the President at the Indigenous Strategy Launch. November 16, 2017. University of Calgary. Photo Credit: Riley Brandt, UCalgary.

business and reputation of the university. On the academic side, the series of committees included the Academic Planning and Priorities Committee (APPC), the Executive Committee of the GFC, and the GFC as a whole. On the business side, key committees included the BOG Executive Committee and the BOG as a whole. In all cases, the four co-chairs, along with Traditional Knowledge Keepers who were part of the Working Group, presented the strategy. Before it was introduced at each meeting, one of the Traditional Knowledge Keepers offered an opening prayer.

Cultural translation between members of both the university community and the Indigenous community was critical, positive, and generative. Each meeting provided an opportunity for key individuals to voice their support, including the president of the university, the board chair, and members of the executive. This support demonstrated commitment



Traditional gifts of tobacco. Indigenous Strategy Launch. November 16, 2017. University of Calgary. Photo Credit: Riley Brandt, UCalgary.



Reg Crowshoe gifting a Blackfoot name to Dru Marshall. Indigenous Strategy Launch. November 16, 2017. University of Calgary. Photo Credit: Riley Brandt, UCalgary.



Aerial photo of the Indigenous Strategy Launch. November 16, 2017. University of Calgary.
Photo Credit: Riley Brandt, UCalgary.

at the highest levels of the university. In the end, there was broad support for the strategy, and the process of approval was smooth and enthusiastic without significant delay or controversy. With the final endorsement of both the GFC and the BOG, the strategy was ready for a fall 2017 launch. We were ready to begin implementation of this generational commitment!

The discussion and voting on the strategy were positive, and we received significant feedback throughout the process. This feedback was incorporated into the final document. Perhaps the best example of cultural translation happened at the APPC. In discussion at that committee, we heard an objection about use of the cultural symbol adopted for representation of ways of being from one academic staff member, who argued that this three-character symbol reflected a normative, stereotypical image of a family, with a mother, a father, and a child, and suggested that it be removed from the strategy to avoid such stereotypes. From a Eurocentric worldview, that symbol could certainly be perceived in that way. However, the Elders quickly clarified that this symbol is not a representation of family as suggested. Instead, from an Indigenous worldview, the symbol represents whole communities, all living entities, ancestors, and seven



Dancers at the Indigenous Strategy Launch. November 16, 2017. University of Calgary.
Photo Credit: Riley Brandt, UCalgary.

generations into the future. It also represents fluidity, and it is a more holistic, all-encompassing symbol that frames ways of being across time and relationships. On this basis, it remained in the strategy. We also received feedback on the twenty-seven recommendations in the strategy, with concrete suggestions about where specific recommendations fit and what they would mean for work at the university. We learned that we should consult further with specific groups as the strategy was implemented, particularly with the unions on campus regarding collective agreements, to ensure that we minimized any impacts on those agreements.

In hindsight, the parallel worldviews represented in our strategy required a significant amount of cultural translation. Even after the strategy was formally approved through the typical institutional process and validated through ceremony, it was clearly necessary to continue such translation. An Indigenous lens and process were necessary to launch the implementation of the strategy.

Once all approvals were completed, we presented the Indigenous Strategy to the community through a public launch held on November 17,

2017. This event included formal presentations, videos, cultural performances, and a symbolic transfer of the *ii' taa'poh'to'p* pipe bag from the Office of the Provost to the Office of the President, indicating formal acceptance of and responsibility for the strategy on behalf of the university. This key step in our parallel journey included a ceremonial gifting of the Circle of Life Pendleton blanket to the Office of the President, now considered a signature commitment blanket for University of Calgary presidents. A special blanket and naming ceremony also honoured Provost Dru Marshall in recognition and appreciation of her leadership and support in the development and approval of the university's Indigenous Strategy.

On June 29, 2018, the university hosted a pipe ceremony to mark significant milestones in the implementation of the strategy. During this special pipe ceremony, the strategy welcomed the inaugural vice-provost (Indigenous Engagement) and was officially transferred a tipi design and two tipis (one ceremonial and one for teaching and learning) from Elder Reg Crowshoe along with a special honour song by Stoney Nakoda Elder Rod Hunter. The two painted tipis represent the University of Calgary's Indigenous Strategy and our commitment to reconciliation. The honour song has become a significant part of our convocation proceedings as well as other important university events and celebrations, including our "Annual Journey" updates to the community. These initial cultural gifts transferred in ceremony—the name of the strategy, cultural symbols and model, tipis, and honour song—are distinct to the university. These cultural gifts and the concepts that they convey have been woven into the fabric of the university in tangible and meaningful ways.

Cultural gifts continue to be bestowed on the strategy to mark milestones as we move forward. For example, in the spring of 2021, the strategy was gifted with a Winter Count³ buffalo robe to capture our ongoing story. The Winter Count is parallel to our annual strategy progress report. That report is presented to the community in the fall of every year to mark the anniversary of our launch date. The report is culturally translated into a pictograph, added to the Winter Count buffalo robe, and validated in a Ceremonial Tea Dance⁴ held close to the spring equinox as an act of renewal.

3 A Winter Count depicts an oral story through cultural symbols (also called pictographs).

4 The Ceremonial Tea Dance is a traditional ceremony focused on validation of special announcements and vows, with intergenerational ceremonial rights held, led, and transferred by the Crowshoe family.

These cultural gifts and ceremonies continue to capture our collective journey of transformation and renewal through meaningful acts of reciprocity and ceremonial validation. Development of the Indigenous Strategy began in ceremony, and as we engage with *ii' taa'poh'to'p* we continue to be in ceremony.

Implementation

Once the Indigenous Strategy moved through the parallel processes of institutional approval and Indigenous ceremonial validation, we put it into action with an implementation plan that engaged the campus community, collectively responsible for enacting the spirit of *ii' taa'poh'to'p*.

SETTING UP: OFFICE OF INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT

The Indigenous Strategy fell under the purview of the Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic). To move forward in a good way, we needed to make several critical decisions that would be supported by the university infrastructure. Prior to the development of the strategy, there were few Indigenous leaders on campus, with some pockets of excellent Indigenous programming in faculties and through Indigenous student services. We knew that, if the strategy was going to be successful, more Indigenous leaders had to be present and visible. Thus, some structures needed to be created to bring visibility to and provide scaffolding for efforts at reconciliation and indigenization. New funding was provided to create an Indigenous Engagement Office, faculties began to work with the strategy's recommendations, and an Advisory Circle was formed that included senior university leaders and Indigenous Elders. The journey had begun in earnest.

Within the Office of the Provost, a vice-provost portfolio for Indigenous Engagement was created. It was envisioned to include the vice-provost as the leader, an executive assistant, a director for the Indigenous Strategy, a cultural protocol and special events coordinator, and four areas of focus: intercultural capacity and awareness training, the Traditional Knowledge Keepers Advisory Circle, the Indigenous Students Advisory Circle, and a cultural protocol unit. This portfolio was envisioned to have strong connections to the Office of the Vice-Provost (Student Engagement) and to Continuing Education for both Indigenous Student Services and

programming. Once the structure was created, hiring occurred. First, an Indigenous leader needed to be hired as the vice-provost (Indigenous Engagement). Through typical university processes, an Indigenous vice-provost was hired in December 2017 and joined the university in June 2018. The long-standing director of the Native Student Services Centre (now the Writing Symbols Lodge) was appointed as the director of the Indigenous Strategy in November 2017 and served as the de facto lead of the strategy until the new vice-provost arrived in June 2018. A new executive assistant was hired for the office, along with a cultural protocol and special events coordinator, and Dr. Reg Crowshoe was formally named and hired as the Traditional Knowledge Keeper in residence and key *ii' taa'poh'to'p* adviser in July 2018. The creation of the portfolio and the hiring of people also required a budget, which was secured through the re-allocation of existing dollars along with a new infusion of strategic dollars. The budget was also necessary for programming.

IMPLEMENTATION STRUCTURE

Creating a meaningful strategy through parallel paths was a compelling experience for those involved. Along with moments of deep learning and enthusiasm, there were numerous moments of ambiguity and self-examination. There was so much to learn about Indigenous histories and worldviews and so much to learn about ways of knowing and ceremony. However, defining and honouring parallel pathways resulted in a distinct and culturally significant milestone for the university. At a fundamental level, the *ii' taa'poh'to'p* strategy forged a new way of working for the University of Calgary. On that basis, we knew that implementing such a meaningful and culturally rich institutional strategy would require a mindful, complex, and engaging structure that remains attentive to parallel ways of knowing, doing, being, and connecting. Implementation of the Indigenous Strategy, prior to and beyond the establishment of the Office of Indigenous Engagement, started to take shape as we prepared to launch the strategy in the fall of 2017.

We knew early on that the implementation structure needed to reach across the institution's faculties and business units and into the multiple levels of the organizational structure to ensure a shared commitment to and responsibility for realization of the strategy. We intentionally created

a complex, active process that included both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people who could come together in a shared and ethical space as change makers. We created an Implementation Committee (now called the Guiding Circle) composed of select members of the campus community focused on enacting, tracking, and moving forward with the strategy's recommendations. The creation of the Guiding Circle was quickly followed by the establishment of an affiliated subcommittee structure, now called working circles. This structure, launched officially in the late spring of 2018, included seven working subcommittees, composed of members of the campus community dedicated to specific recommendations outlined in the strategy and focused on enacting necessary and innovative changes across the institution, including reviewing and revising current policies, procedures, and processes; creating new academic and non-academic programs; envisioning new indigenized places and spaces across the campus; increasing Indigenous representation; and reimagining teaching, learning, and research through Indigenous pedagogies and paradigms.

To create an ethical shared space of engagement where the university could speak openly and seek guidance from Traditional Knowledge Keepers, the Office of the Provost established the *ii' taa'poh'to'p* Circle of Advisers. It brought a diverse group of Elders from the region together with select leaders of the university to have important conversations about respectful inclusion, cultural protocols, and transformative reconciliation for the university while staying true to our parallel paths as guided by *ii' taa'poh'to'p*. The Circle of Advisers has been instrumental not only in keeping the university on the right path but also in helping to resolve challenges and introduce cultural protocols for the institution to respectfully engage in transformative reconciliation, moving from a transactional way to a more relational way of doing and being. The journey continues, but as we anticipated it is not without challenges related to the colonial mindset and resistance.

Capturing Progress

In the following subsections, we capture select initiatives that responded to the launch of the Indigenous Strategy and how they affected people, practices, programs, and places across the campus.

PEOPLE

In addition to the hiring of Indigenous leaders outlined above, we increased the capacity in our professorial ranks through three targeted cohort hiring initiatives for Indigenous professors. These cohorts provided new academics with the built-in support of a peer network along with regular support provided to new faculty. We also encouraged faculties to work collaboratively so that Indigenous hires were made in strategic areas where combined resources created an environment for success. Strategic dollars were provided to increase the number of Indigenous postdoctoral scholars on campus, which meant—in addition to the hiring of Indigenous scholars highlighted above—an increase in Indigenous-led research. Finally, there has been a substantial increase in Indigenous-led Tier II Canada Research Chairs across faculties, including Engineering, Social Work, Education, and Science.

To increase Indigenous student representation and create a more welcoming campus, the university reimaged recruitment processes and retention programs through a community engagement lens. We reviewed and revamped admissions procedures, practices, and criteria and created new faculty-based access routes through transitional and bridging programs with culturally relevant Indigenous student supports. We reviewed and refined retention programs and support services to better support and ensure Indigenous student success. Additional Indigenous staff were hired to support new student programs and related initiatives.

PRACTICES

Many of the recommendations noted in the Indigenous Strategy address the need for the university to create a place of inclusion for Indigenous students, faculty, staff, and knowledge systems. Through *ii' taa'poh'to'p*, the university has committed to revisiting and revamping institutional policies, procedures, and practices to ensure consideration and inclusion of Indigenous peoples' practices, protocols, and lived experiences. This has proven to be a daunting task given the scope of institutional policies embedded in hierarchical and transactional colonial structures. The overall intention is to undertake policy review and development by critically examining and revising existing institutional policies, procedures, and practices where and when needed through an Indigenous lens of inclusion.

Ideally, this lens will ensure that Indigenous peoples are culturally safe and not disadvantaged by “normative” institutional structures requiring conformity.

Our approach to transforming institutional ways of doing includes, but is not limited to, reviewing new policies and policy renewals through an Indigenous lens. We have reviewed several institutional policies to date. We have also revised institutional processes to reflect Indigenous ways of doing. For example, our convocation proceedings and programs have been altered to be more inclusive of Indigenous students and cultures. This has meant incorporating the University of Calgary honour song into the formal procession to commence the convocation ceremony and creating space for Indigenous students to add cultural items to convocation regalia. Changes to convocation proceedings continue to evolve as we take one step at a time toward meaningful change.

We have also introduced regional land acknowledgements for all members of the campus community to include at the beginnings of meetings and important events, fostering a practice across the institutions to honour, educate, and pay tribute to the Indigenous peoples of the Treaty 7 region in southern Alberta. To acknowledge the land as a living relative, we have invited ceremonial Elders to lead land blessings to commence the construction of new buildings. These ceremonies are parallel to Western land surveys and groundbreaking ceremonies; however, rather than “breaking the land,” the Indigenous ceremony asks permission from the land for the building to be built in that location.

To create space for cultural practices, the university has created procedures to honour Elders as an act of reciprocity through cultural gifting and honoraria. For reporting purposes, the Office of Indigenous Engagement compiles an annual written report, shared with the community during a special celebratory event offered in the fall each year. As noted earlier, this annual report is accompanied by a Ceremonial Tea Dance in which a cultural symbol is designed based on the annual report, validated by Elders, and added to our *ii' taa'poh'to'p* Winter Count buffalo robe. This ceremony takes place close to the spring equinox in March every year as an act of renewed commitment to our Indigenous Strategy.

PROGRAMS

In early 2018, the provost and vice-president academic provided initial funding to establish an annual Intercultural Capacity Building grant competition within the institution. Each project was eligible for up to \$10,000 in funding. The key criteria centred on how well proposed initiatives aligned with *ii' taa'poh'to'p* and the project's potential for intercultural capacity building. A similar grant cycle for an internal program for teaching and learning called the Indigenization of Curriculum was also launched through the Office of Indigenous Engagement, setting aside \$50,000 annually for faculties and faculty members to submit proposals up to a maximum of \$10,000 per year to indigenize program or course curricula. Applicants are required to include Indigenous ways of knowing in innovative curriculum development that engages Traditional Knowledge Keepers, land-based learning, and/or Indigenous pedagogies.

Since the launch of the Indigenous Strategy, similar annual grants, awards, and recognition of teaching excellence have been offered by various units and faculties across campus. There has also been an increase in awards, bursaries, and scholarships for Indigenous graduate and undergraduate students. These types of internal grants and student awards remain important in recognizing Indigenous students and encouraging the campus community to develop innovative programs in response to recommendations outlined in *ii' taa'poh'to'p*.

Cultural illiteracy among the campus community was identified early in our journey as a major concern regarding any meaningful implementation of the Indigenous Strategy, potentially affecting our ability to move forward in a good way. We noted during the Gathering Stories phase of our journey that the campus community was in dire need of intercultural capacity building education. The results of the online survey conducted during the development of the strategy indicated that many respondents—including students, faculty, staff, and alumni—had little to no knowledge about Indigenous peoples' histories, cultures, languages, and lived experiences in Canada. We recognized that there was an urgent need for the university to create and offer more learning opportunities, on both the academic and the non-academic sides of the house, to address cultural illiteracy through new educational programming and professional development. We did not find cultural illiteracy on campus surprising given

the educational journeys of some non-Indigenous members of the Task Force. However, related expressions of racism on campus were shocking. Threaded throughout the strategy is a call for intercultural capacity building programs for the campus community, aligning with several of the Calls to Action outlined in the *Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada* (TRC 2015).

Since the launch of *ii' taa'poh'to'p* in 2017, various university faculties and units (including the Office of Indigenous Engagement) have created several innovative programs, courses, and professional development workshops that provide a broad spectrum of learning opportunities for students, faculty, and staff. Examples include a series of online learning modules offered through Human Resources, new specialized academic certificate programs, and immersive land-based credit and non-credit courses. We decided, however, not to make these offerings mandatory, leaving the decision to do so up to specific units for non-credit learning and faculties for credit learning. We wanted to ensure that those who engaged in intercultural capacity learning opportunities did so as part of their individual commitment to reconciliation; choosing this route has not been without internal and external debates based on differing perspectives. That said, the Werklund School of Education at the university has adopted a mandatory course for all education students. Additionally, other business units, such as Student Services and the Office of Advancement, have made some online learning courses offered through Human Resources mandatory for all of their staff.

Since the strategy was passed, faculties have developed and launched new faculty-specific bridging programs and/or access routes to increase student representation across the institution, including but not limited to Education, Nursing, Engineering, Architecture, Science, and Arts. Many faculties have undertaken reviews of curricula to create space and/or meaningfully embed Indigenous content in courses and programs. New degree programs, offered in partnership with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities, have also been developed. Additionally, faculties have created and launched new specialized certificate programs and immersive land-based credit and non-credit courses (often led by Traditional Knowledge Keepers).

Generally, the University of Calgary has seen a significant increase in research funding awarded to Indigenous-led and -focused research

projects across all faculties since the launch of the strategy. The university received a \$125 million Canada First Research Excellence Grant for One Child, Every Child in April 2023, with research that “bring[s] together Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, child health research institutes, education and healthcare providers, equity-deserving groups, [and] local, national and global stakeholders to accelerate outcomes for children and their families” (McGinnis 2024). Key concepts outlined in the Indigenous Strategy, such as parallel paths and ethical space, were core to the university receiving this funding.

Other steps taken to transform research at the university include but are not limited to revisions to research ethics processes to be more inclusive of and attentive to Indigenous research ethics and methodologies and hiring an Indigenous research support team under the auspices of the vice-president research. We have also revised graduate student policies and exam processes to create space for Traditional Knowledge Keepers on supervisory committees and ceremonies in candidacy and oral defence exams.

PLACES/SPACES

The creation of new places and spaces makes the campus more inviting and welcoming for Indigenous students, staff, and community members and pays tribute to the Indigenous peoples of this land. Since the launch of the Indigenous Strategy, faculties such as Social Work, Education, Medicine, Engineering, Business, and Nursing have created new culturally designed spaces for Indigenous students and community members to gather. These spaces are equipped for ceremonies and incorporate Indigenous elements in architectural design, structure, and decor, appropriately reflecting the Indigenous peoples of the region. Additionally, the Office of Indigenous Engagement was provided with a purpose-built space designed to accommodate ceremonial gatherings, staff, and Traditional Knowledge Keepers.

In 2018, the campus architect engaged an Elder Advisory Group to reimagine the outdoor campus landscape through an Indigenous lens of relationality and reciprocity. This ongoing inclusive consultation has resulted in a campus redesign. The university has also identified and created new places and spaces for smudging and pipe ceremonies, where buildings and rooms have either been modified or designed with special ventilation

to allow for such practices. Additionally, the university has identified places in the campus landscape where the tipi lodges can be safely erected and has introduced training sessions for the campus community to learn about putting up and caring for our *ii' taa'poh'to'p* painted tipi lodges.

Reflection on Our Parallel Paths

Key concepts and processes embedded in the University of Calgary's Indigenous Strategy, *ii' taa'poh'to'p*, are grounded by Indigenous knowledges and methodologies. The commitment to honouring them through parallel pathways has made the university distinct from many other postsecondary institutions in Canada. The parallel paths followed in the development of the strategy mark a way toward transformative reconciliation, in which Indigenous and non-Indigenous people come together to increase mutual understanding in an ethical, shared space. The four-stage journey framework provided an Indigenous methodology for strategic development that is adoptable and adaptable by, and applicable to, other organizations. Working through and engaging with *ii' taa'poh'to'p* has provided a gift of knowledge and experience, giving those of us who helped to develop the strategy much on which to reflect.

Transitional Story

THE SPIRIT OF II' TAA'POH'TO'P

If our strategy could talk, then it might say to us, “Greetings, friends, my name is ii' taa'poh'to'p. For you see ii' taa'poh'to'p is a living document; it has a spirit. It is not a two-dimensional document on white paper or a two-page handout that tells us what to do and how to do it. It has a living energy that we can relate to, engage with, take care of, and help to shape. It is a gift that carries deep meaning should we choose to engage with it, dig deeper, and get to know it better. It has been recognized and validated through the ceremonial guidance of Traditional Knowledge Keepers. It has been gifted with a name, it has inspired the gifting of a song for our institution, it has a story, it has a home, it has relatives, and it has a future. And that future is in all of our hands. ii' taa'poh'to'p was collectively created through parallel ways in a shared intercultural space by many hearts, many hands, many minds, with spiritual guidance and blessings from Traditional Knowledge Keepers. We are now responsible to ensure that its spirit is recognized and nurtured.

Shawna Cunningham

