

Digital Research Folio Proposal Assignment with Literature Review

1. Working title: A University for Everyone

2. Selected topic: Indigenization at Capilano University

3. Preliminary research question: What Indigenization efforts has Capilano University undertaken?

4. Literature Review

Introduction

This literature review will be divided in two parts. The first part will explore the concept of Indigenization in order to define the process and to establish the importance of such a process for Indigenous learners and the university institution. The second part will review strategies and tactics recently employed by Capilano University, in chronological order, to establish the University's goals to Indigenize and increase support for Aboriginal learners. Capilano University is located on the traditional and unceded territories of the Lil'wat, Musqueam, Sechelt, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations, and through Indigenization efforts, the University is upholding commitments to these communities, and to the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action. This literature review will examine the importance of Indigenization and the concept-in-action at Capilano University.

PT. I

Indigenous students across Canada face oppressions causing barriers to higher education (Harper and Thompson 41). Employing ethnographic and case study research methods, Harper and Thompson recognize the Indigenous experience as characterized by oppressions including “poverty, suppression of their identities, racism and gender violence (41).” It is recognized that of foremost importance to the prosperity of Indigenous peoples is “Indigenous self-determination,” or “the right of Indigenous peoples to determine their own economic, social and cultural development (Harper and Thompson 41).” Harper and Thompson critique the Western education system and recognize that school systems are “specifically constructed by the state to ingrain Indigenous subjugation within dominant societies.” (42) Harper and Thompson recognize the effects of the “void in Indigenous representation within schools and the overall colonial nature of existing Canadian curriculum” in declining high school graduation rates and lesser pursuit of post-secondary education for Indigenous students (43). In applying a “self-determination framework for education,” Harper and Thompson suggest that “education...among Indigenous peoples...can help reverse colonial processes.” (53)

Echoing Harper and Thompson, Pidgeon recognizes that “in an Indigenized institution, Indigenous peoples remain empowered in their self-determination and cultural integrity.” (77) Pidgeon parallels Thompson and Harper’s recognition that a challenge regarding indigenization within higher education is “creating the space within predominantly Euro-Western defined and ascribed structures, academic disciplines, policies, knowledges and ways of being within the academy.” (77) This barrier, along with other “systematic barriers and inequities, and...other barriers to social inclusion (e.g., discrimination, racism, etc.)” result in repercussions for Indigenous learners (Pidgeon 77). Employing an “environmental scan of publically available strategic plans at 124 public colleges and universities in Canada,” Pidgeon finds that “only 35% of these institutions had a specific institution-wide...Aboriginal Student Success Strategy.” (83) Pidgeon, reflecting work by Thompson and Harper, acknowledges that education can be “a tool of decolonization where Indigenous people are empowered in who they are.” (79) Although Indigenization of higher education in Canada has been an ongoing process since the 1970s, the

Truth and Reconciliation Commission is credited for bringing about further change (Pidgeon 79).

Reflecting the changes set forth by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission as stated by Pidgeon, Canadian universities are employing various initiatives “to weave Indigenous peoples, cultures and knowledge into the fabric of their campuses.” (Macdonald 1) Macdonald defines Indigenization as a process where “many universities are making a conscious effort to bring Indigenous people, as well as their philosophies and cultures, into strategic plans, governance roles, academic, research and recruitment.” (1) It is recognized that “the most complex, and contentious, aspect of Indigenization is what it means for curricula, pedagogy and research.” (Macdonald 3) Employing case study research methodology, the following positive changes are recognized among Canadian universities: the implementation of Indigenous advisories councils; more executive positions being held by Indigenous peoples; university-wide graduation credit requirements in Indigenous studies; “incorporation of Indigenous case studies in course readings and assignments”; and requiring faculty to include Indigenous content into the course syllabus (Macdonald 3). There exist both proponents and skeptics of Indigenization, with the later fearing that the process “may draw experts and elders away from their communities where they are needed.” (Macdonald 4) In discussing faculty hiring practices relating to Indigenous instructors, Macdonald decenters herself from Western ways of knowing in acknowledging that “those with deep knowledge of Indigenous arts and culture may not have doctorates...but may have community recognition.” (5) Universities are Indigenizing their institutions through “campus spaces and symbols”, “academic programs and resources”, and “research chairs and projects.” (Macdonald 5-7)

PT. II

Reflecting the ongoing initiatives towards Indigenization at Canadian universities, as mentioned by Macdonald, Capilano University is also moving towards Indigenization. The importance of Truth and Reconciliation Week and events occurring at Capilano University in 2017 is discussed in a media release by Cheryl Rossi. Rossi quotes Squamish Chief Ian Campbell, keynote speaker

at the 2017 events, on the importance of these events in stating “First Nations are invisible in our own land and seen as a vanished race by the world...it is time, we all deserve better.” (1) Rossi notes that the events are open to “CapU students, employees and the public”, and includes activities such as “film screenings, potlucks, a discussion about cultural appropriation, a guided campus walk with Elder Latash Nahannee...and an interactive Blanket Exercise.” (2) In conclusion, as relevant to initiatives towards recognition and respect for Indigenous peoples, Rossi acknowledges that “Capilano University is named after Chief Joe Capilano, an important leader of the Squamish (Skwxwú7mesh) Nation of the Coast Salish people.” (3) As well, Rossi notes that “our campuses are located on the territories of the Lil’wat, Musqueam, Sechelt (shíshálh), Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations.” (3)

The Capilano University Aboriginal Service Plan (2018-2021) elaborates on efforts undertaken by the University, as stated by Rossi, outlining the university’s plans, policies and processes, and programs and activities fulfilling the Ministry of Advanced Education’s goals regarding Aboriginal Learners. Toran Savjord, President (acting) of CapU acknowledges in a letter to the Minister that “Indigenous knowledge enriches our educational environment by broadening learning perspectives, deepening connections to the land and communities, and enhancing our identity as citizens and residents of British Columbia and Canada.” (3) The ASP recognizes barriers facing First Nations youth in our community and posits that the process of Indigenization allows Aboriginal learners to better succeed in post-secondary education (6). The ASP makes note of various institutional commitments regarding Indigenization including: a rebranding effort “that highlights Indigenous symbolism and artistic style”; daily routines “such as acknowledging the traditional territories of the nations upon which we reside in every formal meeting on campus”; the “renaming of [CapU’s] Sechelt campus to ká lax-ay” in 2017; and annual Truth and Reconciliation Week events (3). The ASP debriefs CapU’s First Nations Advisory Council; Indigenizing the Academy Committee; and the implementation of a President’s Task Force of Aboriginal Education. Further, the ASP discusses the Aboriginal Learner Success Strategy; University Study Skills for Aboriginal Learners (USSAL) workshop; University One for Aboriginal Learners; the Elders-in-residence program; and expansions to the

Kéxwusm-áyakn First Nations Student Centre. The ASP also discusses the success and importance of the Sechelt, Squamish and Lil'wat language and culture programs – and plans to create a similar program for the Tsleil-Waututh Nation. In the Capilano University Aboriginal Service Plan Appendices, we find letters of support from the Lil'wat Nation, Sechelt Nation, Squamish Nation, and Tsleil Wautuh Nation. The Appendices also provides summaries from focus groups conducted with the Lil'wat Nation and Squamish Nation - it is evident that aspects of the ASP employ focus groups as a qualitative research method.

The Capilano University Institutional Accountability Plan and Report 2017-2018 echoes the Aboriginal Service Plan (2018-2021), establishing indigenous learning as an ongoing priority at CapU, “in response to Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action and in line with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People.” (2) As pertaining to Aboriginal Learners, the Plan and Report discusses the progress and further actions of recruiting with a “focus on a ‘One University’ approach.” (10) The Plan and Report notes CapU’s implementation of University One; Aboriginal Language and Culture Certificates; First Nations Student Services (FNSS); and “the signing of an Affiliation Agreement for Post-Secondary Educational Opportunities with the shíshálh Nation.” (11) The Plan and Report discusses CapU’s “partnership with the Government and Indigenous communities, organizations and institutions to implement the Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Policy Framework and Action Plan to increase the participation and success of Aboriginal learners.” (13) Specific to system goals and objectives, the Plan and Report finds that CapU has fulfilled the Advanced Ministry of BC Performance Measure of providing “equitable and affordable access for residents” by creating aboriginal student spaces (15). The Plan and Report finds a “decrease in the number of self-identified Aboriginal students” enrolled at CapU in the 2017-2018 academic year (16). However, “CapU’s strongest programs are continuing to attract an increasing number of Aboriginal students.” (17) The Plan and Report outlines specific strategies to increase Aboriginal student spaces including improving “retention and student success...through [the] First Nations Student Services Centre” and “piloting...University One for Aboriginal Learners...and...[adding] capacity in Aboriginal community outreach to identify and act on

learning needs to improve Aboriginal student access for the long term.” (17) Further evidence of Indigenization is recognized in the Indigenous Independent Digital Filmmaking Certificate and Diploma programs (20). It is evident that aspects of the Plan and Report are measured and presented through record keeping, case study research, process of observation, and descriptive statistics.

Further Indigenization efforts by Capilano University are recognized in “the partnership between the Health Care Assistant Program at Capilano University and Squamish Nation’s Eslha7an Learning Centre.” (1) The North Shore News article ‘Capilano University Health-Care Program Has First Nations Focus’ by Lise Boullard adds further insight into Indigenization initiatives at CapU as mentioned in both the Aboriginal Service Plan and Institutional Accountability Plan and Report. Boullard establishes the importance of such a program in mentioning the underrepresentation of Aboriginal professionals in health care and barriers facing Aboriginal students (1). Boullard employs one-on-one interviews in discussing the logistics of the Program, finding that the “eight-month certificate program prepares Aboriginal students to provide personal care to patients and residents in the community, including those in complex care, in specialized dementia care and in acute care settings.” (1) As relevant to Indigenization of curriculum, the Program will “encompass theory and clinical practice” through an Indigenous focus that will include “cultural activities...done [in part] through storytelling.” (1) As well “Indigenous instructors, or those with experience working with Aboriginal populations, will...be hired when possible.” (1) Boullard goes on to discuss other initiatives by Capilano University including the University One for Aboriginal Learner’s Certificate and Elders-in-residence program (2).

The ‘Truth & Reconciliation 2018’ poster outlines events at Capilano University between Monday, September 24, 2018 and Friday, September 28, 2018, providing a more defined and recent overview of Truth and Reconciliation Week at Capilano than the 2017 media release by Cheryl Rossi. The 2018 Truth and Reconciliation Week events include: Elder welcome and blessing; campus-wide moment of reflection; “Reconciliation Matters”; screening of *The 8th*

Fire: Aboriginal Peoples, Canada and the Way Forward; drum circle with Willie Lewis; screening of *A Road Forward*; a play by Yvonne Wallace titled *utszan: A story about mending family through first language homecoming*; Writer's Feast Poutluck; Blanket Exercise; Chatlive: My Reconciliation Includes; a community conversation on Truth and Reconciliation; Elder walk about campus; Orange Shirt Day; Potluck lunch; and a keynote address by Steven Point. These events are endorsed by Capilano University, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, and Reconciliation Canada.

Conclusion

Indigenization is a necessary and important process occurring at universities across Canada. Among the many structural and social barriers experienced by Indigenous people in Canada, Euro-centric ways of knowing in the higher education framework seek to further oppress and marginalize this population. Indigenization, through policy and program changes, creates a holistic and tolerant institution where the success of Indigenous students is encouraged and their individualities and cultures are accepted and celebrated. At Capilano University, Indigenization has taken effect, as evidenced by the many various ongoing and fulfilled efforts towards greater inclusion, acknowledgement, respect, and support for Indigenous learners and surrounding Indigenous communities.

5. Methods / Next Steps

Proposed method of inquiry: For this research project, I intend to incorporate and elaborate on my findings as stated above, especially pertaining to the Aboriginal Services Plan and Institutional Accountability Plan and Report. I will also seek further primary sources held by the University that outline Indigenization initiatives. I plan to seek archival sources held by the University to explore Indigenization efforts in the past in order to establish when these changes began and how they have developed.

Materials: Primary Sources

Capilano University Aboriginal Service Plan 2018-2021

Capilano University Institutional Accountability Plan & Report 2017-2018

Truth and Reconciliation Week Posters

ChatLive Posters; Documents referring to Guest speakers at the University

Archival Sources: *I am unsure if such archival sources exist and will contact the appropriate parties in the coming weeks.*

6.

Works Cited

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