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FROM ACCESS TO ENGAGEMENT: UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG INITIATIVES IN SUPPORT OF EDUCATIONALLY MARGINALIZED CHILDREN & YOUTH, 1988–2017

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The University of Winnipeg is committed to excellence in post-secondary education . . . . In pursuit of our mission, we are guided by the knowledge that our primary responsibility is to our students, to whom we strive to offer a community which appreciates, fosters, and promotes values of human dignity, equality, non-discrimination and appreciation of diversity. We view both accessibility and excellence as important goals, and will endeavour to make the University as accessible as we can while maintaining high standards of quality in our academic programs.

–University Mission Statement, 2017

Introduction: From Student Access to Community Engagement

It has now been 50 years since The University of Winnipeg (UW) was first chartered by the Province of Manitoba to offer undergraduate degrees. Much of that time has been characterized by efforts to become an institution that lives up to its mission by enabling marginalized youth to flourish and enjoy the benefits of a university education. Understandings of what it means for the University to commit to both academic excellence and meaningful access have changed in the course of learning how best to engage students who are underrepresented in university admissions and graduation rates. Given its inner-city location in a city with the largest Indigenous urban population in Canada, the University has been in a key position to focus on engaging with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit youth, along with youth from other communities that are disproportionately likely to experience poverty and unlikely to pursue university education.

In anticipation of its 50th anniversary, and the occasion it would afford to reflect on what has been accomplished and how to reshape our efforts, the University successfully applied for a SSHRC research grant[1] to undertake a study of a representative range of the institutions' many initiatives to engage educationally marginalized students: those who for a variety of reasons (most often socioeconomic) have not had other students' opportunity to flourish in their K–12 educations, making them less likely to seek a university education and less likely to succeed when they do. A multidisciplinary research team of ten professors from Arts, Education, and Kinesiology was assembled to lead studies of various initiatives using a range of methods, but focusing especially on interviewing and surveying the youth who participated in one or more of the initiatives and the university personnel who developed and implemented them.

As the chapters in this volume will show, the institution's understandings of how best to engage educationally marginalized youth have evolved with changes in broader society (such as the LGBTQ rights movement) and international events with local impact (such as civil wars and political persecution leading to an influx of immigrants and asylum seekers). Chief among these changes between 1967 and 2017 has been the far greater attention on a national scale to the situation of Indigenous people, culminating in the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and its calls to action in all spheres of society, and especially those that are implicated in colonization, including higher education. Among the many benefits of the TRC process has been its provocation to think more deeply about what is required to create a respectful, inclusive, and equitable society.

Thus, there has been a shift in discourse—the way we think about and speak about how to engage educationally marginalized youth—in recent decades:

[1] SSHRC Aid to Small Universities Program, 2014 competition, Grant 681-2014-0024.

- *from a discourse of "access" in the 1980s,* where a largely untransformed UW would open its doors to "underprepared" individuals and give them the supports needed to succeed in the university-as-it-is. This was the era of the "democratization" of universities nationally and internationally, where universities were adjusting from serving a smaller, mainly "straight white male [and more recently, male and female] middle-to-upper-class Christian" student population, to admitting a much bigger and more socioeconomically diverse student body. University administrations may not have foreseen that the same societal pressures that had motivated expansion and diversification of the student population would have an impact on the university itself—but they did. Despite opposition from traditionalists who feared an erosion of academic excellence in the challenge to "the canon," identity-based programs of study such as "Native" Studies and Women's Studies emerged at this time, and traditional Humanities departments such as English Literature and History began to diversify their curricula in ways that would, in effect even if not by design, reflect their more diverse student bodies. (See, e.g., Menand 2010.) Still, UW could not be said to have committed to reinventing itself, and its relationship to non-dominant communities or social justice issues seems not to have become central to its ethos. Dr. Robin Farquhar (1999), President of the UW in the 1980s, would describe the key strengths of universities in very traditional terms (academic freedom, institutional autonomy, etc.) that would have been endorsed by university leaders from earlier eras.
- *to a discourse of "community engagement" in the Axworthy years (2004–2014)*, when contribution to social justice and community development was central to the purpose of the university. In this discourse the emphasis was not only on providing supports for individual students but on becoming a university where students from socioeconomically disadvantaged communities could flourish. Dr. Axworthy struck an Access Task Force that still used the language of access but was charged with answering a much deeper question than is suggested by that discourse: "How does the University of Winnipeg become an agent of change?" The task force concluded that removing financial barriers was only part of the challenge, and was secondary to the bigger problem of low-socioeconomic status (SES) youth disengaging from school and never aspiring to enter university. They also observed, crucially, that the university was itself structured to favour "the middle class student coming directly from high school" whether in student service schedules or in teaching methods. One of their recommendations was to develop a robust community engagement strategy by expanding on its partnerships and service contracts with community organizations (Access Task Force, 2007). There was concern among some faculty members in these years that there was too great a gap between the academic and community engagement, and that the latter was being pursued at the expense of the institution's capacity to maintain excellence in teaching and research. UW developed programming for children and youth at this time, together with an administrative infrastructure for community engagement, including a Director of Community Learning and Engagement position reporting to the President, an Associate Vice-President of Indigenous Affairs, and an Indigenous Advisory Circle. In 2011, the University adopted a "Community Learning Policy" that committed the institution to "the active integration of the University into the social, cultural, and educational life of the community" in order to provide innovative learning opportunities for specific underrepresented communities in the University, namely "Indigenous students, visible minorities, students with

disabilities, new Canadians, students who are the first in their family to attend university, students from rural communities, and those who work full-time while attending university" (Community Learning Policy, 2011).

- *and to an expanded discourse of community engagement in the current administration of President Trimbee (2014–),* who has reaffirmed the importance of sustaining the fundamental academic mission and collegial governance model of the University while consolidating, and in some ways expanding on, the university's commitment to community engagement. Thus, "Academic Excellence and Renewal" and "Indigenization" are both pillars of the University's 2015 Strategic Directions document. Dr. Trimbee's focus on charting an academically and financially sustainable course, where academic and community engagement interests are brought into mutually beneficial connection, can be seen in decisions about which engagement efforts to support. Under Dr. Trimbee the University has maintained the key community learning programs initiated in the Axworthy era to engage inner-city youth, and committed the institution to acting on the TRC's calls for universities to contribute to reconciliation. The expansion of the meaning of community engagement can be seen in UW's efforts at an institutional level in recent years to actively include the previously unacknowledged community of 2SLGBTQ* students and staff.

Some of the initiatives to engage marginalized youth examined in this volume go back decades to the Access era. The University made a major commitment to pursuing the goal of access by establishing the University's Writing Program in 1988. It was meant to raise the calibre of academic writing among all students, but particularly among "access students" who begin university with lower academic qualifications. University leadership at the time was particularly concerned with avoiding the phenomenon of "revolving-door" access, where underprepared students are welcomed into a university but not offered the supports required to succeed. See Jennifer Clary-Lemon's chapter on the University writing program.

The Faculty of Education has, since 1998, offered several highly successful education programs for Indigenous and inner-city residents through their Access Program: the Winnipeg Education Centre program (WEC), Canadian Aboriginal Teacher Education Program (CATEP), and International Teacher Education Program (ITEP), which have prepared hundreds of teachers to work in inner-city schools. The Faculty has had the mandate from the inception of its B.Ed. program to prepare all of its students to teach in the inner city. Thus, the B.Ed. degree includes a variety of relevant courses, including mandatory Aboriginal Education and Service Learning courses, and a range of other courses including Mentoring and LGBTQ-Inclusive Education. Paul DePasquale's chapter examines the WEC B.Ed. program that prepares inner-city residents to teach in inner-city schools. Lee Anne Block's chapter on Service Learning addresses one of the key components of the Faculty of Education's long record of engagement with educationally marginalized youth (for other Faculty of Education initiatives, see the appendix).

Many initiatives date from the ten-year presidency of Dr. Lloyd Axworthy (2004–2014), who brought with him a passionate commitment to contribute to socioeconomic development in the inner city by working vigorously at an institutional level to engage students from Indigenous and war-affected communities. See

the chapter by Axworthy, Linda DeRiviere, and Jennifer Rattray for an examination of several key programs and their benefits. During this period there was additionally an emphasis on engaging inner-city children and youth in sports and recreation and providing them with access to University facilities; see Nathan Hall and David Telles-Langdon's chapter on the University RecPlex and its community charter. One of the final achievements of the Axworthy years was the proposal of a student-initiated, Senate-approved Indigenous Course Requirement (ICR) for every degree program to ensure that every graduate has taken a course offering the opportunity to learn from Indigenous knowledge and challenge colonial misrepresentations of Indigenous peoples, histories, and cultures. The aim was both to contribute to national reconciliation efforts and to foster a respectful campus climate for Indigenous people.

Since President Annette Trimbee began her term in 2014, the University has consolidated its commitment to engaging Indigenous students and other marginalized groups. Notably, the University has made significant progress in implementing the ICR, establishing it by unanimous support of University Senate in 2015, with over forty courses now in the calendar and others in development. Helen Lepp-Friesen's chapter discusses the impact of ICR courses on Indigenous and non-Indigenous students and faculty members. The institution has made additional efforts to extend this work on an institutional level to 2SLGBTQ* students. Although 2SLGBTQ* youth are not a group particularly likely to experience educational marginalization arising from poverty or racism (although of course some do), research at the high school level has shown that 2SLGBTQ* students do experience a hostile school climate and are at higher risk of dropping out. The University made a major commitment to engaging particularly marginalized 2SLGBTQ* communities in its historic 2017 "C2C" conference which brought together Two-Spirit Indigenous people and Queer and Trans People of Colour from across Canada in dialogue with other LGBTQ people and allies to develop calls to action for institutions and communities. See Heather Milne et al.'s chapter for an examination of 2SLGBTQ* inclusion and exclusion at the University.

Much of the focus in media coverage of changes at the University focus on major building projects such as the Richardson science complex, the Buhler Centre that houses the Faculty of Business and Economics, the mixed-use apartment building behind it, and the RecPlex. Generally, the discussion focuses on how such projects contribute to downtown revitalization; what is less often noted is that many of the architectural changes on campus over the years, large and small, have been fueled by the need for physical spaces to accommodate the University's community engagement goals and its growing understanding of what respectful inclusion requires. We can see this in the migration of the Aboriginal Student Centre from its inadequate space in the basement of Bryce Hall with a staff of one thirty years ago, to its current facilities in Lockhart Hall; in the construction of the RecPlex, a facility built for community engagement and required by Charter to offer it; in the establishment of the Helen Betty Osborne Centre on Ellice Avenue and Urban and Inner-City Studies North End location on Selkirk Avenue to provide the facilities needed for meaningful access for educationally marginalized inner-city students.

The thirty years of community-engagement efforts at the University discussed in this volume are flanked by two bold decisions that affect every degree taken by every student: in 1988, the Writing requirement, and

in 2014, the Indigenous Course Requirement. That both these decisions were unanimously approved by Senate after intense campus-wide dialogue speaks to the evolution of the institution's understanding of what is possible in, and required of, a university committed from its inception to the twin goals of meaningful access and academic excellence. We hope that this volume will help to take the conversation back to the educational goals behind the building projects, as we reflect on our past efforts to become an inclusive institution that supports academic excellence in and through engagement with a socioeconomically and culturally diverse student population, and make decisions about how best to pursue that goal in future.

Note:

We have focused on a representative selection of community-engagement initiatives in this study, and there are a great many other important initiatives at the University of Winnipeg that have not been included here. A more comprehensive annotated listing of these programs can be found in the Appendix at the end of this volume.

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Access and Excellence: The Writing Program Then and Now

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Abstract

This interview-based study of ten teachers and administrators fundamental to the establishment of the University of Winnipeg's Writing Program examines the discourses of access and excellence that emerged in discussions of its establishment and change over time. Such discourses set up common arguments about the function of higher education, its purpose, and who it should serve. Terminology associated with both access and excellence implies a view of education dependent on academic standards and quality control. A discourse analysis on the interview transcripts resulted in five themes that showed varied approaches to conceptualizing access and excellence in the Program's 30+ year history: 1) Access as Unqualified/Underprepared; 2) Access as Social Justice/Inclusion; 3) Excellence as a Standard/Exclusion; 4) Excellence as Research; and 5) Access and Excellence as Developmental Processes.

The writing program at the University of Winnipeg (UW) has a documented thirty-year history of being the first writing program in Canada, emerging as a unique national case study for activity in writing and rhetoric (Clary-Lemon, 2017; Kearns & Turner, 2016, 2006, 2002, 1997; Turner & Kearns, 2012). Moving from a program housed within an English department, to an independent program, to a program housed within a stand-alone department of Rhetoric, Writing, and Communications[1] has meant that the writing program itself has undergone many changes from its inception as a program designed to serve students who were in a variety of ways underprepared for writing tasks in university (M. McIntyre, interview), to a program housed in a disciplinary department that serves students at all levels in an undergraduate major. It has also meant that the priorities of hiring and expertise have shifted over time to accommodate a shifting programmatic vision. In 1986, when the program began, professional training in the area of composition was not available in Canada, and the six faculty members first hired to work in the writing program were appointed at the rank of Instructor. In later years, the program and department were able to hire PhDs in the fields of English, Writing Studies, and Communication Studies, thus constructing a trajectory of increased professionalization and disciplinary affiliation. These themes have been well-traced in Louise Wetherbee Phelps' 2011 Fulbright report documenting a six-week study and curricular evaluation of the department in which she noted that the "institutional tension between access and excellence" that has characterized the department's history suggests that present-day interpretations of its identity may construe "access" within a "service" mission to teaching underprepared writers, "while 'excellence' is attributed to the ideals for scholarship and knowledge-making embodied in the major, graduate studies, and faculty publication" (p. 14). These interpretations, however, are nuanced and situated within changing historical and institutional contexts. This study, which is based on the discourse practices of interviews with ten teachers and administrators who helped found and shape the program over time, indicates that although *access* and *excellence* can present and has at times presented such a tension, the history of the writing program has also been steeped within hybrid, relational movement between these discursive and often polarizing terms.

Discourses of Access and Excellence: Background and Method

Linguists, rhetoricians, and English studies scholars have recognized that the use of the terms "access" and "excellence" in higher education are more than simple catchphrases to describe student populations or expectations for research quality. Instead, each has emerged as a *discourse* of higher education, in which discourse is used in the Foucauldian sense to mean "practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak" (Foucault, 1969, p. 49), thus both enabling and constraining what is possible to say in any given moment and constructing specific realities about any given object. Similarly, James Gee (2011) defines

[1] See https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/rhetoric/

capital-D "Discourse" as languages and practices that, together with particular tools and symbols, work to construct a "socially recognizable identity" (p. 201). Given that the writing program's historical identity may be located in a perceived tension between its missions of *access*—attributed to its service mission—and *excellence*—attributed to its production of knowledge—I've chosen this discursive frame within which to locate my research question: how have those who have been the closest to the formation of the writing program interpreted its missions of access and excellence over time, and how might that shape the program's future?

Pegeen Reichert Powell (2014) speaks of discourses of student retention in writing instruction that emerge from "a configuration of textual and social practices" (p. 55); similarly, Jenny Williams (1997) connects the discourse of access in higher education with discourses of selectivity and equity that concomitantly construct polarizing opposites. This is echoed by Allan's (2007) examination of the use of "excellence" in university mission statements and dictionary definitions in order to situate it within the tradition of Raymond Williams' *Keywords* (1983). Allan's discursive approach to language locates excellence as a keyword, using Williams' work, noting that keywords are "significant, binding words in certain activities and their interpretation; [and] they are significant, indicative forms in certain forms of thought" (Williams, 1983, p. 15; see also Gentz, 2009). While scholars who do research in the area of higher education, student retention, and teaching and research excellence may examine different objects of study, they are engaged in an examination of the discourses of higher education that set up common arguments about the function of higher education, its purpose, and who it should serve. Terminology associated with both access and excellence imply a view of education dependent on academic standards and quality control; as Jenny Williams (1997) notes,

> Words such as access, standards, academic excellence, mature students, consumers, enterprise, quality, are used as shorthand descriptors of who should or should not be let into what sort of academia and on what terms. Such 'icon' words have become embedded in "polarising discourses" (Ball S. J., 1990); the simplistic opposition of alternative understandings:
>
> elite v. mass
>
> standard v. non-standard
>
> traditional v. non-traditional
>
> quality v. access
>
> academic v. vocational
>
> qualified v. unqualified
>
> academic freedom v. government control
>
> research v. teaching (p. 25)

An examination of how such discourse has influenced the perception of UW's writing program over time is warranted, given the writing program's unique history as an access initiative, first designed to accommodate the shifting demographics of university students in the 1980s (first generation, low income, English as an additional language). In its thirty-year history, its mandate has not changed, but its student populations at the second year and higher have enlarged its charge: the department now teaches writing on a vertical, as well as horizontal curriculum, and engages student majors in areas of disciplinary expertise.

In order to undertake this research, I recorded and transcribed ten interviews with teachers and administrators central to envisioning and constructing the writing program in its early years. Because the institution is a small one and the cohort of parties involved in the construction and revision of the program are known or can be easily located, each participant agreed to be named in this research. I spoke to four individuals who have been associated with administering or evaluating the program over the course of its history (Neil Besner, Mark Golden, Michael McIntyre, and Bill Rannie), and six who had a primary teaching role[2] in the program (Robert Byrnes, Judith Kearns, Jaqueline McLeod-Rogers, Sheila Page, Deborah Schnitzer, and Catherine Taylor)[3]. The interview was designed to understand the historical contexts of the writing program over time, as well as why it was created, its institutional mandate, who it serves and has served in its various iterations, and how those transitions have affected university programming about writing. I then conducted a discourse analysis on the interviews, isolating instances of the use of the terminology "access" and "excellence" or its equivalent use—similar to Williams' (1997) list of polarizing terms above—with a focus on Gee's notion of *significance*, with my attention in each case toward the question "how is this piece of language being used to make certain things significant or not and in what ways?" (2011, p. 17). I then examined preceding and subsequent phrases around access and excellence terminology in order to establish common patterns of thematic language use. The results in the following discussion establish five topical thematics that emerged around access and excellence: 1) Access as Unqualified/Underprepared; 2) Access as Social Justice/Inclusion; 3) Excellence as a Standard/Exclusion; 4) Excellence as Research; and 5) Access and Excellence as Developmental Processes. As I examine each of these thematics in the following sections, I argue that paying attention to the significance of access and excellence in the writing program over time allows a deeper understanding of what is possible to imagine in a programmatic future where student populations urge a rethinking of this discursive dichotomy.

Access as Unqualified/Underprepared

Williams (1997) notes that "access" in higher education traditionally "prioritizes provision for groups historically excluded from higher education" (p. 42). These groups can vary widely: students returning to university at an age later than 18 ("mature students"), first-generation university students, low-income students, students of colour, students for whom English is an additional language, students with disabilities, students facing location-based diaspora (rural/urban, international). In terms of writing programs, there is a

[2] There was some overlap in these categories, as Neil Besner originally taught in the early program, but went on to act later both as Dean of Arts and Vice-President Academic, with administrative oversight for the program.
[3] Interviews were conducted between June 2015 and March 2016.

long history of the mandatory first-year writing course as being the outcome of the exigence that "Johnny can't write," an outcry against illiteracy and declining standards in higher education, from the course's first inception as "English A" at Harvard in 1885 to its continued iterations in writing programs across the United States and Canada (Connors, 2003; see also Russell, 2002). While those who choose to teach writing contemporarily are trained in pedagogical practices, writing theory, and rhetorical approaches—that is, the disciplinary content of writing—the mandatory writing course retains much of its loaded history in terms of remediation, preoccupation with error and student readiness, and perception by university faculty that the job of teaching writing is an insufferable chore (Gold, 2008). How faculty and administration talk about the mandatory writing course that, together with the writing centre, have historically made up the Writing Program at UW has much to do with the ways that universities have traditionally articulated thoughts about student writers and writing over time. As one interviewee noted of interdisciplinary colleagues, "they didn't see us as a legit department." Another acknowledged, "There's lingering stigma up to this day... I don't think they are as deep or as insidious as they used to be, but there are still people in the institution who think the teaching of writing is a high school remedial preoccupation that doesn't have to do with real scholarly thinking."

In the thematic of "access" as meaning underprepared or unqualified for university study, interviewees often echoed these historic sentiments in ways that, as Williams (1997) notes, produce "negative statements concerning the problems of particular groups of students and the 'excessive' investment of time and staff they need" (p. 44). When the Writing Program was established in the late 1980s, it was funded from redressment grant money from the provincial government in the amount of $400,000 (N. Besner, interview).[4] These funds were later augmented by grant funding from the Bronfman Foundation, and university capital funding to establish a computer writing lab and peer tutorial program, which provided the exigence for ongoing funding by the University Grants Commission of the provincial government and allowed for a second round of faculty hiring in 1991 (M. McIntyre, interview). The impression on the university community was that special funds were being used to begin an access program, and often created a perception of mild resentment among disciplinary faculty that trickled into those who taught in the writing program. Between common cultural sentiments about writing and who is responsible for preparing student writers for university writing demands, a lack of professional training in the discipline, and institutional resentment around resources, discourses of access in terms of such negative statements were clear in the interview corpus, as these samples show:

> So there was a tension that had built by the mid-80s between access and excellence and the Writing Program was seen as a way of bringing everyone up to par so that a variety of people

[4] At the time, university funding was mediated through a body called the University Grants Commission (UGC). The University was able to make a case to the UCG that because of its student demographics (primarily on the basis of the largest percentages of both part-time and first-generation students in Manitoba), it needed an adjustment to core funding. While the UCG could not change core funding, it could give project-specific funding in the form of a "redressment" grant (M. McIntyre, interview).

from a variety of backgrounds, including some sub-standard K–12 education backgrounds, would have this acculturation experience in which, not just to learn how to write an academic essay, but in which people could learn what university was all about and how to think like an academic. (C. Taylor)

But going back to the access thing, if we're taking in students who don't have ability in writing, it compounds all of the problems that I've just been talking about. They can't write when they come in, not because they're not bright enough or anything of that sort but just opportunities and background. Then those are the ones we have to make sure they can write when they come out and that's the most time-consuming job in the whole university I think, to try to do that. You could almost give them no other courses and it would take full-time attention to that. And that's again a very expensive thing to do. (B. Rannie)

So in terms of the access, we had those populations. We had First Nations populations, overseas populations. We had students moving in from rural areas. We had students coming out of city high schools with low graduating averages. And those, they were the ones that we were really looking at, especially in Development Rhetoric, to get them acclimatized, to help them learn writing process, to give them the support through the tutoring. And to give them the confidence to go on and finish off the writing requirement with Rhetoric 1 and then move on from there. (S. Page)

So, there's about eight folks who stayed here for a long time and all of us were pretty receptive I'd say to access and making, you know, opening the portals of the university and reducing the sense of once you got students who were maybe not totally prepared that they would leave. So, it was definitely seen as not an anti-intellectual program but an access-oriented mandate… my sense as a member of the program is when the next group came in with the revision of the writing program that saw it grow forward into a department eventually the access element was seen as maybe less pressing or less interesting. (J. McLeod-Rogers)

What these students lack, what access students lack, as we'll call them, students who in theory need writing instruction or just many people look like they need writing instruction, are in fact—suffer from a drastic lack of language. (R. Byrnes)

Again, it [the Writing Program] suffered the stigma at the outset of being a place where people went to fix things. Like the dentist, you have a problem with a semicolon or whatever. (N. Besner)

If we're saying "at risk," even if we're using [the term], it's just huge because we use standards all the time. We use rank all the time. We, everything about the way in which we

> organize ourselves, has I think some, has some pretty undemocratic implications. (D. Schnitzer)

Faculty and administrators of the writing program have a clear sense in these examples that access is taken to mean addressing student populations who, in various ways, are being perceived as being underprepared to write—whether in naming specific student demographics, assigning blame at the high school level, noting student "backgrounds" and "opportunities," or intimating what students "lack" that requires a "fix." Such demographics are partnered in polarity and tensions with preparation and academic acculturation of the more traditional university student. Yet it is not without a critical stance on such an approach to access; as one interviewee notes, to denote a student as "at risk," for example, suggests the structure of standards, qualifications, and exclusion that they are marked as unlikely to survive. As well, written into the discourse of access here is that access programs are terrifically "expensive" and are a drain on the University's staff and resources.

The discourse of access is not singly faceted into simply denoting student populations and resource requirements, though as Williams (1997) points out, access discourse writes various categories of difference (like class, race, and age) into institutional discourses under one umbrella category as though these different demographics can somehow be comparable to one another. On the one hand, using access to signify underprepared students tends dangerously toward simple categories that suggest who deserves or is ready for university and who is not—and thus may be used to keep some populations in university and some populations relegated to failure. On the other, interviewees also cast access as an inclusive move toward social justice, a thematic I next take up.

Access as Social Justice/Inclusion

Often administrators see access programs as resource-intensive moves toward student enrolment and recruitment, as enrolment numbers are used as a performance indicator for provincial university funding. Those who are invested in the pedagogical mission of access programs, however, are often focused on the message of inclusion and social justice, with the notion that involving underrepresented students in university life and addressing their needs helps, overall, to remedy the structural inequities that plague higher education in its focus on credentialing dependent on stratification, hierarchy, and prestige (Davies & Guppy, 2010; Davies & Zarifa, 2012). It's important to note that "access" can be used to suggest a variety of positions about higher education, from a social justice orientation to one that is associated with traditional educational priorities of levels of student preparation and a concern with enrollment figures. To that end, not only is the discourse of access associated with a lack of preparation demonstrated by the focus on underrepresented populations as noted in the above section, but it also is concerned with Williams' (1997) suggestive "icon words" of "social justice, political literacy, empowerment, and community development" (p. 42). As she notes, a discourse of access that sees it as a route toward social justice disassociates itself from a view of access that is dependent upon traditional goals in higher education that rely on hierarchy, "modularization," and higher education as a consumer product (p. 43). Instead, this view of access acts "not just to stimulate individual or even group mobility, but to act as a catalyst to both community

developments and to change higher education itself," asking "What changes to pedagogical style, to the curriculum, and to assessment techniques are necessary to achieve this?" (p. 42).

From its inception, the Writing Program struggled with these questions, primarily because it was the first of its kind in the early 1980s. As a result, the group of core faculty instructors hired to teach in the program were collectivized and drawn into delivering a "common curriculum," staffing a writing tutorial program, and encouraging students' use of word-processing technologies through the computer writing lab, all without similar national models or peer faculties with which to build community. As Deborah Schnitzer, one of the first instructors in the writing program, put it,

> [I]f we had blueprints to work with I think they were chronically under developed… But we had an understanding, a shared understanding of what it was we wanted to do and a notion of a centre and what that would do in supporting students who were coming in from all different kinds of places to support the courses that were being developed and to support what we had I think envisioned: a lively and changing culture in the university. Or a way of informing a possible changing culture and university, opening up what they understood their student body to be.

This set curriculum emerged from a feminist and social justice–oriented teaching philosophy that worked with innovative teaching methods: small, workshop-sized classes, team teaching, a peer tutorial program, and common curriculum across sections. The curriculum, as Jaqueline McLeod-Rogers, one of the first instructors in the program notes, was not oriented per se around students who were seen as somehow lacking, as much as on good principles of writing pedagogy:

> The intellectual development for our students had to do with writing so you [students] would have gone on to become involved with administration of a tutoring centre or tutoring. So, then you would really have to think about how do you teach writing, what are the principles of writing that are portable? So, it was really very much a writing-based pedagogy and program focused on adapting curriculum to students.

Moreover, best practices of writing pedagogy were concerned with Freirean notions of higher education that worked to empower students with literacy education, and many historic[5] and contemporary[6] initiatives of the writing program emerged out of such goals:

[5] Elements such as pass/fail writing courses, small class sizes (15 to 18), the peer tutorial program, student diagnostic essays and staff meetings on timed holistic scoring, instructor one-on-one tutoring and conferencing, writing courses for specific Indigenous groups from Peguis and Fisher River, writing courses for specific cohorts from Indonesia, Malaysia, and China (S. Page, interview).

> [A]ccess is telling students what you bring to the university you've already got it. We'll find what you know, we'll polish that, we'll make you a better writer, we can work with peer group skills, we'll make your approach to learning more manageable. But basically you're looking at the learner as already coming whole and in place. (J. McLeod-Rogers)

> I really thought we would dismantle and that the professionalization would be all of our responsibilities, students would be professionalized, we would be professionalized but with whole sight, you know? So, it wouldn't be professionalized into the existing rank, 'cause I thought, that's not good for us, but it would be professionalized into that sense of the multi-dimensional beings that we were. And that when mothers [in the Rising Sun school initiative] came, they came with the experience of mothering, with the experience of coming from another country, with these five languages that some of them spoke, that that would be so deeply honoured, right? That it wouldn't be a broken English that anybody ever said, nobody was to be fixed here. I had this really deep sense of how we could encourage these differences so that this integration and intersectionality and a definite, like this really sensitive democratization that I felt would work against, you know, departmentalization or syllogisation or isolations or separatism. I just, I was pushing for that. (D. Schnitzer)

The set curriculum of the early Writing Program, with its attendant commitment to community development and empowerment, as suggested above, endured changes after the second group of instructional staff was hired in the early 1990s. Those changes, which allowed more instructional freedom, created some internal friction; as Catherine Taylor noted, "I think that we saw their [the second group of hired staff] rejection of that set curriculum as part and parcel of just lacking a commitment to the idea of access and excellence and I think we very strongly believed, at the beginning, that you needed to be working as a collective almost in order to make this thing work as beautifully and as strongly as it could." However, despite the discord such changes suggested internally, the new instructional staff nonetheless held on to the notion of access beyond its negative connotations of lack, and toward a version of access as equity borne of self-reflexivity:

> [S]tudents can come in thinking about their having a deficit addressed and if instead we can talk about university writing in the broader terms we're familiar with as opposed to a particular type of writing that has its own challenges that we can make explicit and work on and make interesting to try to meet. That's a way of allowing all of the students in our classroom to feel that they've got something to gain from it. (J. Kearns)

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[6] Many contemporary fixtures of the Writing Program have emerged from these historical components: the Transition Year Program (https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/assc/transition-yr-program.html), which takes a cohort approach to first-year Indigenous student writers, specific stretch cohort courses for EAL writers, one-on-one peer tutoring, class size caps of 28 at the first year.

> [Reading proficiently] that's the product that a liberal education should produce and it can't be done by one, you know, 50 cc's of penicillin injected in the first semester at school, or even the same amount injected at the last semester at school—it has to be a continuous practice and improving consciousness… about the writing process itself. (R. Byrnes)

Despite the changing nature of the program over time, the "access as inclusion/social justice" thematic was woven together from its centered focus on student experience, pedagogical flexibility and innovation, and commitment to diversity as a value of higher education. This discourse of access downplays qualifications and admissions and aligns instead with promoting knowledge acquisition that recognizes student agency. At the same time, noting access as a movement toward inclusion did, as Williams' (1997) suggests, construct its opposite position in the thematic of an emergent discourse of *excellence*, suggesting excellence itself as a particular standard of exclusion.

Excellence as a Standard/Exclusion

In defining excellence, it is important to note, as Brusoni et al. (2014) do, that the word itself suggests "competence as the starting point" (p. 21). Thus developing mastery, underpreparedness, or remediation—all suggesting an emerging competence—directly contravenes the starting point of excellence. This is what Williams (1997) means when she suggests that discussions of selectivity and higher education—the question of who should attend university—give rise to polarizing discourses of inclusion (we should let everyone in as a democratizing move toward mass education) and exclusion (education is a privilege meant for the most qualified, elite persons who are capable of meeting a universal standard). In university mission statements and elsewhere in the marketing of higher education, as Allan (2007) contends, the language of excellence—associated with words such as "*standards*, *benchmark*, *best practice*, and *quality*"—suggest "current agendas related to 'quality control' and verification" (p. 57). It is no surprise, if we refer back to Williams' (1997) list of polarizing categories that the use of terms like "non-standard" and "non-traditional" to represent "shorthand descriptors of who should or should not be let into what sort of academia and on what terms" (p. 25), that these descriptors also often are used to describe student populations that fall on the opposite side of "excellence," associated with high levels of academic achievement, a meeting or excelling of a particular standard, and a superiority to others (Allan, 2007, p. 60).

Excellence, when viewed in this way, was often seen as coming from without by writing program faculty, that is, from other university departments without an access mandate. However, such attitudes also shaped faculty's self-perception of the role of writing in the university, particularly in the early years of the writing program:

> So, it was definitely seen as not an anti-intellectual program but an access-oriented mandate. Then against that would come even from the English department that housed us

> this reminder that there is also the standard of excellence. So, they would say we don't care, you know, even when you're evaluating writing, we don't care so much about the affective goals, we're interested in the cognitive outcomes. (J. McLeod-Rogers)

> We are to help the "core" work with the students who are admitted here. But the real core, the heart-and-soul core, is intellectually rigorous academic offerings. And the Writing Program was just supposed to make that work better. (C. Taylor)

Here, faculty in the early iterations of the program note the pressure of an academic standard and intellectual rigour that places expectations not on pedagogy, process, empowerment, or social justice, but on outcomes, measures, and an academic "core." Such a focus on excellence in the writing program as a path to improvement, betterment, or developing competence situates the spectre of excellence here within a discourse of what Allan (2007) terms "a technical ideal of performance" (p. 57). This ideal is situated within the language of measurement and assessment that defines educational standards, as Bill Rannie, an administrator who helped initiate the writing program, describes:

> At the start up it [the Writing Program] was meant to serve a remediation function just by the nature of the rules. If you got 90% we're not going to deal with you, those who got below 90%... That says remediation right off. I mean if you can write we'll give you a pass, we'll waive the requirement, which is too bad in a way because you can always make a writer, a good writer better.

Thus excellence is situated within a quantitative discourse of rules, requirements, and standards set in place to exclude underprepared students from university (and track their inclusion through specificities of access programming), separating qualified writers from unqualified ones, prepared students from those underprepared and in need of remediation. As Allan (2007) suggests, such an approach to *excellence* suggests that it "can only be achieved by the few; since educational achievement depends on ability, there will be a small number of high achievers and a much greater number of relatively lower achievers." In the discourse of higher education, "the best institutions will attract the high achievers, and vice-versa" (p. 64).

Even as the writing program has seen recent changes in establishing a vertical curriculum and departmental status, faculty struggle with trying to rectify the openness of inclusion associated with access and its original mandate and the standards of exclusion associated with excellence, which suggests a high degree of faculty professionalization:

> [T]he university doesn't have a master plan to produce good writers as part of the Liberal Arts mission, and so forth. So one can imagine this could all be done if there were enough people with rhetoric and communication composition backgrounds hired to implement it, institute it, but I see no prospect of that happening. (R. Byrnes)

As Bob Byrnes, teaching faculty in the second iteration of staff hiring for the writing program, suggests above, the tension of the polarization of excellence—associated with "good writers" and those with the disciplinary background to teach them—is one that surrounds the discursive construction of excellence, moving it beyond only a term of exclusion and standardization and toward an affiliation with professionalization and research. As the Writing Program changed from a horizontal, first-year curriculum to a Centre with an undergraduate major, and finally to a Department of Rhetoric, Writing, and Communications expected to deliver disciplinary programming in three disciplinary areas, interviewees often represented excellence's association with disciplinary inquiry and research expertise.

Excellence as Research

Excellence emerges as a standard for higher education, as Vaira (2009) has it, that is bound up with international rankings of universities that rest on particular "legitimated sets of excellence criteria on which evaluation and rankings are built" (p. 141). Of these criteria, research has emerged as the most elite in strata, "still now represented and valued as the most 'noble' function of an institution, and as a benchmark or indicator for national and international excellence" (p. 149). Thus it is little surprise that as interviewees considered the role of excellence within the writing program, that often their deliberations around excellence focused around differing rankings of staff hired in first and second waves. The first wave were hired as instructors upon the Writing Program's creation; the second wave were hired on the tenure track through the English department in the mid-1990s (N. Besner). As the Writing Program progressed through subsequent iterations of an independent Centre (in 1995), developed an undergraduate major (in 2003), and shifted into an independent department (in 2006), it began to hire in disciplinary areas beyond English studies. Together, these moves toward independence from the English Department and an increased disciplinary knowledge in the fields of Rhetoric, Writing Studies, and Communications Studies represented by faculty hires in these areas contributed to interviewees housing talk of excellence within these developments. Hires at the rank of Assistant Professor (as opposed to Instructor) are research-oriented; similarly, the say on university committees that make programmatic decisions (like consideration of independence, developing major curriculum, or advocating for departmental status) depended on those voices required by union contracts to have such a say; that is, those within the professoriate.

The decision to hire Instructors to staff the writing program in its inception was not one that those who recall its start-up were entirely happy with, as Neil Besner, who helped hire the first group of writing program faculty, explains:

> the first cohort of people were hired as instructors; and a mistake in my view. A mistake driven by resource considerations because the people who were hired as instructors, when we started to try to think about how they could more properly integrate with and enter into the professorate, we were told, "No. They are going to remain as instructors. That's the way this cohort is going to react." In fact, in the second phase of hiring… I guess in that second phase, they were professors…. And so there was a degree of what you would call,

> professionalization, respect, profile, all welcome, brought to the writing program at that point which had been lacking because everyone was looked upon as junior as an instructor.

Besner summarizes the shift in rank from Instructor to the professoriate as a way for the program to gain credibility and respect that is enfolded into the structural systems of university rankings and evaluation: professors research, and thus bring more credibility to a program's activities, based on universities' stratification and rewards systems. This is echoed by Michael McIntyre, the Dean who catalyzed the program in the 1980s:

> I think the evolution from writing program to centre to department is largely perceived as earned and appropriate. And I think part of that was fueled by the excellence of the people…. By the trajectories of their own careers they showed they were worthy, not only of tenure track appointments, but, they were worthy of constituting a department, a focus of excellence.

Here the move to link professorial rank to excellence is overt; this is echoed by many who witnessed the shifts in the program over time:

> [T]he necessary steps were taken so we could start to have an intellectual structure to build courses and a kind of vision of how it constituted a disciplinary area for students to go forward and study…. that was more of a nod to excellence. (J. McLeod-Rogers)

> Because with the advent of real, you know, people with graduate degrees in Rhetoric, we were able to start thinking about expanding our offerings beyond academic writing and start looking at offering upper year courses. And then it's just sort of a logical progression from there to go from a centre to a department. (S. Page)

> Well, the Writing Program is kind of an outside certification requirement when you think of the curriculum of the Department as an intellectual enterprise beholden more to a discipline than to a mission within an institution. (C. Taylor)

> We're another department as opposed to a sort of special unit. So I think that an increasing sense of our disciplinary independence and our being an entity like other departments has really been helpful…. Students understand writing as an area of inquiry, "rhetoric, writing and communication," that they can pursue in the same way that they do other areas so that there's less an attitude that it's simply a skills-based course. (J. Kearns)

Whether refining the link between excellence and research to mean intellectual rigour, disciplinarity, or the development of curriculum beyond the first year, faculty in the program show a clear distillation of

excellence to mean that which is associated with the professoriate ("real… people with graduate degrees in Rhetoric") and upper levels of teaching which tend toward discipline-oriented and theoretical content, as opposed to teaching writing at the first-year level carried out by instructors. Again, this posits in opposition not only dichotomous terms such as excellence/access, but also research/teaching, and professoriate/instructoriate that work to construct expectations about value in higher education.

Thus far, we've seen the discourses of access and excellence set up in these contrastive ways, born from both the increased market-driven competition in higher education for student bodies (on whom funding models depend) and the structuration of higher education as a selective enterprise. However, one last way that interviewees talked about both access and excellence managed to challenge this dichotomous view, focusing less on either as a mark of legitimation and more on both as interdependent processes always in the making.

Access and Excellence as Developmental Processes

Thus far, both *access* and *excellence* have emerged as part of dichotomous discourses that assume each to mean the other's opposite, along the lines of Williams' polarizing categories. However, while interviewees acknowledged these emergent tensions, they also often recognized their interrelated qualities: rather than seeing access as only a movement to prioritize underrepresented demographics on university campuses, interviewees saw access as an acknowledgement of a process of recognition of universal potential. Similarly, rather than note excellence as serving solely a function of exclusion, interviewees located excellence in a near horizon rather than an exclusive now. Together, these positions locate both access and excellence as developmental processes that not only can peacefully co-exist, but in the case of building students' writing facility, augment one another to provide a promising educational space for all students.

These intermediate, rather than polar, positions are reflected in literature on higher education that question both excellence and access as totalitarizing moves in one direction or the other. In regards to the discourse of access, in which often universities focus exclusively on *admissions* (which forward concepts of selectivity, exclusion, institutional autonomy, and market success), an intermediate position might focus on access as a condition of *potential* (which forwards concepts of development, individual merit, and creative growth over time) (Bravenboer, 2012). The same applies to excellence; as Brusoni et al. (2014) point out, if excellence is "linked with unexpected outcomes… which prove better than anticipated," such as innovation, excellence is mounted as a developmental process that emerges over time, rather than a universal static concept that focuses on selectivity and exclusion. Both intermediary positions emphasize not only these terminologies as processes, but also highlight elements of innovation, creativity, and growth as emerging from the synthesis of each.

Both synthesis and focus on process were apparent in the way that both administrators and faculty considered the function of writing in higher education, as well as the development of the writing program and its transitions over time:

And that it [the writing program] supports multiple Englishes and languages and that it doesn't narrow but that it really opens and opens and opens so that the university sees itself very differently than it has seen and sees academic Englishes and modes of representation way beyond the traditional models that it has allowed as excellent or standard. (D. Schnitzer)

To characterize the program as an access program, I think, is a mistake. There's a larger argument to be made here. I'll only try to make the argument in miniature. There's this alleged conflict between access and excellence, which I think mitigates against a program like the teaching of writing. It does. If you see it only as, "Oh let's help those poor souls, who for one reason or another, aren't up to snuff," we're going to open the doors to them but we're going help them by instructing them in writing, then you lose the other side of the argument which is what I would argue that the access/excellence is a false dichotomy. Why? Because excellent writers in every discipline are always thinking about writing, they're always thinking about how to write or present themselves in writing. For goodness sakes, I do it all the time. Why wouldn't we all? If you characterize the writing program as an access program, you lose—not half—but a major component of its vocation, I think. (N. Besner)

I think access was an important part of that mandate.... In part, to improve access, but right from the beginning he was very clear that access and excellence could go well together. That being explicit about writing standards at university on offering explicit instruction, which certainly wasn't a model that we found in Canadian universities, would be of advantage to all students including those that came from backgrounds that had prepared them less well for university.... So I think if we talk about excellence as striving for excellence as something that everyone, wherever you place yourself on the spectrum, we're all striving for that. That can encourage students all along the way to be taking advantage of every opportunity to strengthen their abilities so that that's really a model—I guess that's just what I'm talking about, is always looking and strengthening and enhancing what's there as opposed to a kind of deficit model. (J. Kearns)

Well, I saw the Writing Program as being absolutely committed to the twin goals of access and excellence and I saw those as being dependent on each other and nourishing each other… that improving genuine access as opposed to revolving door access for students through the Writing Program would lead to academic excellence and a real enrichment of the dynamic intellectual diversity of the institution. (C. Taylor)

That means the original mandate has been carried forward. That, in fact, the ability to deal more with the, whatever the word is, higher level issues—the writing as a discipline, writing in the disciplines, writing as a discipline—those higher level things haven't actually robbed the original mandate to act as a writing resource for needy students. It's just been built on top. (B. Rannie)

> [W]hen I think about access and excellence, I see the people who came in as access students having become excellent students and excellent professionals beyond. (S. Page)

> This clarity [field-specific writing research] is a plan isn't it? …maybe a focus in on what does it mean for access to be meaningful? And I think the whole notion of writing as something that energizes education and discipline. (M. McIntyre)

In these excerpts, writing itself is what allows these discursive middle positions of access and excellence because it is a mode of learning that requires development over time—no one is born writing—and never tries to represent mastery (as even the most prolific and eminent writers will acknowledge). Further, the emphases on process, opportunity to develop, and enrichment are those that impact students entering at all levels, allowing range for both individual potential (the "access student" who becomes an "excellent professional") as well as expertise as supporting surprising innovation (the nourishment of all students by campus inclusivity; the ability of writing research at upper levels to benefit what is known about writing at lower levels; writing as "something that energizes education and discipline"). Unlike discourses of higher education that promote a universal definition of excellence as selective exception, discourses of writing expertise note that *writing excellence* is ongoing, contextual, supported by serendipity, and eludes attempts at mastery. Such a position undergirds a synergy between access and excellence that sees each supporting the other as developmental processes located in both time and experience.

Access and Excellence: Imagining Futures

While access and excellence are surely considered buzzwords of higher education in the current moment, it's central to note that these buzzwords represent discourses of higher education that contain in them tensions, pressures, and anxieties about who should or should not be in university, as well as how universities-as-businesses will fare in a market-driven economy of education that posits students as consumers and student bodies as provincial funds. The Writing Program at the UW remains a distinct case for revealing some of these tensions, as well as suggesting ways that access and excellence can work synergistically to recognize that the energy of writing is not containable to a particular type of student, a particular course, a particular major, or a particular job future.

The flexibility of writing as a subject allows for all students to commit to developing mastery at all levels and to imagine excellence on the horizon, rather than a given of elite admissions. It also allows for a focus on this developing mastery to affect the first-year writing class as well as the third-year discipline-specific Communications class, the second-year Chemistry lab, the Honours Sociology seminar. A synthetic balance between access and excellence as a future move of the Writing Program might take any number of possible approaches; a few that have emerged as promising areas of attention throughout the interviews are as follows:

- movement to reinvigorate a Writing in the Disciplines (WID) approach, connecting out to other departments and investigating what writing needs their students experience, as well as consulting

with disciplinary faculty to help them include writing-based assignments and assessments in their curricula;

- the recent development of the Certificate in Writing, which pairs expertise in writing as something existing alongside other major fields of study in the BA;
- fostering connections between the Writing Centre and other parts of the university, pairing excellent student writers with writers in other classrooms and university programs;
- highlighting the work of first-year writers in the university by department-based publications, such as the newly formed *Rooted in Rhetoric* undergraduate journal

These are but a few directions such an equilibrium between access and excellence might take. An intermediate position that engages both access and excellence allows for the possibility of including a multitude of voices to strengthen research and to think innovatively about job futures—as we are told, millennials who work now will collaborate more, engage themselves in community missions, and disavow hierarchies more than any other generation in history (Schawbel, 2013). As Canada invites disciplinary professionals into the writing and rhetoric curriculum, such expertise allows for writing to emerge not just as a basic "skill" for a university education, but a vertical path through the intellectual core of a liberal arts mission informed by both research and best practices (see Jamieson, 2009). Enlarging the discourse of access to include excellence—and vice-versa—as many did from the first despite structural and cultural obstacles to doing so, works against the polarizing forces contained in these discourses that pits openness against selectivity. Imagining the conditions in which access and excellence can complement one another is perhaps one of the best ways to imagine both a less stratified and a more prepared university to tackle the challenges of higher education in the twenty-first century.

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Successes and Challenges of the University of Winnipeg Education Centre (WEC)

Paul DePasquale & Doris Wolf

Abstract

The Winnipeg Education Centre began in the 1970s, first at Brandon University (1972-1978), then University of Manitoba (1978-1997), and now University of Winnipeg (1998-present). This study examines the University of Winnipeg Education Centre's (WEC) successes and challenges. WEC has made deep and lasting contributions to teacher education in Manitoba and to the inner-city and other communities that it serves. Since 1998, over 400 students, about 50% of them Indigenous, have graduated from the program. The success of WEC has also helped to lay the foundation for later ACCESS programs - the Community Based Aboriginal Teacher Education Program (CATEP), the Post Baccalaureate in Indigenous Knowledge Program (PBIK), and the most recent Immigrant Teacher Education Program (ITEP). Educated through WEC, many graduates are now practicing teachers and administrators across various school divisions throughout Manitoba. WEC students, all of whom require academic, personal, and/or financial support in order to be admitted into the program, have access to considerable resources to ensure their academic success. Despite strong supports, and excellent and caring faculty and staff, a few challenges keep the program from making its fullest contribution to the education and well-being of its student teachers.

Methods & Data

- Online survey questionnaire distributed to about 400 past and present WEC students in the fall of 2016 (n=63)
- Anonymized demographic data from in-take forms, 1998–2015 (n= 419)
- Interviews with past and present administrators, staff, and faculty
- Student focus group
- Review of the relevant secondary sources

About WEC

WEC is a 5-year integrated education program with a History major and an English minor. Graduates are certified teachers in the Province of Manitoba with a specialization in Early and Middle Years (K-8).

WEC has been running since the early 1970s, first at Brandon University (1972-1978), then at the University of Manitoba (1978-1997), and now at the University of Winnipeg (1998-present) housed in the Helen Betty Osborne Building (see Figures 1, 2, and 3). As a teacher education ACCESS program, it accords with recommendations in the provincial government's Hikel Report, which identified the major design elements that have an impact on program costs and outcomes (Hikel 1994; Baker et al. 2003). WEC's purpose is to address inequality by educating socially and economically disadvantaged individuals representing the inner city or neighborhoods with inner-city characteristics. As stated on WEC's website, the program is designed for "adult learners who would normally not be successful in a university program due to financial, academic, and/or social barriers. Examples of such barriers include low family income, single parent responsibilities, ethnicity, and lack of prerequisite academic qualifications" (https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/access-education/wec/student-supports.html).

The program accepts only those students who require academic, personal, and/or financial supports. An application and vetting process ensures that these students are representatives of their communities in the sense of having experience with the inner city or communities with inner city characteristics. WEC is a highly successful program that has graduated over 400 students since 1998. Many of its graduates have gone on to teach in school divisions across urban and rural Manitoba. The success of WEC has also helped to lay the foundation for later ACCESS programs - the Community Based Aboriginal Teacher Education Program (CATEP), the Post Baccalaureate in Indigenous Knowledge Program (PBIK), and the most recent Immigrant Teacher Education Program (ITEP).

Figure 1: First location of WEC in decommissioned elementary school, Sir Sam Steele School.
Photo Credit: Gordon Goldsborough, MHS.

Figure 2: Second location of WEC in U of M facility on Selkirk Avenue, William Norrie Centre. Photo Credit: Prairie Architects.

Figure 3: Current location of WEC at UW on Ellice Avenue, Helen Betty Osborne Building. Photo Credit: University of Winnipeg.

History

WEC has its origins in humanistic initiatives across North America during the early 1970s to improve the personal, social, and economic position of members of minority populations (Baker et al. 2003). The Winnipeg Centre Project (WCP) was created in 1972 under the authority of Brandon University. WCP arose at a time when other "alternative" teacher training programs were springing up all over the United States and Canada, seeking to recruit and train more minority professional educators (Baker et al. 2003). The WCP's original mandate was "to train inner city residents as teachers with its campus located in the inner city of Winnipeg" (Loughton, 1978). In 1978, WEC was relocated to the University of Manitoba, William Norrie Centre campus, where it remained until 1997. At the William Norrie Centre, the University of Manitoba offered the Inner City Social Work Program through the Faculty of Social Work and the Winnipeg Education Centre program through the Faculty of Education and Extended Learning. The University of Winnipeg began to teach courses in the program around 1986, sharing administrative duties and financial resources with the University of Manitoba. From the University of Winnipeg side, there was a sense of cost and resource imbalances. There was also a sense that the William Norrie campus was cut off from the main UW campus and that this isolation had a negative impact on students, faculty, as well as on perceptions of the program by others.

In 1996, there was a review of Faculties of Education in the province, including the WEC program at the University of Winnipeg and the University of Manitoba. There was considerable worry that UW would lose the program under rationalization, as had recently happened in other parts of the country. Dr. Annabelle Mays, Director of Education in the Faculty of Arts and Science at the time, prepared an Education Review for Dr. Bernard Shapiro, produced in 1996. Following this report, the Manitoba government decided to reassign WEC to the University of Winnipeg and to keep the social work program at the University of Manitoba. In a move that seems to have pleasantly surprised UW administration and faculty, UW was given the authority to administer its own full program, including a certification year. Under the old joint system, students needed to attend the University of Manitoba campus to complete certification, a requirement that was understandably a source of dissatisfaction for a lot of UW students.

The decision to move WEC to the University of Winnipeg resulted in the new responsibility to offer a full degree program. Fortunately, UW had experience in offering a full degree program due to a recent contract with the Malaysian government to offer Bachelor of Education degrees to two cohorts of about twenty-five students each. Because of this contract, there were already courses on the books that could be readily adapted to fulfill the requirements of the WEC program. The English Department also provided a number of courses for the Malaysian students in this ESL-based program.

Who Are WEC Students?

WEC's annual intake is 20-25 students and there are currently about 100 students enrolled in the program. The average age is 31. According to the online survey, most students (70%) hear about the program through word-of-mouth. The intake data indicates that about 57% of WEC students are Indigenous, with 15% immigrant/visible minority, and about 28% other including Caucasian (see Figure 4). In our online survey, a higher number self-identified as Caucasian (37%) and a lower number (13%) as visible minority. Historically, about 82% of the students are female (see Figure 5), although this number was higher in our online survey (86%).

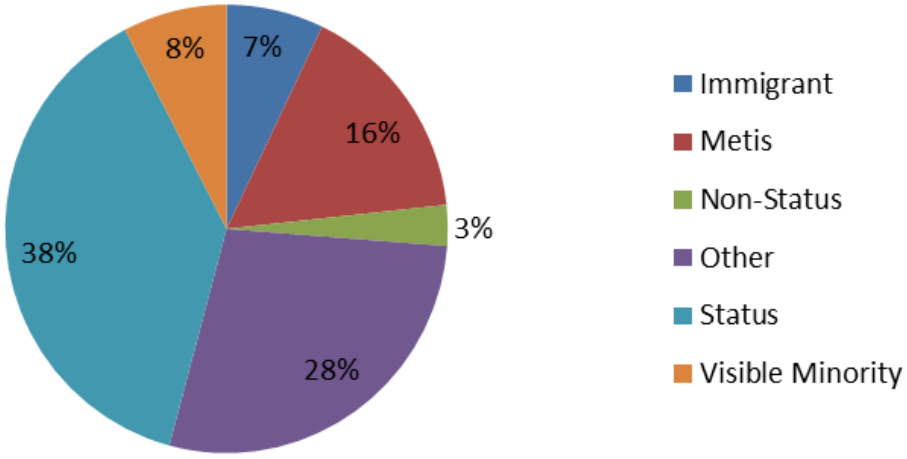

Figure 4: Cultural Breakdown of WEC students (n=419). Source: Chart provided by Dan Bailey.

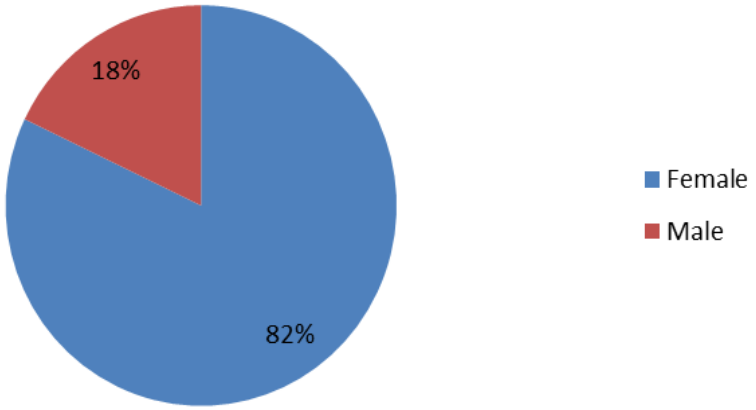

Figure 5: Gender Breakdown for WEC (n=419). Source: Chart provided by Dan Bailey.

When asked what they consider their home community to be, online survey respondents offered the following: Winnipeg (32 respondents or 48%), various Manitoba first nations (7 or 10%), other rural Manitoba areas (5 or 7%), Caribbean (1 or 1.5%), and Ontario (1 or 1.5%). 65% percent of respondents completed high school on time. Of those who did not complete high school on time, 55% earned a Mature Diploma and 19% a General Education Diploma (GED). A high number of respondents (48%) speak another language in addition to English: French (8 speakers or 12%), Ojibwe (8 or 12%), Cree (2 or 3%), Yoruba (2 or 3%), Hausa (2 or 3%), Portuguese (2 or 3%), and Italian, Amharic, Polish, German, Salteaux, Tagalog, Spanish, Hebrew, and Kiswahili each with 1 person or 1.5%. The figures indicate that, of those who speak a second language fluently, the majority speak a local Indigenous language (11 respondents or 16%).

78% of WEC students have children, according to the survey, 42% of whom are single parents. Not surprisingly, WEC students give generously of their time and energy as volunteers. They volunteer most with educational (20%), community (17%), children's school (14%), cultural (12%), religious (12%), and sports (10%) organizations and activities.

The majority of survey respondents (30%) are the first in their families to attend university. About 5% said that both parents attended university, 18% said their mother only, and 11% their father only. 80% of respondents had some level of post-secondary education prior to their enrollment in WEC. 75% were employed prior to enrolling in WEC, with 45% of the total employed in a teaching-related field. 6% of respondents indicated they were a stay-at-home parent while the other parent worked, 5% were on maternity leave, 8% on social assistance, and 6% indicated they were a student.

Success of the WEC Program

Intake data (see Figure 6) indicates that, since 1998, 42% of students have graduated with a Bachelor of Education degree, 5% with a Bachelor of Arts, and 4% have transferred to other programs. 28% of students have withdrawn (automatic or voluntary) and 21% of students are still in the program (SIP). The actual graduation rate is 70%.

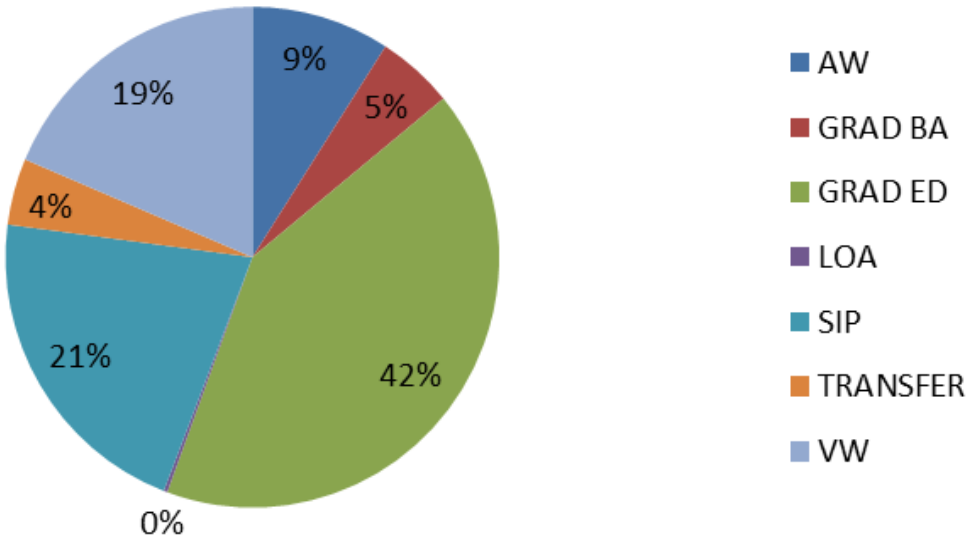

Figure 6: WEC Student Graduation Statistics (n=419). Source: Chart provided by Dan Bailey.

Employment Rates

Accurate employment rates since WEC came to the University of Winnipeg in 1998 are not known due to the difficulty of tracking students after graduation. The high level of satisfaction expressed in the online survey (see Figure 7), along with the feedback and comments received in both the online survey and focus group, would seem to suggest that placement and employment is not a major concern. Anecdotal reports suggest that the success rate is even higher than that for main campus although we are not able to confirm this. In terms of the survey, 44% are currently employed in a teaching related field, 6% in a teaching related field outside the classroom, 6% in a support position, and 6% are unemployed. Of the over 55% who are employed, 48% of respondents state they are employed full time and 15% part time.

Graduates of the program are employed across most of Manitoba's school divisions. According to the small sample of our online survey, the majority are employed in Winnipeg School Division (22%), followed by Seven Oaks (11%), Pembina Trails (4%), Lord Selkirk (4%), and others.

Student Satisfaction

Success is more easily measured in terms of past and present students' satisfaction with the program. Of the 63 participants of the online survey who chose to answer this question, 90% are "satisfied" with the program, with 71% indicating that they are "very satisfied" (see Figure 7).

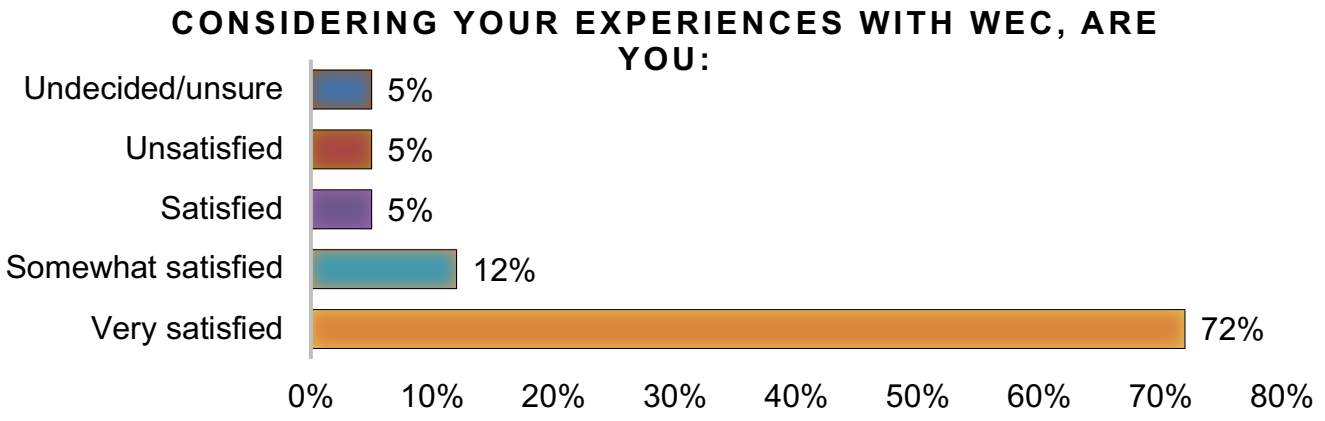

Figure 7: Student Satisfaction with WEC Program. Source: Online survey (n=63, expressed as a percentage).

Factors that Contribute to WEC's Success

1. Kindness & Caring.

Through their online survey and focus group feedback and commentary, many students of the WEC program strongly demonstrate that one of the key attributes of WEC is that it successfully creates a culture that is best described as "kind" and "caring." Students experience these qualities in many facets of the WEC program, from the sense of unity that develops through cohorts, to supportive faculty and staff, to smaller class sizes, to academic and financial supports. For students with young children, this might mean taking courses in a family friendly environment where faculty and staff welcome children and have sometimes even helped to care for them during classes (e.g., during a test). Instructors in the program clearly enjoy working in and contributing to such an environment. Some talk quite specifically about pedagogies that maintain academic rigor within an environment of flexibility needed to accommodate students who have very full and sometimes challenging personal and family lives. Feedback from the online survey points overwhelmingly to a feeling of student appreciation for all the day-to-day and ongoing supports that the academic advisors, staff, and faculty provide. There is a definite sense that the cohort system, smaller class sizes, and less formal environment all help to make WEC less intimidating and overwhelming when compared to the environment on main campus. For those students who have struggled to achieve academic success in the past, the kindness and caring that they experience in WEC appears to be a very big part of their own success as a student.

2. Student Supports.

In addition to UW amenities for all students, including the library, fitness centre, etc., WEC students may also take advantage of the following available in the ACCESS building:

- Counselling
- Academic advising
- Free tutoring services

- Free Math and Science preparatory classes
- ACCESS bursaries – initially 21, currently 50 (2018)
- Emergency loan fund (non-repayable)
- Computer lab
- Lounge/lunch room
- Photocopy and printing
- Study room/carrels

Q. "Is there a specific aspect of the program that has contributed to your success as a student, or that you have found particularly helpful?"

Select student responses from the online survey:

> "The program was focused around relationships. Small class size and more personal connections with staff contributed to my belief that relationships are the key to success at any level in any capacity of education."
>
> "The staff at WEC are always available to meet your needs. They support their students mental, emotional, social, and financial needs. Their compassion and understanding have made my life as a mature university student with no outside support bearable. Their confidence and kind words make you believe that you can keep going on those really stressful days. The staff and students at WEC are a community that works together to create a safe and warm learning environment. Not to say the road has been easy, because it has not been. But the strong foundation of people motivates you."
>
> "The instructors are very helpful and understanding when I need more time to finish assignments. WEC offers flexibility and a family environment. The smaller classes make a huge difference. I feel very comfortable coming to WEC and very happy to go there every day. The classes starting at 9:30 am is very helpful."
>
> "The fact that people are more supportive. The fact that it is more community based, learning with people with life experience. The fact that professors are helpful and easy to talk to."
>
> "The compassion from the professors and the smaller class sizes and it truly feels like a family and you are not just a number."
>
> "First Nations perspectives."
>
> "The in-house access to financial help and education advice."

"The smaller class sizes, extra support from the teaching staff, and close community with fellow colleagues, felt like a close-knit group of friends."

"The community of learners. Having a cohort that I see almost every day, that I am able to build solid relationships with, has assisted me in being successful. I also have benefitted from the support staff and professors in the program. Everyone is kind, helpful, and supportive."

"The professors and administrative staff are extremely supportive for overall success. I would not be a teacher if it wasn't for this program."

"Support from staff seemed more available and involved than regular university programming."

"Aboriginal component."

"Understanding that many of the students have families and having the classes mostly within school hours has been helpful. Also, getting funding and bursaries has made studying and providing for my family easier."

"I had very little confidence in my abilities as a university student before WEC. I felt confident after my first term. I felt very supported by other students and faculty."

Observations & Recommendations

1. Program Success

WEC is a highly successful educational program that has trained and benefitted many students. Many past and present students clearly feel grateful for the opportunities and supports they have been given, without which there is a sense that many would not have succeeded in university.

2. "Two Solitudes"

The sense of isolation and "two solitudes" that existed when WEC was at the William Norrie Centre on Selkirk Avenue has significantly improved with its move to the Helen Betty Osborne building on Ellice Avenue which is immediately across from the Duckworth Centre on the university's main campus. To a lesser extent, WEC students, staff, and faculty still experience a feeling of "two solitudes" in the sense that there is little interaction between main campus and UW ACCESS programs, including WEC. Several WEC students have described main campus as a kind of intimidating and overwhelming place where they do not feel welcome or wish to go. There is also a perception among WEC/ACCESS staff, faculty, and students that ACCESS programs in general, and their contributions to teacher training in the province, are not well understood on main campus.

This sense of "two solitudes" is unfortunate particularly in our era of inclusive and "Indigenized" education, where there is an opportunity for students to learn from the experiences of different people, cultures, ethnicities, and socio-economic positionalities. Some faculty are consciously seeking to enhance the level of interaction between main campus and ACCESS students, through, for example, creating learning opportunities on main campus for WEC/ACCESS students and also integrating main campus students into WEC/ACCESS courses and vice versa.

3. Math

Many students expressed a high level of frustration, sense of failure, and lack of confidence in their Math abilities. Even though free tutoring is available, many expressed the feeling that expectations around Math, imposed by the Math Department, are unjust and even detrimental. Students are required to take two courses, Math 0031 and Math 0041, which are preparatory, non-credit courses, but are subject to fees and require "a lot of tutoring," according to many reports. Students often need to repeat the required Math 2903 two or three times. The skills test, for which they require 80% to pass and for which there are no assigned marks, totally consumes them. For students who have often struggled with Math in the past, their experiences with the subject in the WEC program serve mainly to reinforce their considerable anxiety for the subject. The Math Department and Faculty of Education would do well to work together in order to create highly effective pedagogies and strategies that can enable Math to be part of the solution.

4. Daycare

Childcare is obviously a great concern for WEC students, especially given that 78% have children. Several students and staff commented during our study that the current daycare facility at UW offers little help to WEC and other ACCESS students, due to hours, space availability, and cost. Various ideas have been considered over the years, including a daycare in the Helen Betty Osborne building which is not feasible due to resource and provincial licensing requirements. We suggest that the University of Winnipeg consider opening another daycare in an adjacent building or expanding the hours and service of the existing UW daycare in order to accommodate WEC and other ACCESS students and their children.

5. Indigenous Languages

As stated earlier, about 16% of students according to the online survey speak a local Indigenous language. This is a significant strength of the program and we recommend that a way be found to make it easier for those who are fluent in their Indigenous languages and who wish to teach the language to be able to do so. We therefore suggest that the University investigate ways to fast track Indigenous language experts into the system. One way might be to recognize prior learning, especially in Indigenous languages, to help get more qualified Indigenous language experts into classrooms throughout the province as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Acknowledgments

Thank you to all past and present WEC students, staff, faculty, and administrators who participated in this study, with special note of Phil Baker and Dr. Ken McCluskey. Thank you to Dan Bailey for helping with the demographic data and some of the charts presented here. Thank you to research assistants Chris Campbell, Kimberly Thomson, Catherine van Reenen, and Larissa Wodtke and to Dr. Catherine Taylor for her help and advice.

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Beyond Access to Inclusion: The Axworthy Years 2004–2014

Lloyd Axworthy, Linda DeRiviere, and Jennifer Rattray[1]

Abstract

Universities across Canada have more actively integrated service-learning and community engagement opportunities for students**.** However, The University of Winnipeg (UW), an urban institution on Treaty One land in the heart of the Métis Nation, has expanded its mandate for community learning to include a broader response to contemporary social and economic issues, as well as evolving community and demographic characteristics. In doing so, it has challenged existing academic models and practices, and has incorporated strategies that better address the social divide between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in order to more effectively serve the learning needs of the surrounding community. This paper demonstrates how an inner-city university has redefined its role by creating dialogue and authentic relationships with the surrounding community, which has in turn fostered an environment of mutual exchange. It will describe UW's holistic approach to Indigenous educational opportunities and community capacity-building for lifelong learning, and provide an overview of the positive effects of six learning initiatives on a community of underrepresented learners.

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Introduction

Over the past decade or more, universities and colleges across Canada and the United States have responded to the need to modernize pedagogical approaches to the curriculum by introducing community learning initiatives, which have taken the form of service learning courses for students (Moore, 2014; Prentice & Robinson, 2010) and increased emphasis on community-engaged scholarship for faculty (Arendt &Westover, 2014; Nichols, Phipps, Gaetz, & Fisher, 2014). The impetus for this movement in Canada was the establishment of the Canadian Alliance for Community Service-Learning (CACSL) in late 2004, which supported the expansion of these initiatives in Canadian post-secondary institutions (CACSL, 2015).

A search of 65 university websites[2] across Canada showed evidence of universities actively embracing the idea that learning should extend beyond the customary structures of in-class lectures**.** Many universities have established service learning and community outreach offices or centres that focus on establishing community partnerships for the purpose of providing services to socially vulnerable groups. In most provinces, university programs target some of their services to Indigenous children and youth (e.g., Aboriginal students services), and they provide opportunities for Indigenous university students to mentor and support their younger peers in high school through work for credit programs.

The website review also revealed that Canadian universities have made efforts to raise interest and literacy in the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields among young women and economically disadvantaged youth. Some science programs engage in Indigenous scientific approaches in an effort to attract Indigenous students to careers in the sciences. Moreover, a markedly popular service learning trend has seen university students receive course credit for placements in community settings; for example, tutoring and mentoring younger children in an after-school homework club or facilitating sessions at a science or reading club, or a math circle. More than ever, universities now offer mostly fee-based summer day camps for youth that focus on popular topics in science, literary and music creativeness, or sports. Some business schools have hosted youth entrepreneurship camps. Other program features that raise student comfort level on campus include guided tours of the university, career fairs, short-term workshops, and lecture series, all of which are geared toward enhancing community learning opportunities and raising student interest in post-secondary education.

The University of Winnipeg (UW) was at the forefront of these innovations over a decade ago. It recognized that, in order to maintain its relevance as a modern urban university, it was essential to remove systemic barriers (academic, financial, social, cultural, etc.) to post-secondary education for low-income students and incorporate a comprehensive community learning initiative. However, it has reimagined its approach, profoundly changed its relationship to the community, moving beyond service learning to actively

[2] A research assistant conducted a brief survey of community learning initiatives at approximately two-thirds of Canadian universities.

partnering with the surrounding community in order to make it easier for people to access the resources and facilities on the campus. Although the past decade has seen academic literature engage with the idea of "community as a neighbour" (Moore, 2014), a huge gap still exists between the theory and practice of community-university engagement. In fact, critics argue that these collaborations rarely evolve into mutually-beneficial and productive partnerships because university partners often give less attention to relationship-building processes, or the process is undermined by institutional complexities, such as inflexible policies and regulations, faculty rewards systems that do not favour relationship-building, or time constraints that limit adequate training of students for service learning projects (Blouin & Perry, 2009; Moore, 2014; Nichols et al., 2014; Stoecker, 2008).

At UW, culturally-based programming emerged from a series of discussions that took place at a 2004 Aboriginal Education Working Group led by First Nations and Métis faculty, staff, and students. At the time, a ten-year provincial tuition freeze had little impact on the recruitment of low-income students, as only 10% of students came from neighbourhoods around the university. Thus, the working group's mandate was to examine barriers within the university itself. These discussions produced an Indigenous Education Strategy that extended beyond service learning to a community investment model that adopted a holistic approach to addressing the learning needs of Indigenous members of the surrounding community. One example of UW's divergent approach is the free, culturally-based family programming, such as Pow Wow clubs and not-for-credit Indigenous language programs which are not typically offered at most other universities.

Moreover, some analysts have pointed out that successful collaborations are founded on reciprocity and mutual trust, and that one way to achieve this goal is through institutional support, ongoing attention to the university-community relationship, and harnessing financial and other institutional resources to back it up (Nichols et al., 2014). To this end, UW has made community learning a matter of university policy by changing its governance structure to include an Indigenous Advisory Circle to guide its progress, and it has established strong relationships with Indigenous Elders. It has also raised millions of dollars in private funding to establish innovative learning opportunities that address the needs of Indigenous students and the surrounding community (Axworthy, 2013). This paper presents the positive results of these long-standing interactions between a university and the community it serves.

Community Characteristics

Winnipeg is increasingly becoming more diverse as a result of the rapidly growing population of urban Aboriginal peoples, primarily First Nations and Métis, and new Canadians—the fastest growing populations in the university's immediate neighbourhoods and Canada as a whole. Aboriginal people represent more than 11% of Winnipeg's population and account for 20.2% of inner-city residents. Similarly, new Canadians comprise almost a quarter of inner-city residents (City of Winnipeg, 2015a). Despite the local cultural richness and diversity, these surrounding neighbourhoods are high-poverty areas that struggle with

inadequate housing, unemployment, a relatively high level of crime and gang activity, and other social inequities. Not only do young people face enormous economic disadvantages associated with poverty, but they also experience higher school dropout and pushout rates than children and youth in more affluent neighbourhoods. Likewise, an even larger gap persists in university education completion rates (Hallett, 2006; Statistics Canada 2013a, 2013b, 2010). These challenges are profoundly significant because the number of Aboriginal youth under the age of 18 as a percentage of all Aboriginals in Winnipeg is more than double that of their non-Aboriginal counterparts (35.4% and 17.2%, respectively) (Statistics Canada, 2013a, 2013b).

The 2011 National Household Survey revealed that, in Winnipeg, 45.3% of Aboriginal children under the age of 18 (non-Aboriginal: 17.6%) and 52.0% of children less than 6 years of age (non-Aboriginal: 19.9%) lived in a low income household.[3] Moreover, 27.8% of Aboriginal renters lived in subsidized housing compared to 18.1% of all Winnipeggers (Statistics Canada 2013a, 2013b). It is also well established that the majority of low-income households are located in the inner-city, North End, and West End neighbourhoods of the city.

Whereas gaps in labour market indicators have narrowed in Winnipeg, as shown in Table 1, Aboriginal men and women persistently have lower participation and employment rates and almost double the unemployment rate of non-Aboriginals (10.6% compared to 5.5%). Although not shown in the table, the average full-time full-year employment income of Aboriginal people in 2010 was 84% of the average for all of Winnipeg; this estimate was even lower at 78.4% for employed individuals residing in the inner city (City of Winnipeg, 2015a; Statistics Canada 2013a, 2013b).

Table 1: Labour Force Indicators of Aboriginals versus non-Aboriginals in Winnipeg

	Total	**Male**	**Female**	**2001 Census**
Aboriginal people, 15 years and over	**% (*non-Aboriginal)**	**% (*non-Aboriginal)**	**% (*non-Aboriginal)**	**% Aboriginal (1)**
Labour force participation rate	64.1 (68.7)	68.7 (73.2)	60.1 (64.5)	63.6
Employment rate	57.3 (65.0)	60.9 (69.2)	54.1 (61.0)	54.3
Unemployment rate	10.6 (5.5)	11.4 (5.5)	9.9 (5.5)	14.7
Not in the labour force	35.9 (31.3)	31.3 (26.8)	39.9 (35.5)	36.4

Calculations by authors, based on the 2011 National Household Survey Profile and Aboriginal Population Profile (Statistics Canada 2013a, 2013b).
*Non-Aboriginal estimates in parentheses.
(1) Statistics Canada (2002). "2001 Census Aboriginal Population Profiles."

[3] Based on after-tax low-income measure (LIM-AT**).**

As shown in Table 2, in a ten-year period from 2001 to 2011, the high school education gap appears to have narrowed modestly. However, recent statistical analyses in Manitoba indicate that high school completion rates in the poorest urban families (i.e. lowest income quintile) could be as low as 55.3% compared to 98.5% in the highest income quintile (Brownell et al., 2012, p. 207). In Table 2, only 12.3% of Aboriginals in the 25–64 age category reported a university degree compared to 30.4% of non-Aboriginals in Winnipeg.

Table 2: Education Levels of Aboriginals versus Non-Aboriginals, Ages 25–64, Winnipeg

	Aboriginal	**Non-Aboriginal**	**Inner City**
Education categories	**% (1)**	**%**	**% (1)**
No certificate, diploma, or degree	27.1 (42.2)	11.1	19.9 (36.0)
High school diploma or equivalent	27.0 (22.2)	25.0	25.2 (26.7)
Postsecondary certificate, diploma, or degree	45.9 (35.7)	63.9	54.9 (37.3)
Apprenticeships or trades certificate or diploma	11.1 (n/a)	9.0	9.0 (10.5)
College, CEGEP*, or other non-university certificate or diploma	18.9 (n/a)	19.0	16.1 (11.8)
University certificate, diploma, or degree at bachelor level or above	12.3 (7.4)	30.4	25.4 (15.0)

Calculations by authors, based on the 2011 National Household Survey Profile and Aboriginal Population Profile (Statistics Canada 2013a, 2013b); in the far right column, inner city estimates (2011) for inner city residents, ages 25–64, were retrieved in an excel spreadsheet provided by the City of Winnipeg, Neighbourhood Profiles staff.
*CEGEP is a French acronym for General and Vocational College in the province of Quebec.
(1) In parentheses: Statistics Canada (2002). "2001 Census Aboriginal Population Profiles."; City of Winnipeg, (2015b), 2001 Census Data, Inner City, ages 20+.
n/a: not available.

Although some educational outcomes have improved, including rates of non-university post-secondary diplomas, it is imperative to continue to build on this positive momentum until the percentage of Indigenous peoples with a university education is at least the same as the general population.

Circumstances are similar for new Canadian families in the inner city as evidenced by recent statistics. In their interviews with 75 recently arrived refugee households predominantly from Africa and the Middle East, and 78% of them residing in inner-city neighbourhoods, Carter, Polevychok, Friesen, and Osborne (2008) found that, one year after arriving in Winnipeg, 92% of households had incomes below the poverty line. After re-interviewing 55 of these same households after their second year in Canada, 73% continued to live below the poverty line with average household income still being less than half of other Winnipeg households. Low household income was also attributable to the fact that only 42% of respondents were employed after year one; this figure increased to 66% after the second year which is reflected in the decline in household poverty rates.

These persisting poverty-related barriers raised many questions, such as: how, as a matter of ethical responsibility, can UW be situated in a neighbourhood with significant social disparities and not consider the wider inclusion of the community and particularly the university's role in challenging the graduation gap? How could we partner with our neighbours to improve high school graduation rates, and to help increase engagement with the university and other forms of post-secondary education? For young people, which methods of outreach would promote an understanding that the university belongs to them, and they have the right to benefit from it? In the process of integrating community learning initiatives, how can we respect the community's autonomy in developing programs to support the increased participation of inner-city youth in education? (Axworthy, 2009).

Community-Driven Learning Programs

The community's reality was a catalyst for UW's innovative approach to addressing the question of what it means to implement relevant and respectful community learning initiatives. As part of the university's community learning mandate**,** the introduction of an Innovative Learning Centre in 2006 presented an array of learning opportunities for community members, including an on-campus science program for Grade 5–6 students from inner-city schools, as well as a summer day camp. The mandate of the latter was to address summer learning loss experienced by students from high poverty neighbourhoods who would not otherwise have an opportunity to attend a summer day camp, and to help these students see themselves as high school and post-secondary graduates. In a further attempt to break down barriers to education, a Model School (a school within a school) provided students underrepresented in high school and post-secondary graduation rates an opportunity to attend UW's Collegiate High School at no financial cost to their families, while also providing bursaries toward their post-secondary studies. Students who are invited to join the program substantially increase their chances of completing high school and pursuing post-secondary studies (Axworthy, 2013, 2009).

Similarly, the doors opened to the Wii Chiiwaakanak Learning Centre in 2005, which is a community centre located on the UW campus, and for many years, it was open six days per week year-round. The Centre offers free and open access to computers, after-school tutoring, educational and cultural programs, as well as community meeting spaces. The centre is a safe and friendly environment that encourages residents in the community to expand their knowledge and skills in cultural activities, such as beading, making crafts, the art of traditional Pow Wow dancing (grass, jingle dress, hoop, round dance, etc.), drumming, and Aboriginal language proficiency. The Global Welcome Centre was also established in 2008 to help support new Canadians with their learning needs, such as computer and language skills, tutoring, counseling, as well as providing any other required assistance in transitioning to a university environment (Axworthy, 2013, 2009). Annually, this Centre served 350–400 registered clients representing 80 countries; it has recruited 75–100 volunteers; and its Bridge-to-Post-Secondary outreach program served approximately 600 people in the community each year.

The President and Indigenous leadership within the university recognized that, in order to meet the needs of the community, the approach to community learning must be a highly social process that nurtures family relationships. Moreover, learning can be more effective if it is informal and experiential. The role of Elders is crucial for passing down cultural teachings to children and youth, and for promoting lifelong learning about oneself, as well as one's responsibility to family and community. In Indigenous communities, social relationships provide the foundation for learning about self-identity through cultural ceremonies and other traditions, but particularly ancestral language. It is alarming then, that according to the 2011 Aboriginal Population Profile, only 6.1% of the Aboriginal population in Winnipeg had knowledge of an Aboriginal language (Statistics Canada, 2013b). This may be significant with regard to children's school outcomes, as another study based on the Aboriginal People's Survey, found that children aged 6–14 years who were supported to learn an Aboriginal language had improved school achievement (Guevremont & Kohen, 2012).

All three centers are funded privately; however, they also need to rely on resources from UW in order to implement meaningful learning opportunities. The hiring of Indigenous leaders and role models with authentic relationships to the community and their ability to build on existing collaborative relationships with schools, community agencies, and families was also essential to UW's mandate of generating positive changes in the community by way of after school, summer, and cultural programs.

To ensure the sustainability of these programs, in 2011, UW integrated community learning into its governance structure by having its Board of Regents approve a Community Learning Policy that has a mandate of supporting youth from Indigenous and new Canadian families to increase high school and post-secondary graduation rates. In addition, following a commitment by the Province of Manitoba's Department of Education, a primarily private fundraising strategy, referred to as the Opportunity Fund, established bursaries and a tuition credit account towards post-secondary education for each student enrolled in the program. The overarching goal of these measures is to reduce the graduation gap (Axworthy, 2013).

Methods and Study Participants

Whereas UW has implemented a wide range of initiatives over the past decade, the impacts of six of these community learning programs (Tables 3 and 4) were evaluated in 2014–15. These evaluations assessed the Innovative Learning Centre's Model School, a science program for elementary school children, and summer camps open to children ages 7–15, and Wii Chiiwaakanak's free culturally-based learning opportunities for families, a healthy teen relationships program, and a summer math camp.

Table 3: Innovative Learning Centre Program Descriptions as of the evaluation period in 2014–15

Model School (2008): The Model School is a high school program accommodating approximately 45–50 students in Grades 9–12. It operates in partnership with UW's Collegiate High School (a private, tuition-based school), and addresses the needs of students from backgrounds that have traditionally been underrepresented in high school and post-secondary graduation rates; for example, Indigenous students and some new Canadians. The school has been developed as part of the university's community learning mandate to eliminate barriers to education, and in order to realize this goal, UW provides underrepresented students an opportunity to attend the university's Collegiate High School at no financial cost to their families, as well as providing bursaries for their post-secondary studies. The school takes a holistic approach to its programming and utilizes individualized academic plans that identify and address the unique challenges faced by each student while providing an intensive support structure to help students overcome them in achieving academic success.

Adventure Kids Summer Camp (2007): This summer camp is the largest free day camp in the inner city and serves more than 1,000 children from more than 40 public schools located in low-income neighbourhoods. The camp offers between 4–6 separate one-week programs that aim to address summer learning loss by engaging children in exciting science and environmental activities. Transportation is provided to get the participants to the camp site, as well as to build and reinforce a positive relationship with the schools and families, and a nutrition program provides healthy snacks and lunches to every participant. The camp employs and provides volunteer opportunities to more than 40 youth leaders between the ages of 14 and 25. The majority of these workers are Indigenous or they are visible minorities from the high poverty areas of Winnipeg, and many have a strong interest in careers that deal with social justice issues. Through the use of group-centered approaches, the employment experience teaches leaders about teamwork, positive peer influences, and life skills for daily living such as work ethic, leadership, responsibility, commitment, and dedication.

Science Kids on Campus (2006): Approximately 50 students in Grade 6 from three inner-city schools attend a two-hour long science program offered once weekly for a period of 8–10 weeks at the university campus. While on campus, science professors, teachers, and senior-level students assist the children in conducting a variety of hands-on science experiments and activities tied to their school curriculum, such as DNA sampling, squid dissection, studying how the brain works, and examining owl pellets. The students take tours of different departments and facilities on campus which helps to familiarize them with a post-secondary environment as it strengthens their science education and experience.

Table 4: Wii Chiiwaakanak Learning Centre Program Descriptions as of the evaluation period in 2014–15

Although Wii Chiiwaakanak Centre has over 1,000 drop-in visits to its computer lab each month and hundreds more to its other community programming, three programs were evaluated:

Sacred Seven Healthy Teen Relationships: Since September of 2013, the Wii Chiiwaakanak Learning Centre at UW has offered the Sacred Seven Healthy Relationships Program for students primarily from schools in Winnipeg's high poverty areas (the inner-city, North End, and West End neighbourhoods). Divided into two program components, basketball (Pride Group) and hoop dancing (Girls Group), the Sacred Seven Healthy Relationships Program offers resources to Indigenous children and youth between the ages of 9 and 19 that allow them to access traditional Aboriginal teachings (Seven Sacred Teachings and Medicine Wheel tool), to feel connected to their ancestry, and to help them to establish better relationships with themselves, their families, and their communities. The youth also develop their own code of honour principles for healthy teen relationships, and they integrate these principles into their hoop dancing and basketball drills. The teens also conduct presentations of what they have learned in the program at community public schools in the above-noted neighbourhoods.

Family Learning programs: Let's Speak Ojibway to Our Kids and Pow Wow Club

Let's Speak Ojibway to Our Kids (2012): This weekly language program provides families and individuals of all ages a chance to learn about ceremony, the Anishinaabe (Ojibway) language, and traditional beliefs in a safe and social environment.

Pow Wow Club (2012): This weekly program provides community members of all ages with an opportunity to learn the art of traditional dancing, along with song and drum teachings. The program is open to families and individuals of all ages, knowledge levels, and abilities.

Summer Indigenous Math Leadership Camp (referred to as Math Camp) (2012): Beginning in the summer of 2012, the Wii Chiiwaakanak Learning Centre offered a two-week Summer Indigenous Math Leadership Camp for 11 students from urban schools in the high-poverty areas of Winnipeg (the inner city, North End and West End neighbourhoods). The camp ran from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. each day, and over the two-week period, students were given math lessons, lunches and snacks, and transportation to and from their residence at no cost to their families. The summer math camp provided students between the ages of 13–15 with an opportunity to improve their math skills and learn more about the connection between mathematics and Aboriginal cultures, while also enjoying activities and outings on campus. The math camp continued over the next three summers (2013–15) with the majority of participants returning each year.[4]

[4] In the summer of 2015, the Math Camp expanded its activities to emphasize the Indigenous leadership component of its program title. It hired 13 youth leaders from the pool of participants who had attended during the previous three summers to help tutor younger students between the ages of 8 and 11 from local elementary schools in the inner city of Winnipeg. To support the youth leaders, the camp provided a one-week training program, and it ran over the following three-week period for the younger participants. In 2016, the camp recruited 24 young

An Indigenous approach to evaluation, which is driven by a strengths-based and empowerment framework, offered a compelling depth for understanding the impact of these programs (LaFrance & Nichols, 2011). Since it was necessary for the research process to benefit those who are most directly impacted, we wanted to give the participants a chance to provide feedback on their experiences in the programs and what they thought worked well or needed improvement and why.

As shown in Table 5, 940 individuals participated in a wide range of exercises throughout the evaluation process, including surveys, questionnaires that required short answers, forced-choice Likert-scale statements, in-person or telephone interviews, and many other instruments. For younger participants, the objective was to assess their level of interest in, and enjoyment of, the program, as well as how much they felt they had learned from the experience. Questions in the qualitative interviews with youth leaders and other program staff addressed general themes such as program delivery issues, benefits derived from their employment with the program, the ways in which the program has impacted their educational and vocational aspirations, and their future plans for both paid and volunteer work. Parent and guardian interviews were concerned with the degree to which their children enjoyed attending the program, their perceptions of and satisfaction with the program staff, the benefits derived from their children's participation, the no-cost feature, and any suggestions for improvement. In their interviews, the teachers and administrators were asked for feedback on recruitment issues, the cultural value and social benefits of the program, and the importance of the program to youth in the community.

The evaluator triangulated the data to the greatest possible extent. In triangulation methods, the data are collected and analyzed together to ensure that the findings are corroborated. The objective of this cross-referencing technique is to have the data tell the full story and to identify patterns that increase confidence in the findings, thus permitting conclusions (McDavid, Huse, & Hawthorn, 2013). By itself, a standardized instrument such as a short-answer questionnaire or a circle-the-word exercise is much less meaningful unless it is combined with the feedback from other stakeholders, such as parents, school administrators, and teachers. The children's and youths' instruments were designed to capture some of the more immediate benefits derived from attending the program. Such instruments are frequently standardized and simplistic so as not to be too daunting for the young participants and, as such, they do not tell the full story. It is the triangulation of the data that allows their responses to be converted into a meaningful result (McDavid, Huse, & Hawthorn, 2013).

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campers whose grade levels ranged from entering grade 4 to 9. The camp hired 13 youth leaders, of which 11 were returning employees from the previous year.

Table 5: Evaluation Participation (2014–15)

		Innovative Learning Centre			Wii Chiiwaakanak Learning Centre		
Program stakeholder	**Type of instrument**	**Model School**	**Adventure Kids Camp**	**Science Kids on Campus**	**Sacred Seven**	**Family Learning**	**Math Camp**
		N	N	N	N	N	N
Children and youth program participants, under age 25	Questionnaires and Likert scale instruments	26	n/a	n/a	36	n/a	10
Children and youth program participants, under age 25	Survey instruments and other evaluative exercises: circle the word, friendship bracelet, and fill in the blanks	n/a	308	46	222	27	n/a
Youth, over age 18 (former students)	Qualitative interviews	4	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Other adult program participants	Likert scale instrument	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	27	n/a
Program staff and faculty, volunteers, instructors, youth leaders, administrators	Qualitative interviews	6	43	9	9	10	1
Parents and guardians of participants and youth leaders	Qualitative interviews	18	73	2	10	8	8
Community schools: teachers, community outreach workers, counselors, and principals	Qualitative interviews	n/a	17	3	6	n/a	n/a
Community schools: teachers and principals	Survey instrument	n/a	n/a	n/a	11	n/a	0
Total participation in the evaluations		**54**	**441**	**60**	**294**	**72**	**19**
Program registrations and participation		42 (1)	1,032 campers 45 youth leaders (2)	70 students (3)	222 students; 71 program participants (4)	54 adults and 69 children (5)	11 students

(1) Student registrations for 2014 and 2015; the Model School high school has graduated 41 students since 2008. **(2)** Summer 2014 registrations and youth leader employment. **(3)** 70 students participated in two sessions in 2013 and 2014; 110 students in 3 sessions in 2012 and 2013.
(4) From September 2013 to June 2015, 222 students participated in five school presentations, and 71 students participated in the Sacred Seven program.
(5) Spring session 2014: Pow Wow Club: 15 adults, 36 children from 9 families; Let's Speak Ojibway: 39 adults and 33 children from 19 families.

Although the data gathering instruments and questionnaires in the six evaluations were uniquely designed for each program, the questions were relatively similar and suitable to the thematic analysis included in this paper. For example, while questions posed to youth may have been framed or worded slightly differently in the instruments of each evaluation, they often tapped into similar themes of confidence building, resilience, making positive choices, educational and vocational aspirations, and establishing healthy relationships through cultural teachings. Therefore, in reporting the findings, we aggregated data wherever common findings or themes could be collated across programs.

Impact Assessment

Six evaluation reports (DeRiviere, 2015a–b, 2014a–c; DeRiviere & Rhodes, 2014) produced 168 pages of findings, outcomes, best practices, and lessons learned in the programs listed in Tables 3 and 4. In narrowing down these findings, five key themes and commonalities emerged from the data in support of UW's working group consultations and policy objectives dating back to 2004. The themes that seemed to cultivate program successes included: (1) support and connection with the community through free culturally-based educational opportunities; (2) strengthened community partnerships; (3) building social capital among youth through peer mentoring and role modeling opportunities; (4) encouraging connections of youth to education, employment, leadership opportunities, and civic responsibility; (5) fostering a sense of belonging to the university community in children, youth, and their families.

The findings reported in this paper only scratch the surface in terms of the enormity of the task undertaken by UW to provide community-learning opportunities. But this research has demonstrated the immense ability of an urban university to effectively use its resources and infrastructure in order to extend its reach into the community and, through a variety of partnerships, to have an impact on the learning experiences of many people beyond the conventional structures of university programming. The evaluations conveyed important narratives about the perseverance of inner-city youth in the face of numerous challenges, improved Indigenous academic success, and high parental involvement and turnout in community programs. Youth and their families remarked that they felt a sense of belonging to UW's community, and that it is not simply an exclusive, closed institution that happens to be situated within their neighbourhood. In fact, recent institutional statistics indicate substantial growth in the representation of Indigenous students at approximately 10% and visible minorities at approximately 20% (The University of Winnipeg, 2015). Overall, the reactions of evaluation participants were overwhelmingly positive with regard to their experiences at UW, which was described as a reputable institution that seemed genuinely interested in "getting to know the community."

Theme #1: Culturally Relevant Programming

On aggregate, 93.6% (n=455 out of 486) of participants indicated that they enjoyed and were satisfied with the evaluated programs. Participant feedback for the family learning programs, including Pow Wow Club and Let's Speak Ojibway to our Kids, was also overwhelmingly positive, as these programs provided

meaningful learning opportunities, built stronger family units, and enhanced the community's capacity to see itself as learners. The importance of language programs has been pointed out by Ball (2009), who found a higher effectiveness of these programs on children's ability to learn a language when they are centered on parental involvement in promoting their children's language development; thus, this research suggests that there is a considerable value in providing family language learning opportunities.

Parents and guardians spoke about being on a "cultural journey as a family," and they indicated that the programs provided solid grounding for how they wish to raise their children. Learning about Aboriginal history and cultural teachings was crucial in helping their children to understand the richness of their ancestry and historical family connections. In fact, 81.5% (n=27) of adult participants reported that they felt an increased sense of cultural pride as a result of participating in the program, while 85.2% (n=27) said that the program had fostered a greater sense of identity and connection with their culture and also indicated that they had been able to apply the knowledge obtained in the program to their day-to-day lives. Parents and guardians were especially pleased that their children were being helped to develop a shared sense of identity with others from the same background. In fact, the children reported making an average of ten new friends throughout the program, as well as feeling a sense of belonging to something about which they can be proud. Program learning also supported parenting strategies; for instance, parents reported using drumming and the singing of traditional songs at home as a strategy to get a restless child to channel their energy into a positive activity.

In all programs, parents and guardians expressed gratitude for the no-cost features. In low-income families, it encouraged parental consent for their children to participate in the program. Wraparound services[5] were provided in all programs, which included free transportation, supplies, and healthy snacks and meals. The most notable measures of success were the recommendations made to friends, neighbours, and extended family members. In the five programs in which the question was asked, 99.2% (n=128) of interviewed parents and guardians said they would send one of their other children to the program and/or that they would recommend it to extended family members and neighbours. In the Adventure Kids Summer Camp program evaluation, 95.2% (n=41) of youth leaders indicated that they would recommend the camp to families in their neighbourhood and, were they older and had children of their own, that they would send their own children to the camp. Likewise, 70% (n=10) of youth attending Math Camp said they would recommend the program to their friends. Finally, 92.9% (n=14) of surveyed school partners, including principals, counselors, and teachers, said they would recommend the Sacred Seven school presentations or Science Kids on Campus to other public schools in the high poverty areas of the city.

The reasons that were given for these positive recommendations were highly related to program emphasis on cultural aspects. Activities were regarded as creative, culturally-relevant and, where applicable,

[5] "Wraparound" is a problem-solving approach to supporting youth, children, or students, and it usually involves a group of individualized services that are relevant to the child's wellbeing and complex needs.

addressed summer learning loss in an enjoyable way. Programs were consistent with Indigenous approaches, such as hands-on or experiential learning opportunities that are relevant to participants' real lives. As an example of a hands-on teaching strategy, the math group's campus explorations were usually tied to a lesson about measurement problems such as solving an area and perimeter math problem in a space in the university's library. In past years, the group visited the university's bicycle lab where the instructor integrated an applied math problem as part of his lecture. Using physical materials while learning math concepts promotes mastery of skills and, by showing practical applications of complex ideas, it builds self-esteem in students. Importantly, programs helped Indigenous youth to connect with each other and to be proud of their identity, and they also gave non-Indigenous students a chance to learn about Aboriginal culture. Campers at Adventure Kids reported making an average of 7.6 (n=300 campers) new friends during their week at camp. This finding also shows how participation in the camp can help to alleviate the social isolation that some children from high poverty families experience during the summer break. Perhaps the most significant feature of the summer camps was that they exposed Indigenous children to positive peer influences in the form of the camp's leaders who came from the same communities as the campers, with nearly two-thirds of camp leaders being Indigenous and another 14.6% coming from visible minority groups.

In both the Science Kids on Campus and Math Camp programs, a hands-on approach to delivering lessons had an appreciable effect on the attitudes of participants towards science or math and post-secondary education. Upon completion of the program, 60.9% (n=46) of Science Kids (Math Camp: 60%, n=10) indicated that their interest in studying science (math) had increased, and 67.4% (Math Camp: 90%) indicated that they were now more interested in attending university. In the Science Kids program, a thread of environmental, Indigenous, and social justice issues ran through many topics, including ecological footprints and sustainable development, which made the program relevant to its young participants. Drawing on their professional experience in alternative educational settings, D'Elia and Wishart (2014) have argued that mainstream science pedagogy in North America has been consistently perceived by vulnerable children as irrelevant because they have difficulty relating the curriculum to their life experiences. An experiential approach allows children to control the experimentation and see how it connects to their own learning processes and daily experiences, which in turn helps to motivate them.

Further to this point, an important goal of the Math Camp was to celebrate First Nations, Métis, and Inuit accomplishments and contributions. The program integrated these traditional ways of knowing through its speakers series. For instance, in the summer of 2014, four invited guests spoke to the students on the topics of Indigenous accomplishments and contributions to mathematics. These community leaders emphasized the importance of pursuing a post-secondary education and exploring one's career opportunities, but they also discussed the importance of the medicine wheel teachings in making life choices. A favourite topic of participants in the Math Camp was the BBC documentary, *The Code*. The instructor connected the documentary's main discussion about how mathematics is a language that can be used to describe the relationships among all natural things (including people) to Anishinabe teachings about the importance of learning from nature, and he focused on how algebra can be a way of representing

these relationships.[6] All interviewed adults (teachers, principals, instructors, and volunteers) involved in these programs endorsed the hands-on experiential approach, and some described it as a holistic teaching method that respects the student's learning process. As noted by Nguyen (2011, p. 231), "Aboriginal education needs to be reframed in an Aboriginal context that will provide Aboriginal children with a sense of self-worth. That is, a sense of who they are and where they come from, which will impact community self-government and self-determination."

In summary, parents and guardians viewed all of the programs as a positive way to get the younger generation more involved in their culture. The family learning programs were viewed as a family celebration of learning about culture and as an intergenerational transfer of knowledge. Interviewed parents or guardians expressed a strong commitment to raising children who were proud of being Aboriginal, to keeping them away from the cycle of negativity commonly associated with poverty, and to continue to celebrate their Aboriginal heritage by passing along cultural traditions and legacies to their children. In two programs that targeted youth, when asked in a Likert statement if they were proud of being Aboriginal, 88.2% of Sacred Seven Healthy Relationships program participants and 100% of Model School students indicated "true" or "very true."

Theme #2: Strength in Community Partnerships

Program staff has cultivated strong partnerships, both internal and external to the university community, with public school stakeholders (principals, community outreach workers, school counselors, and teachers), community residents and non-profit agencies, program volunteers, university faculty, and instructors. These partnerships have assisted the development of innovative and culturally-relevant programs, and they have been sustained over the years.

One example of the benefits of these strong partnerships, is the unique recruitment strategy of the Model School at the Innovative Learning Centre for inviting students to join the school. This strategy involves a collaborative referral system with community groups and agencies, and public school partners in the inner city. Each year, these partners recommend students who show academic promise but are not realizing their full potential and risk falling behind for a variety of reasons. The community partners also help to facilitate communication between the Model School faculty and a student's parents or guardians. No advertising is required in the recruitment process, as the school has strong links and networks in the community that support its referral system and help it to fill its capacity requirements. Similarly, interviewed public school partners of the Science Kids on Campus program expressed a strong desire to continue their working relationship with UW's Innovative Learning Centre. In fact, most school partners recommended program growth so that more schools and grade levels could be included, which is likely the most important measure of program success.

[6] N. Tanchuk (Math Camp instructor), personal communication, August 14, 2014.

At Wii Chiiwaakanak Learning Centre, named by an Elder and which means “partners” in Anishinaabemowin, considerable trust has been built between the centre’s staff and community members. A 2012 Renewal Plan that was created by the staff working in partnership with the community was a key step in responding to the priorities of the community. The centre has grown with the support and input of the community, and includes a Community Advisory Committee, and it has been developed into a true learning centre with more than 20,000 unique visits a year. Interviewed participants appreciated the wide variety of free services, such as resume building, computer access, or information about access to housing. Some thought that the centre and its family-oriented atmosphere is quickly becoming the hub of the neighbourhood, stating that it is a link that connects Indigenous people and families to one another by giving them an opportunity to participate in activities together, such as crafting, beading, and other cultural activities.

All interviewed participants agreed that places like Wii Chiiwaakanak are necessary in an inner-city environment, even if only to acquire a better sense of familiarity with one’s neighbours. Some participants, including staff who grew up in nearby low-income neighbourhoods, revealed that there were no programs that offered cultural teachings, traditional dance, and Aboriginal language preservation when they were younger. They believe that the uniqueness of the Wii Chiiwaakanak Learning Centre is tremendously important in building trust and support networks among residents in the inner city. The interviews identified another of the centre’s strengths which was its ability to leverage resources and infrastructure at UW; these resources range from the sizeable space in the university used for the weekly Pow Wow Club, to its relationships with the university’s bicycle lab and other faculty and student volunteers from a wide range of departments and faculties.

In the Sacred Seven Healthy Teen Relationships program, the centre’s collaboration with the Anishinaabe Pride Basketball Club for teens aged 13 to 19 was deemed a good match since the Pride Basketball and Girls Groups espoused similar values of teamwork, respect for oneself and others, cultural identity, and the positive role of physical activity in building resilience in youth. While the Pride Basketball Group was doing exceptionally well on its own, partnering with the Sacred Seven Program expanded its mandate and opportunities, and helped to give the Pride Basketball participants more opportunities to do community service through their cultural presentations to public schools in the inner city. Their participation also allowed more resources to be made available to the Wii Chiiwaakanak Learning Centre with regard to strengthening their partnerships with community schools. Moreover, this unique partnership with the Centre brought these youth to UW and exposed them to a post-secondary institution, which was a first occasion for some of them.

Theme #3: Building Social Capital among Youth

All programs supported youth in their journeys of personal growth and development through cultural teachings and understandings. A key strength of at least four programs (Sacred Seven, Model School, Adventure Kids Summer Camp, and Math Camp) was the mentoring component and its effect on the growth of participants’ leadership capacities. These programs are well on their way to developing a clear

model of youth leadership through a mentoring approach, and the evaluations revealed countless examples of participants who had received hands-on learning and mentoring from adult role models in a program and who later became mentors themselves in the roles of program leaders or facilitators. One example of this mentoring process is that, for the 2015 session of Math Camp, past participants have been hired to tutor younger children in Grades 3–4. Furthermore, the Adventure Kids Summer Camp evaluation revealed that 39% (n=41) of current leaders had previously attended as campers when they were younger, and 25.0% (77 of 308) of current campers indicated that they want to be employed as a camp leader in the future. With this model of skills enhancement and transfer, the program's participants are able to assume a role in future program development and teaching others how to mentor and lead. Moreover, assuming responsibility helps young people develop a sense of purpose, builds resilience, independence, and lets them become part of the solution in strengthening their community. In fact, most program leaders at Adventure Kids, many of whom were also students at the Model School, expressed a strong interest in developing leadership skills. Encouragingly, most defined "leadership" as an opportunity to actively help shape the character of their community and mentor younger children.

These programs have an added advantage that results from the wide age range of the students they recruit, as the younger children and adolescents get a chance to observe the older students and learn what level of commitment is required if they want to succeed academically and personally. The age gap between students (ages 9–24) creates some advantages in this area, as the older adolescents are approaching graduation from high school, and are preparing to, or are already pursuing, post-secondary studies. This co-mingling generates positive peer influences, as the younger children form relationships with and are influenced by these older role models who take their studies and future aspirations very seriously.

There are also positive spillover effects in the community at large. Five community school presentations of the Sacred Seven Healthy Relationships program saw young Indigenous leaders (the presenters) integrate their cultural teachings into hoop dancing and basketball drills. A survey of the audience indicated that 57.2% (127 out of 222) of students would like to participate in this program, and that less than 1% disliked the presentations. The teachers at the schools commented on the significant social value of exposing not only Indigenous children to their ancestral traditions, but also introducing Indigenous culture to new Canadian children who may be unfamiliar with it. Teachers had previously observed that, among peers, some Indigenous students were hesitant to openly engage with their culture. The presentations normalized the culture, highlighted an exemplary model of youth who were engaged with leadership in the Indigenous community, and fostered pride in Aboriginal identity. It helped Indigenous students to be proud of their strong heritage. In fact, through this form of hands-on or kinesthetic expression, learning also occurred in the audiences, as an evaluative matching exercise of the Seven Sacred Teachings and their connection to animals (e.g., the bear teaches us courage, the eagle teaches us love, etc.) indicated that the majority of students understood the presentation's main messages. Also of significance was the fact that the Sacred Seven presenters were seen by 100% (n=17) of principals and teachers at the public schools as good role models for the Indigenous students in their schools.

As revealed in the evaluations, another key feature of the community programs was the commitment on the part of program developers and facilitators to respecting collective values by empowering participants to assume a leadership role in designing program activities. This approach works particularly well with young people, as it builds independence, and develops decision-making and intuitive skills. The programs worked especially well when the participants had an opportunity to make decisions about which activities they engaged in or which types of speakers were invited to conduct workshops. For example, in the Sacred Seven Healthy Relationships Pride basketball program, the facilitators encouraged the participants to design the program on their own terms, including developing their own code of honour principles for healthy relationships, as well as integrating the seven sacred teachings in their basketball drills. The facilitators were available to support the participants and access the necessary resources to implement the programs, but none of the programs were rigidly structured.

Finally, 100% (n=49) of youth leaders, facilitators, or staff associated with the family learning programs, Sacred Seven Healthy Relationships, and Adventure Kids Summer Camp viewed themselves as role models to younger children, as well as to their own peers. All interviewed parents and guardians (n=18) of Model School students stated that their children are positive role models to siblings, cousins, and other younger children. The adults noted improvements in their children's sense of responsibility, work ethic, dependability, and leadership qualities since they began attending these programs.

Theme #4: Encouraging Strong Connections of Youth to Education, Employment, Leadership Training Opportunities, and Civic Responsibility

All programs continuously stressed the importance of education as a positive life choice. For instance, depending on the age mix of the children, the leaders and facilitators of the family learning programs made a special effort to emphasize the empowering effects of education in discussing the occupational aspirations of the youth. In their answers to various questionnaires, some youth indicated that they were the first in their family and peer network to pursue a post-secondary education and, in many situations, they were the first to earn a high school diploma.

Educational Aspirations

As shown in Table 6, the payoffs of a peer mentoring and role modeling approach to community learning may be substantial. Although not shown in Table 6, 96.2% (n=26) of student participants in the Model School evaluation indicated that it was important for them to get more education or vocational training after leaving high school (i.e. university, college, or technical/trade school), and that this was part of their plans. Another 84.6% of students indicated that attendance at the Model School had influenced their decision to get more education after high school, particularly as a result of career exploration activities and the influence of faculty in helping students to view themselves as agents of change in their own lives. Adventure Kids Summer Camp leaders were excluded from Table 6, as the majority (87.8%, n=41) were already in Grade 12 or attending a post-secondary program, and the skills and attributes that brought them summer employment make it highly likely that they will also earn their high school and/or post-secondary

diploma. However, 75% (n=40) of leaders indicated that employment at the camp helped them to make a decision about a future career. In the Sacred Seven Healthy Relationships program, 87% (n=23) of participants indicated that they performed better in school since having joined the program.

Table 6: Attitude towards Education and the Future

	Programs	N	%
Education is important to the participant	MS; SS	60	98.3
Participant plans to finish high school	MS; SS; SK; MC	118	99.2
Participant plans to attend university	MS; SS; SK; MC	105	85.7
Participant is thinking about future goals	MS; SS; SK	106	89.6
Participant self-identified as a good student	MS; SS; SK; MC	116	75.9
MS: Model School; SS: Sacred Seven Healthy Relationships; SK: Science Kids on Campus; MC: Math Camp.			

Occupational Aspirations

The majority of youth in five programs, including 7–12 year old children at the Adventure Kids Summer Camp and Science Kids on Campus, identified themselves as workers in the future, with 94.1% (429 out of 456 respondents) reporting an occupational aspiration. For the most part, participants aspired to a career that would require university or college training (e.g., teacher, doctor, veterinarian, engineer, lawyer, graphic designer, etc.). Almost three-quarters of students (74.8%, excluding campers at Adventure Kids) identified a university program or courses they will have to take in order to achieve their occupational aspirations, and other students identified general knowledge that was required to do the job, such as knowledge of computer programming, biology, or calculus. These are important indicators of ambition in youth, particularly if they are given opportunities to put their goals into action and transform their aspirations into occupational outcomes.

Training and Employment

By creating meaningful summer employment and leadership opportunities, four programs (n=120)—Model School, Sacred Seven Healthy Relationships, Adventure Kids Summer Camp, and Math Camp—equipped youth with employment skills, leadership development, and promoted students' civic responsibility through volunteering in their community, including mentoring of younger children.

Evaluation participants in the Model School and Adventure Kids Summer Camp noted their appreciation of countless opportunities to build their resumes through access to summer employment and training experiences, as well as skill development through a wide range of courses and workshops such as Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and first-aid training, non-violent conflict resolution training, food handling techniques, a culinary arts workshop, and many others. The Model School has provided funding for interested students to acquire their coaching and refereeing certification for basketball, volleyball, and other sports. Some students worked as paid leaders or held other volunteer positions in the Manitoba

Government's "After School Leaders Program," which works with businesses to give youth opportunities to explore their career options through work experience.

The school also offers a basic life skills course referred to as Life/Work Transitioning. In accordance with the provincial curriculum, this for-credit course covers topics such as career exploration, resume building, fitness, nutrition and health, anti-bullying workshops, and diabetes prevention. The school has also introduced a series of workshops focused on developing soft skills such as communication skills, conflict resolution, leadership, healthy relationships, making responsible choices, assertiveness and confidence-building, and many other basic life skills. And finally, senior level Model School students were recommended for summer employment at the Adventure Kids Summer Camp, Summer Indigenous Math Leadership Camp, placements with the provincial government or other non-profit agencies, and many more opportunities.

Leadership Training

Although most prominent in the Adventure Kids Summer Camp, the program at large contained a strong leadership development component and provided leaders with one week of intensive training and orientation at the beginning of the summer. Notably, however, many leaders had participated in other employment readiness workshops throughout the year, for example, a workshop on conflict resolution techniques that give children positive options as alternatives to negative behaviour.

Twenty-nine leaders (78.4%, n=37) identified teambuilding exercises as the most important component of their training. They appreciated how everyone's ideas were respected, and how it helped to build up the self-confidence of newly recruited junior leaders. All participants (n=39) felt that they benefited from the training, and 97.6% (n=41) felt that they received training that was adequate with respect to what they were expected to do in their job. Furthermore, leaders said that they actually used their training in their job, most frequently to help resolve disputes between children and teach them to address their conflicts verbally rather than physically.

Model School students were given leadership opportunities in the Science Kids on Campus program and/or the Math Camp by assuming the role of instructor or volunteer helpers. In fact, 92.3% (n=26) of Model School students indicated that they were interested in developing leadership skills (e.g., public presentations, etc.). The Sacred Seven Healthy Relationships program supported participants to improve their communication skills and public presentations by helping them to articulate the ways in which they integrated the seven sacred teachings into their hoop dancing and basketball drills. In the Girls Group, an important goal of the program was to encourage the older participants to take on a mentoring role towards the younger ones. The adult facilitator noted that this required creating some space so that these relationships could be nurtured.

Civic Responsibility

Program participants also demonstrated a desire to become involved in improving their communities by becoming interested in social issues. Repeatedly, the majority of participants made comments that reflected their strong commitment to volunteering and a sense of responsibility for giving back to the community. As discussed by Grover (2007), a life of service to community can create a self-sustaining model that strengthens its people in countless economic and political ways. When participants in three programs (Model School, Sacred Seven Healthy Relationships, and Adventure Kids) were asked if they had previously volunteered in their community, 86.8% (n=91) of participants responded affirmatively and provided an exhaustive list of past contributions. They recognized the importance of committing themselves to social justice causes and helping others through community service, as the majority (95.9%) indicated that they planned to continue to volunteer in their community in the future. Moreover, 89.2% (n=102) of participants said they wanted to make their community a better place.

In the Sacred Seven Healthy Relationships program, the Girls Group hoop dancers participated in over twenty community presentations over a two-year period. The older adolescents in the Pride Group volunteered to coach younger children, ages 13 and 14 years, in the regular basketball leagues. In addition, this group volunteered at a local recreation centre in the Pride Basketball Kids Camps for children ages 5 to 12. Held on Sunday afternoons, this development camp was for children who wanted to learn the basics of the sport. By registering their siblings in the camps, the coaches were also encouraged to role model their love for the sport and share what they learned with family members. Through this volunteer work, the coaches focused on building relationships with younger children, as well as using cultural teachings to reinforce positive messages. They encouraged children to become more involved in school sports, including basketball. The youth leaders also promoted a positive lifestyle without the influence of drugs and alcohol. Indeed, some teachers placed considerable emphasis on the role of sports in helping keep students connected to their studies and the university community.

Personal Growth and Development

In addition to technical skills and formal educational training, the programs also recognized the importance of helping youth to establish better relationships with themselves, their families, and their communities. Program resources helped build participants' self-confidence and resilience as they worked towards discovering their cultural identity and achieving positive life results, including educational outcomes. Participants in the Model School, Sacred Seven Healthy Relationships, Adventure Kids, Math Camp, and family learning programs reported more self-awareness, healthier interpersonal relationships, improved positivity, choices, and decision-making abilities. Youth leaders at the Adventure Kids Summer Camp reported in large numbers (82.9%, n= 41) that they had grown their self-confidence and other areas of personal development (patience, self-regulation, etc.) as a result of having worked at the camp. Increased confidence levels in Model School students led to higher levels of engagement while at school and in activities outside of school. This added confidence and resilience will also enable youth to more effectively develop their capacity for leadership, to see themselves as lifelong learners, to succeed academically, and to achieve their goals. Community learning and educational success are deeply linked to the consistent

messages provided by the programs of healthy relationship building through cultural connections. For instance, in their study of Aboriginal children at a charter school in Alberta, Baydala et al. (2009) found that, as opposed to the standard intelligence measures, many social aspects of a school environment (e.g., children's self-belief and self-rated measures of behaviour, close friendships, and cultural aspects) predicted school achievement in students.

Noting considerable growth in their child's social and emotional development, some parents referred to the program as a "confidence builder," as their children learned to express themselves in group situations and took more social risks in meeting new people and developing friendships outside the family network. Parents and guardians of the Adventure Kids campers noted improvements in their children's ability to cooperate at home, and their sense of responsibility, independence, and self-regulation. New Canadian parents were pleased that their children had opportunities to practice speaking English and to learn about Canadian culture, and also to have friends who are culturally different from themselves.

In summary, the most significant findings with regard to the long-term accomplishments of the youth-related programs were the participants' personal growth, social maturity, and contributions to society. However, another significant long-run accomplishment is that the Model School has produced 41 graduates (a more than 95% graduation rate in a neighbourhood where a 50% graduation rate is the norm), of which 78% (n=32) have gone on to pursue post-secondary studies. Though the authors do not intend to measure success through numbers alone, an economic cost analysis has determined that the Model School program pays for itself. Compared to what it cost to educate them, throughout the course of their working lives, Model School graduates of post-secondary programs will contribute more than twice as much to the tax base from their incremental earnings than will a high school graduate. This is the tip of the iceberg in terms of their contributions to society. The Model School is a preventive investment as its costs are vastly outweighed by its far-reaching social and fiscal benefits for society.

Theme #5: Fostering a Sense of Belonging to the University Community

Nichols et al. (2014) have stated, "…universities are difficult for 'outsiders' to navigate" (p. 80). Nothing could be truer for groups that have had limited exposure to a university campus. By offering access to UW's campus, the programs address barriers that often prevent inner-city children, many of whom are Indigenous and new Canadians, from accessing post-secondary education. All programs showed evidence of improvements in the participants' sense of belonging in a post-secondary environment. For instance, in three programs combined—the Model School, Science Kids on Campus, and Math Camp—51.2% (n=82) of students identified that they were at first nervous about coming to a university campus, but in the follow up period, 82.9% (n=82) indicated that they were no longer nervous about attending a university campus. This is a clear indication that many students' comfort level rose, as the result of the measures taken by the programs to introduce them to the campus through guided tours and in helping them to think about how academic activities can connect their interests to a career. Furthermore, at the end of the Science Kids program, the university hosted a graduation ceremony with the President in traditional academic regalia handing out graduation certificates to the Grade 6 students.

Discussion and Policy

The evaluations showed the transformative potential of community-engaged approaches. Programs consistently showed progress in realizing UW's objectives of providing culturally-relevant and free learning opportunities to a community of underrepresented learners in all levels of education, addressing summer learning loss in children, and tackling the high school graduation gap. The community learning initiatives are well on their way to achieving UW's longer-term objectives of cultural preservation, and building resilient and involved communities in the inner city and other high poverty areas of the city. Equally as important is the goal of improving the literacy and educational outcomes of Indigenous youth, particularly their post-secondary graduation rate. These evaluations also inform policy and practice for this university's administration with regard to its commitment to a civic mission.

UW's model has also been provided at a relatively low cost compared to the societal benefits that extend beyond the substantive personal and community benefits. This immediately raises the question of whether there should be public investment funds added to the already strained budgets of the university system. Even in times of fiscal austerity, we simply cannot afford not to. If community learning initiatives result in higher graduation rates, fewer unemployed youth, and healthier, more engaged citizens, does this added human potential not enhance the public welfare instead of incurring the extra costs of economic repercussions? (Axworthy, 2009). The cost analysis offered earlier of former Model School student outcomes provides a clear answer that this model is a community investment strategy, which more than pays for itself in the long run**.** In fact, according to the Centre for the Study of Living Standards, educational parity that served to eliminate the employment rate/income gap between Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals by 2001 would have yielded an additional $160 billion in Canadian GDP from 2001–17 (Sharpe, Arsenault, & Lapointe, 2007).

Our study findings present a viable approach to remediating the pervasive social problems in these neighbourhoods. If there are fewer children left on the streets to be recruited by the gangs, or if the rates of addiction are reduced and the expense of security and incarceration are positively affected and family life improved, is that not of substantial public value? (Axworthy, 2009). Referring to the social benefits of the Sacred Seven Healthy Relationships program, one basketball coach remarked how most of the programming occurs during the "vulnerable" hours for young people, such as after school and early evening. These are the hours when youth are most at risk of becoming involved in negative behaviours. Thus, UW's recreation facilities and Wii Chiiwaakanak Learning Centre function not only as a safe place, but also as a preventive measure. Coaching, mentoring and role modeling Mino Bimaadiziwin, or a good life, which involves sports, team building, and keeping busy with learning activities, is one method of offsetting some of the boredom and potential for youth to engage in high risk activities. These ideas are supported in meta-analyses of after-school programs for vulnerable youth in the U.S., which suggests that non-academic activities may also have a positive impact on the developmental outcomes of young people (Durlak, Weissberg, & Pachan, 2010; Kremer et al., 2015). Likewise, in their case studies of Indigenous high school students, Preston & Claypool (2013) posed the question, "What motivates students to learn?" Their study

identified key themes, such as a supportive environment, relevant curricular content, role models, and many others; but after-school activities, including sports, were viewed as an important motivational aspect of students' education.

These are the kind of questions that the university contemplates as it continues to pursue its community learning strategy to help to slow the cycle of intergenerational poverty in these neighbourhoods. In fact, as many initiatives described herein are transferable to other situations, this university's vision can help set new priorities for public policy, practice, and university funding models that commit to both the continuity and expansion of these programs. To date, the community learning initiatives described in this paper have been largely funded through private sources and not public funds or the university's operating budget (Axworthy, 2009). In fact, most programs' operational budgets are deeply underfunded. What is needed now, in light of the recent Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) events across the country, is a show of force among government leaders and policymakers, university administrators, and Indigenous advocacy groups to accomplish these goals together. Some of these actors have long held that Aboriginal peoples' strong beliefs in the transformational effects of education is a fundamental building block in their communities (Axworthy, 2009, 2013).

Moreover, the evaluated programs only scratch the surface in terms of the exhaustive list of UW initiatives for which private funding was raised, including affordable student residences mixed in with community townhouses, day-care spaces, a young entrepreneurs program, and a culturally diverse social enterprise food service. In an effort to address the fact that children in the care of a child welfare agency—87% Indigenous in Manitoba—are underrepresented in high school and post-secondary graduation rates (Brownell et al., 2015), UW has also introduced a tuition waiver program along with wraparound services, (e.g., housing, textbooks, meal plans) to support the participation of youth-in-care in post-secondary studies. Since this issue was brought forth by UW's former President, Dr. Lloyd Axworthy, and its Indigenous leadership at meetings of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) and the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC), several universities and local colleges now offer a tuition waiver program to youth-in-care. In light of the TRC's focus on education, these programs are best practice models that substantially broaden access for Aboriginal children and counter the dropout rate at the grade nine level that befalls Aboriginal students. Furthermore, in recognition of its responsibilities of Indigenous inclusion under Treaty One, UW has recently introduced the Indigenous course requirement, which will ensure that each graduating student has been exposed to Indigenous course content, including pedagogy (e.g., experiential learning).

In addition, a formalized Community Charter was developed to govern a new RecPlex recreation and wellness facility, and it mandates free access for community-based groups to run their programs. The facility was also built through private fundraising (Axworthy, 2013). As argued by Moore (2014), these bricks and mortar projects "strengthen relationships of people to the places where they live and among those people who live there" (p. 20). This idea is supported by the evidence that was gathered in the evaluations. However, a major shortcoming of this community-learning model is the lack of a sustained and

coordinated government funding commitment, which could potentially undermine future efforts in the university's civic mission.

Education is the new buffalo

In summary, the evaluations informed our understanding of key changes that post-secondary institutions can implement to positively impact Indigenous educational outcomes, which include:

- Visionary leadership as a catalyst for changing institutional culture in the face of obstacles and resistance.
- Recruiting strong Indigenous leadership entrusted to nurture authentic community partnerships and respectful relationships with ongoing, deliberative consultation.
- A clear university governance model and formal policy framework for community engagement that makes it an institutional priority.
- Culturally relevant programming that encourages family engagement at every possible opportunity.
- Promoting a clear model of civically engaged youth, positive role modeling, and mentoring among children and youth through a strong commitment to the leadership development aspects of the programs. The most significant feature of the peer-mentoring approach was that it helped Indigenous youth and children to connect with each other and to be proud of their identity and also to see themselves as high school and post-secondary graduates.
- A commitment to empowering youth in program decision-making processes.
- Multipronged educational strategies and opportunities to help generate resilience and capacity in youth who may otherwise be poorly prepared to meet the challenges of the labour market. These include pedagogical changes to include experiential learning, cultural teachings, co-curricular activities such as skill-building workshops and employment experiences.
- Good fundraising capacity to support low-income students with a program of tuition credits, waivers, and bursaries, as well as ancillary services (housing, meal plans, etc.).

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Leaning into Discomfort: Understanding Marginalized Children and Youth through Service Learning

Lee Anne Block

Abstract

"Educational Leadership within a Service-learning Framework" is a course structured to create opportunities for developing a teaching identity through service. Its effect on our students' understanding of their experiences of marginalized children and youth involves complex issues of identity and social position. "Leaning into the discomfort" of social settings that are often unfamiliar and sometimes difficult allows students to pay attention to their own assumptions, question stereotypes, and experience empathy. A critical understanding of their own identities and of social issues that permeate schooling becomes possible.

Keywords: service-learning, marginalized children and youth, teaching identity, discomfort

Introduction

The focus of this report is to examine the effect of the University of Winnipeg (UW) Faculty of Education's service learning course, Educational Leadership within a Service-learning Framework, on education students' understanding of the experiences of marginalized children and youth. It will consider the diverse learning experiences of education students and what issues or difficulties they experience in their service learning.

The Faculty has an institutional mandate to prepare teachers to work in the inner city. The UW Faculty of Education website states: "…in addition to the preparation of pre-service teachers leading to provincial certification, the program provides an additional focus on urban inner-city education. This emphasis is in keeping with the University of Winnipeg's attention to working with and within the urban community that it is situated in and to providing access to the university for community members" (http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/education/index.html). Former President Lloyd Axworthy instituted a mandate for community learning in 2009 which initiated a variety of programs related to community access (Axworthy, 2009). The compulsory service-learning course, which began in 2008–2009, can be situated within the Axworthy mandate.

However, unlike many components in our larger study of initiatives, service learning is a course, not a program. Its function is not to provide direct access for community, like Science Kids on Campus or programs at Wii Chiiwaakanak Learning Centre. Service learning is a course embedded in an academic program. The purpose of the course is to prepare teachers who, in turn, will provide educational experiences to enhance the access to further education of inner-city students, some of whom are marginalized. The course addresses the Faculty's goals as articulated in the Dean of Education's message on the website: "In the Faculty of Education at The University of Winnipeg, we endeavour to challenge and prepare our students to become inspirational and motivating educators who will strive to meet the needs of all children and youth, including those who have been hitherto marginalized" (http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/education/index.html). By placing education students in community sites where marginalized children and youth are participants, education students begin the journey of working effectively and meaningfully with those participants.

Educational Leadership within a Service-learning Framework is a required course for first-year education students in the integrated program. The service-learning course objectives articulated in its syllabus are as follows:

> Service-learning is an educational approach that integrates service in the community with intentional learning outcomes. By providing students with an opportunity to frame theoretical learning in real-life settings, service-learning leads students to broaden their horizons and to change their perspectives on their participation as citizens of a diverse democracy.

Learning outcomes are expressed in the syllabus as outcomes of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. These outcomes include understanding the systemic causes of social problems such as poverty (knowledge), examining how teachers can foster social awareness in the classroom (skills), and developing an ethic of actively caring (attitude). Education students are expected to work towards these outcomes in order to "encourage opportunities for transformative learning to occur," as stated on the syllabus. This transformative process can be understood as transformation into the role of teacher and also as transformation towards becoming a more mature and engaged citizen. Participatory citizenship is conflated with the role of the teacher from the perspective of service learning (Sokal et al., 2016).

The course structure is fifteen hours of preparatory course work at the university, followed by forty hours of service in schools, agencies, and community centres. The education students' initial fifteen weeks of coursework introduces them to inner-city educational issues such as poverty and immigration. It also prepares them to communicate effectively at their sites and provides them with safety precautions. There are six sections of 28–35 students, three in Fall Term and three in Winter Term, taught by three instructors.

During the forty hours of service, students email weekly reflections to the instructors. Instructors attempt to visit each service-learning site once. Monitoring of students occurs through their reflections. The final class is a debriefing session after service is completed. Students' assignments are the reflections on coursework and on community service, and they also submit a portfolio. The course is pass/fail, but is based on a minimum grade of C+ to pass, like all courses in the Faculty of Education.

The service-learning course takes place in the first year of the five-year integrated education program. Part of the intention of the course is for students to gain experience working with inner-city youth which is, for most, an unfamiliar experience. The service-learning experience may encourage or detract from their commitment to becoming teachers. Professors agreed that the course is useful insofar as it assists students in deciding whether teaching is a good choice by placing them in complex teaching contexts where they experience the difficulties and satisfactions of teaching.

Like many educational activities, the design and purpose of the service-learning course is taken up by students from within their own learning and personal objectives. For many of the students observed and interviewed, the purpose of the course was primarily to experience "the role of teacher" (this phrase re-occurs in student dialogues in field notes, interviews, and focus groups). Students were purposeful about their own learning as well as their participants' learning.

The course purpose and structure addresses its student population. Most education students have limited experience with at-risk or marginalized youth when they start the integrated education program. Students in the integrated program are predominantly female, White, young, rural, and middle class (Office of Institutional Analysis, 2017). In a start-of-term survey, 56 of 59 students considered themselves privileged and only one had ever been termed "at-risk." Many students identified their own experience of schooling as predominantly positive.

First-year education students enter the program because they aspire to become part of a system that supported their identity and values. They want to assume the role of the teacher. The research questions emerge from the experiences and demographics of first-year education students: In positioning themselves as teachers, are these students bringing an understanding of marginalized youth to that position? How does the service-learning course help build that understanding?

Methods

Research in education benefits from qualitative or mixed methods (Deeley, 2015). Students' understanding of marginalized youth is shaped by their experiences in the service-learning course and those experiences were central to data collection. Data sources included a survey of students at the start and end of the course, observations at service-learning sites, and interviews and focus groups with students, site supervisors, and the service-learning coordinator.

The researcher and research assistant presented the study to students in all sections of the course during class time and obtained signed consent forms from willing students. From the group of students who consented and participated in the survey, students were invited to be interviewed. Students who consented to be observed and interviewed form a smaller sub-group of participants. From the smaller group, eleven students were selected and observed at seven different sites. Nine of those participated in interviews and/or focus groups. The accumulated data from observations and field notes, interviews, and focus groups has been analyzed and triangulated. Out of this analysis, portraits of some students have been constructed which explore aspects of their experiences in the service-learning program. This ethnographic approach is embedded in the lived experience of the students, the site supervisors, the program coordinator, and the research assistant and the researcher.

Survey Findings

The link to an online survey was provided to all students. Descriptive statistics are drawn from the surveys completed by service-learning course students. The surveys focused on student perceptions of at-risk youth and the role of educators in supporting them. In the Fall Term of 2015, 39 students out of approximately 90 students enrolled in the service-learning course's three sections completed the survey. Of those 39, 12 completed a follow-up survey after the service learning was completed. In the Winter Term of 2016, 21 out of approximately 90 students enrolled in the service learning course's three sections completed the survey. Only six completed the follow-up survey which had to be given at the end of the university year.

In the survey, students were asked to select qualities they believed would be found in at-risk youth from the following list: empathetic, disruptive, competent, unstable, obedient, creative, rebellious, disconnected, talented, and focused.

The categories chosen by the lowest percentage of students in the online survey were: empathetic, competent, talented, and focused. Unstable, rebellious, and disconnected were all selected by over 80% of respondents, suggesting most students had some negative assumptions about at-risk youth. The major difference between the pre-service and post-service survey was an increase in respondents choosing "focused" (from 16.2% to 45.5%). In the pre-service survey, education was rated as being very important for at-risk youth by 100% of the respondents and 83.3% believed the role of the teacher or youth worker to be very important in supporting positive change in at-risk youth, with 16.7% stating it was somewhat important. In the post-service survey, the role of the teacher/youth worker was seen as very important by 97.4% of respondents.

Before service, when asked whether they expected their understanding of at-risk youth would change as a result of this service learning experience, 53.8% of respondents expected some change and 46.2% expected real change. After service, 50% reported some change in understanding, 41.7% reported real change, and 8.3% reported no real change. No real change in understanding could suggest their assumptions were confirmed by the experience or that they were familiar with at-risk youth before their service experience.

Students, Sites, and Site Supervisors

Service learning is rooted in the service-learning sites. There are between 15–20 sites used in a term. Some are located in public schools; others are in social service agencies and community centres. Education students are required to spend forty hours of service at their site(s), in addition to the fifteen hours of coursework at the university, which prepare the students for their service in schools, agencies, and community centres. Students are assigned in small groups to a site with one or more site supervisors. Students have some input into which site they are assigned to, but final decisions are made by instructors. Hours are established with the site supervisor. Site supervisors observe, interact with, and assess students, but are not evaluating for course credit.

Supervisors in the focus group acknowledged that many education students were unfamiliar with inner-city experience and some were fearful about their placements. However, the supervisors witnessed growth in the students as they worked at the sites. Some students who began working with small groups developed the skills and confidence to lead a whole class. One supervisor explained that students overcame assumptions and learned that the participants who are low income "have good things in their lives." Another spoke of how the education students' learning had a ripple effect of "accidental education." The supervisor believed that students pass on their greater understanding of marginalized youth to their families.

Eleven education students were observed at seven different sites. Of the eleven, there was only one student who had significant difficulty engaging in activities with participants. The rest worked through their assignments thoroughly, sometimes initiating variation on routines. These assignments varied widely: from math and reading support in the schools, to providing meals and supervising games for children in after-

school boys and girls clubs, to English as an Additional Language and homework support at Peaceful Village sites. In school settings, the students worked one-on-one, with small groups, and with large groups supported by other adults. In all settings, the preferred focus for students was on teaching activities. In community sites and school sites, students were concerned with managing behaviour, although that was accentuated in school sites.

Students expressed a preference for working in school settings during school hours, where they could more fully explore the role of the teacher. At the boys and girls clubs or other after-school programs both the atmosphere and their role was less formal. The Peaceful Village setting was more focused on schoolwork than the other after-school programs, but less formal than working in schools. The preference for working in school settings was centred on the opportunity to work with practising teachers and to learn from them. Students identified that they learned much from their cooperating teachers. For example, they learned how to build relationships and how to laugh and be playful and still have authority. Observing classroom management by the cooperating teacher was valuable and most students stated that building relationships and making connections with the school children was instrumental in the learning process.

Education students' experiences with the children and young people they worked with were central in their discussions of the service-learning course. Observing the children and young people improve in math, reading, or the English language was validating. When students were told by participants that they would be missed, it affirmed that they had built strong relationships. One student stated that she understood how much she likes working with kids and "figuring out why they do what they do." Another said that the course had given him "tools to work with," including the understanding that teachers have authority and influence.

Service-Learning Coordinator and Course Direction

Marc Kuly became the coordinator of the service-learning program in 2015 after the retirements of Vern Barrett and Allen Appel, who had developed the program and shared that position since its inception. Central to their design was the concept of "servant-leader" (Barrett & Appel, 2013). Professor Kuly was interviewed at the end of his first year as coordinator. He reflected on both the structure and content of the program. He was particularly focused on what students could learn from the experiences in the course and how to facilitate that learning. Professor Kuly had been a classroom teacher in inner-city schools for several years before accepting a position at UW. Those experiences inform his values and give him insight into his students' experiences on site: "I want these students to come out with, sort of, an emerging critical consciousness and a sense of empathy and capacity."

The paths to develop these competencies and values are multi-layered. They begin with the physical location of the service sites where most students must deal with the discomfort of the unfamiliar. As discussed above, students in the integrated program are predominantly female, White, young, rural, middle class, and of the dominant culture. Many experience "culture shock" when they first visit their sites and

thereafter. Occasionally students decline their placement. When rejecting her proposed site, one student had stated: “I don't like those people.” “Those people” were “Other,” not people she could work with. This example manifests an extreme of Othering; however, many of the students interviewed spoke directly of differences that they had found distressing.

The students’ cultural experiences are often very different from the participants at the service-learning sites. The course is designed to assist students in the transition: “And we [instructors] support them on a number of things, because our suspicions are that their needs, generally, are going to be around understanding cultures and settings that are foreign to them—and that creates a bit of a culture shock” (instructor interview). Professor Kuly encourages students to “lean into the discomfort” and learn from it. As students experience themselves interacting in these sites and learn to see from the perspectives of their supervisors and participants, an identity shift may occur (Pratt & Danyluk, 2017; Preece, 2016). In the classes prior to starting service at the sites, instructors introduce identity construction and the need to question one’s assumptions. Kuly acknowledges that this discussion is only the beginning of a process and that it is taken up by individual students in different ways.

In addition to beginning to develop a critical consciousness of identity, students are developing a teaching identity. This re-negotiation of identity is often uncomfortable due to conflicting perspectives and the tension between what is known and familiar and what is learned in a professional context. Students’ experiences of their own schooling have to be connected to a new context. Their identification of the teacher as “expert” needs to be modified. Professor Kuly notes that students learn that they don’t always have the answer and that’s okay; they can look for it. They learn to respond in the moment: “… that's what the service learning gives them a very good taste of, the immediacy of the teaching moment.”

Kuly expressed his concern that as the beginning teacher identity is developed, it constellates into one of two roles, the saviour and the nurturer, neither of which are sustainable.

> And the one thing I try to stress to the students is, like there are two extremes that are very common, two extreme positions that are very common and unsustainable for inner-city educators. One is the saviour and the other is the... like, the, sort of, shoulder to [cry on]… the saviour who's going to swoop in and make them like me. And the other will go in and, sort of, recognise no problems in the area except for victimhood and just, you know, hug and [say] “oh my God, we're not going to teach today because we just feel so badly.” And it's like both of these things are not sustainable and not helpful. Because you have to recognise that, like... yeah, they both deny the humanity of the people that you're working with. I think that message I could get across.

Kuly affirmed his social justice orientation and how that positions his purposeful teaching: “… wanting to tune in to laying the seeds of activism and identifying a teacher identity which doesn't pretend to be

neutral…" From his perspective, the service-learning course is a context where students can learn about teaching for change.

What identities did the students take up in relation to their placements? As they positioned themselves as teachers in their site communities, how did the students understand their participants and their participants' communities? Professor Kuly described one student's experience as discovering that, within the affluent Fort Richmond suburb where the student lived, "there was another Fort Richmond" at the service-learning site which served a Manitoba housing complex.

One student, Arlene (all students' names are pseudonyms), voiced her Grandmother's concern at her being placed in an inner-city school:

> And I remember you asked did we feel safe at our schools and like I'm not from Winnipeg, I'm not even from Manitoba, so I don't know the city very well. And I live with my Grandma here and she grew up here. And I told her… I have a new volunteer placement at School X… She's like, you can't go there. And I'm like, I'm going but why?… she's like 70, so she has very stereotypical views of the North End and of First Nations people. And so she's very, she was like: You need to change your placement. And I'm like: I'm not changing my placement, they wouldn't send me somewhere that was not safe.

At the outset of her service-learning placement, Arlene is situated in conflict between Grandma's culture and the culture of the faculty. Her portrait will examine that conflict.

Grant, another service-learning student, decides to investigate his site prior to starting the placement.

> And so I plugged into my GPS and I went after school one day and I drove past [the school neighbourhood he would be placed in]. And I was absolutely just shocked at like the despair of the homes around the school. Like the school is, like there's houses all the way around on all four sides and they're all boarded up, shacked up, you know, just… as I drove past I was just, I was just in shock because it is so completely different from my—I grew up in small town, I went to probably an elementary school that is as close to a private school as you can get in the public school system. You know, it's—you know what I mean. So it was just such a shock to drive past.

From his portrait below, Grant's capacity to see differences and to see beyond the differences poverty constructs becomes apparent. There are three student portraits—Maria, Grant, and Arlene—chosen out of the eleven participants in the extended study. Although the three had many commonalities, they were chosen because their individual experiences were different. These portraits provide awareness of the tensions and the growth of students negotiating the service-learning sites.

Portraits of Service Learning Students

Maria

The first image of Maria was her crouched beside a kindergartner, reading. Maria was placed in a Kindergarten/Nursery class in an inner-city nursery to grade 8 school. The combined nursery and kindergarten meant Maria was working with two teachers and she reported that she enjoyed learning different teaching styles. As well, there were educational assistants (EAs) in the class. Maria reported that she liked her placement working with young children. She was particularly attached to child C, who had been elective mute and had opened up to her and was now speaking. Maria gave him ongoing attention, reading, conversing, and drawing him out. Maria was warm and connected with many of the children, and generous with encouragement. In the class was one student with multiple disabilities who had a fulltime EA. Maria did not work with this child nor did she refer to the child at any time, suggesting that this child's level of special needs was beyond her ability to comprehend or interact with.

Maria did not relate much to other adults in the room but found the environment as a whole to be a learning experience and felt connected to it. She stated: "It was just really good working with kids cause that was my first actual in-class ever teaching role so it was really clicking and kind of set it off." Maria emphasized how service learning allowed her to experience the role of the teacher. However, my observations and her reporting suggested that her role was limited to working one-on-one or with very small groups and she also described herself as a teacher's assistant. Within that role she felt she had learned to be strict and to guide students. She believed a teacher's role is to "be there for the student and bond." Another way she expressed this was by reiterating how important person-to-person connections are for learning as it "makes them see you actually care for them." It appears that Maria's current understanding of the teacher's role is to nurture relationships. Her teaching identity is moving towards what Professor Kuly described as the nurturer. How does she understand the students she nurtures? Before the course she thought at-risk students meant only students with special needs. Now she was aware of other kinds of at-risk students. There was no indication that she was aware of social factors that put students at risk. Her current practice was focused on individual relationships.

Arlene

The first image of Arlene was her sitting on the floor at the back of the classroom playing a math game with two grade 3 students. Interactions were formal. She was focused on the rules of the game. Her focus encouraged the children's focus. She had been tasked with providing math support to this class through a series of math games. Arlene's other responsibilities were to supervise at recess and at lunch hour and she also volunteered for the Winter Concert at her inner-city K–6 school. As well as her observed service at the school, Arlene had a second service placement in a recreational after-school program also in the inner city.

Arlene had attended a Catholic elementary school and explained that she had not experienced people of lower socioeconomic status while growing up. As described above, her grandmother had concerns about Arlene's safety at her placement site. These concerns led to Arlene's concerns about the students:

> And like one thing I thought was really interesting was like my grandma like freaked me out, she was like, I figured I was going to go to a school where like all the kids were going to be mean and like really rough. And, you know, the teachers were going to be all like really unhappy because they have to deal with rough unhappy children. And like at first all the kids were really good with me, right, like really well behaved.

Arlene's initial assumptions, based on her talks with family members, that the children would be unmanageable were not realized. She was able to connect to them through math games and activities. She enjoyed working with them and felt useful and capable. However, the differences between their experiences and hers were abundant and hard to process. Arlene stated she was happy to have encountered these differences in her service-learning placements as it would have been a "shock" to go into teaching without those experiences. She had learned that relationship building was important to teaching and that teachers need to understand individual student needs. She experienced the necessity to differentiate in her math sessions: "I tried to work with everybody but I would often spend more time with the students who were having a really hard time with, *not a really hard time, but were challenged* [emphasis added] by the games." Arlene understood that some students in the class needed more attention and support than others. She was disturbed by how students were labelled "bad" and in the quotation above she corrects herself for saying some had "a really hard time" and reframes it as some were "challenged." Arlene expressed concern about children in unsafe situations. At the same time, she explained she had learned to be "caring without caring too much." She recognized that talking to her professor and to her mother, a high school teacher, had been valuable in processing her experiences in inner-city schools.

Arlene consistently remarked on the difference between her own experience and the school children's. When she talked to her mother about Winter Concert at her school, her mom had asked her what a winter concert was and Arlene translated it as "Christmas." Arlene grappled to comprehend an unfamiliar school setting, but she was not able to articulate how cultural differences may require a changed vocabulary and approach. Similarly, absenteeism from school is perceived as a parenting problem, not contextualized in a socioeconomic framework:

> But, like they wouldn't be there. And it just like, it made me so sad because like—I used to fight with my mom to go to school in the morning and I loved school, you know. But they just didn't have the support at home or whatever. And another thing that I was not familiar with is like I get to class and there wouldn't be many people. I'm like, "oh, that's weird there's not very many people today." And they're like, "oh, it's cheque day" or "yesterday was cheque

> day" or something. And I'm like, "explain this to me because I don't get it," you know. And so I, you know, got a bit of an explanation and I'm like it just, it just made me sad.

Arlene wanted to learn about teaching and from her placements, and she believed she had learned much in both settings and from the adults she had worked with. The relationships with students were key to her learning. At the end of her service, she affirmed that her perception of at-risk students was that of an "outsider" but that her perspective was broader than it had been before the service learning.

Grant

The first image of Grant was him standing tall waiting for a guest in the school hall. He had presence and a sense of propriety. He was comfortable in the busy hallway and assured in his interactions with the visiting professor. His interactions with the students and the staff were connected, confident, and good humoured. His perceptions of the students were complicated by the unfamiliar context, as indicated above in his description of the poor housing in the neighbourhood. Another example was absenteeism, in that he had not experienced ongoing absenteeism in his own schooling.

> Because attendance, I think we talked about this, attendance was often not great, you know. The morning bell would ring and there'd be four students in the classroom and then they would slowly trickle in throughout the morning… And so then by lunch we'd have pretty much the whole class. But right at the beginning of the day there'd be like six students. So the fact that they were there, that they woke up in the morning oftentimes by themselves—and got themselves there or had their older siblings make sure that they were up and got themselves to school. I think that was a triumph in itself. *And it just took me a while to see past the hardship that was so visible* [emphasis added].

What did Grant see when he looked past the hardship, leaned into discomfort? He saw children who wanted to learn and understood that he had much to learn in order to be able to teach them. Grant was placed in an inner-city school working in three classrooms: Grade 1, Grade 2/3 split, and Grade 4. As part of a school-wide literacy program, Grant's task was to work on reading with individuals or small groups. However, his stated preference was working alongside the classroom teachers with the whole class, as he experienced the teacher role more fully and there was more variety. Grant focused on what he could learn from each of the three teachers: "So I did enjoy being in the classroom more [than being in a separate room with small group reading]; I found I learned more being able to observe classroom management skills and being able to observe the teacher like actually interact with her students." Grant also felt that working with three teachers was challenging as he had to adapt to their different teaching styles and had different roles with each teacher. Like other students, Grant was focused on his own learning as well as the children's.

> I was there from fall till like November so it was getting kind of cold in November and they didn't have any winter jackets or anything. So that was, that was hard to watch, I think, and

> hard to, you just wanted to help everyone. So that was a huge learning experience for me coming from a totally different set of experiences to just see the struggle. Also, to see the triumph and just get to watch their growth, and they did grow. So it was a really cool path. And I'm still there; I volunteer every week now.

Grant's commitment to the school was part of his choice to volunteer weekly after he completed his forty hours. Grant identifies the "struggle" of these students as a struggle with poverty. He understands poverty as an absence of material comforts and goods (clothing, housing). Grant stated he had never experienced or even witnessed such poverty until coming to this school. He recognizes his privilege, but does not connect it to the poverty he witnesses at his school site. This may be an understanding he will develop with more experience and reflection. Grant's strong identification with the role of the teacher and his desire to be respected in that role may lead him to take on a teaching identity akin to what Professor Kuly described as the saviour.

At another level, Grant may be approaching the transformative learning which the service-learning course provides opportunities for. Rather than the deficit approach (Preece, 2016) of some service-learning students, who see the participants in their programs as missing parenting, focus, or motivation, Grant sees strengths. He understands that the children's getting themselves to school is an effort and a "triumph." He sees their capability and determination.

Discussion

Professor Kuly's objective in teaching towards critical consciousness encompasses an understanding that a teacher's support of their students should "recognize the agency of the individual" and thus move beyond the roles of nurturer and saviour. Teaching critical consciousness is "… a hard thing... and yet I think the service-learning course is one of the best places to start that teaching." Kuly emphasizes that the service-learning program is part of the larger curriculum in Education and that learning to think critically about the social contexts of schooling has to be taken up throughout that larger curriculum.

Based on observations and discussions with education students, critical thinking is developing:

> It helped me in the way that I was able to, like, I learned that just because there are barriers, such as language barriers, doesn't mean that you can't help them. That you can actually help people even though there's, there may be things in the way. And then I realized as well… while *they were learning from me I was learning from them kind of* [emphasis added].

At all sites, education students are working alongside or directly with other students in the course. They may also cooperate on planning and delivery of activities. Kuly's belief is that students need to learn to work and plan collaboratively and to recognise that a teacher's role includes understanding and interacting

with social groups and communities. This would enhance their ability to comprehend the root causes of poverty and other social problems. He would like to see the course structured with more interaction and shared reflection among the students while they are at the sites, possibly on a joint website. Other developments would be to strengthen the reflective writing skills prior to going to the sites. In 2017–18, the course was to be re-structured to have a class on campus in the middle of the placement in order to debrief with the students and consider how they are relating what they have learned in the classes to their experiences at their placement sites.

Two individuals' responses to the survey question (given after completing the forty hours of service) reveal different perspectives. The question was "How has your understanding of at-risk youth changed as a result of service learning?"

> Student X: I was already aware of the many issues surrounding kids who are in difficult positions depending on family finances, etc. So my understanding hasn't changed. I have been given a better idea of how a caring person can have a positive effect on kids and adults who are having a difficult time in their life.
>
> Student Y: All of my preconceptions have dissolved after taking the service-learning course. *I have grown in understanding at-risk youth by working with them* [emphasis added].

In examining the effect of the Faculty of Education's service-learning course, Educational Leadership within a Service-learning Framework, on education students' understanding of the experiences of marginalized and at-risk children and youth, there are complex issues of identity and social position to consider (Pratt & Danyluk, 2107), as well as the diverse learning experiences and prior knowledge of the education students. The course is structured to create opportunities for developing a teaching identity through the service. In addition, students experience social settings that are often unfamiliar and sometimes difficult. "Leaning into the discomfort" allows students to pay attention to their own assumptions, to question stereotypes, and to experience empathy. Reflecting on those assumptions, on stereotypes, and on experiences of empathy and then sharing those with reflections with fellow students, professors, and site supervisors is valuable. It makes possible a critical understanding of one's identity and of social issues that permeate schooling. A "pedagogy of discomfort" (Boler & Zembylas, 2003) assumes the presence of a dominant culture and requires unpacking how educational institutions partake in maintaining dominant culture. It also takes into account the emotional investment individuals have in dominant cultures, both those embedded in it and those at the margins (Block, 2013). A critical approach to the experiences of service learning may develop or transform education students' understanding of themselves and of marginalized children and youth. The extent to which students grow into a deeper understanding of teaching and learning and its social context will inform their competency and convictions as teachers supporting the education of marginalized children and youth.

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A REPORT ON THE CAMPUS CLIMATE FOR 2SLGBTQ* STUDENTS, STAFF, AND FACULTY AT UW

Heather Milne, Christopher Campbell, Catherine Taylor, and Larissa Wodtke

Abstract

This study examines the UW campus climate for 2SLGBTQ* students based on data collected from environmental scans, a campus survey, and interviews and focus groups with staff, administrators, faculty and students (past, present, and prospective). The perception of UW as a place where feminists, environmentalists, Indigenous, and 2SLGBTQ* people find a congenial place to work for social justice is to some extent borne out by the experience of the study participants. However, support for 2SLGBTQ* people on campus is often passive and participants had many suggestions for actions that would help foster a university community that is not only inclusive but anti-oppressive.

President Trimbee carrying the UW banner in the 2015 Winnipeg Pride march.

Photo credit: UW Communications

Introduction

In this chapter, we report on a study of the campus climate for 2SLGBTQ* students as perceived by students, staff, faculty members, and administrators. The University of Winnipeg (UW) has long had a reputation as the counter-cultural university in Winnipeg, where feminists, environmentalists, Indigenous, and 2SLGBTQ* people find a congenial place to work for social justice. As one former student explained, "I chose the University of Winnipeg because it was the cool, hippier university in comparison to, like the conservative suburban university." Another former student remarked, "[When] I hear people talk about the University, they say, well that's the queer University, that's where like, that's the feminist University." Director of Student Support Services Inga Johnson Mychasiw observed, in connection with UW's recent Pride presence, "our reputation in the community . . . fits very closely with that. . . . we still do have a 'granola university' kind of reputation that perhaps existed a long time ago. . . . But I think that's good, right? So the fact that we are that university, I'm proud of that."

Our study found that the public perception of the University as 2SLGBTQ*-friendly is borne out to some extent by the experiences of the study participants. Very few described experiences of outright homophobic, biphobic, and transphobic incidents, and several noted that there is a great deal of support for 2SLGBTQ* students among faculty and staff. However, that support is often passive, and several faculty and staff described a situation where 2SLGBTQ* matters compete for attention with many other pressing concerns, and they felt they lacked knowledge of the issues and were not sure how they could help create inclusive or anti-oppressive environments for 2SLGBTQ* students and colleagues. We hope that this report and its recommendations will contribute to the process of creating not only inclusive but anti-oppressive environments.[1]

2SLGBTQ*-related Initiatives at UW

Over the past 30 years, many students, faculty members, and staff have undertaken 2SLGBTQ*-inclusive efforts of various kinds, and the current administration has provided important institutional supports. In this section we review these initiatives, beginning with the earliest.

[1] For the purposes of this report, we define an "inclusive" environment as one that welcomes individuals (students, staff, and faculty) from traditionally marginalized backgrounds and strives to affirm those identities through positive representation in and visibility in campus life via posters, language used in communications, staff events, hiring practices, and so on. We define an "anti-oppressive" environment as one that aims to disrupt normative paradigms of gender and sexuality and transform the campus climate to ensure that inclusion moves beyond tokenism towards concrete and meaningful change in the areas of curriculum, pedagogy, campus design, campus social climate, hiring practices, and university bureaucracy.

Historical overview 1990–2014

Until very recently in UW's history, there had been little action at the university level to work towards 2SLGBTQ* inclusion. The first official initiatives at the UW involved curriculum. In 1993 UW became one of the first universities in Canada to offer an official, Senate-approved course on an LGBTQ* topic: "Twentieth Century Lesbian and Gay Literature", which had been offered in 1991 and 1992 as an experimental course developed and co-taught by several faculty members in the English and Theatre departments (Drs. Doug Arrell, Keith Louise Fulton, Deborah Schnitzer (all retired), and Catherine Taylor). (Courses at other universities had largely occurred in the form of Special Topics courses which require only departmental approval). Twenty-five years later, several courses in Cultural Studies, Education, English, Rhetoric, and Women's and Gender Studies have substantial gender-and-sexual–diversity content, but standalone courses remain a rarity. This may reflect the lack of faculty members who focus primarily on sexual and gender diversity in their research programs. A small number of faculty members have conducted research on 2SLGBTQ* themes, including Dr. Pauline Greenhill's Tri-Council-funded work on transgender themes in folklore and Dr. Catherine Taylor's national research program on 2SLGBTQ*-inclusive education, which the University recognized with the Erica and Arnold Rogers Award for Excellence in Research and Scholarship in 2013.

Students have often led the way in 2SLGBTQ* inclusion. 2SLGBTQ* students have been elected as President and Vice-Presidents of the UW Student Association (UWSA) numerous times over the last 30 years. Since the 1980s, the student newspaper *The Uniter* has regularly included LGBTQ* topics such as reports on faculty research, local and national news, campus life, and socio-cultural commentary. In the late 1980s, *The Uniter* began including a "Gay & Lesbian Supplement" in February to coincide with Pink Triangle Day (February 14), which they expanded into a full LGB issue in 1990 that ran annually for several years. During this same period, the paper also published the queer comic strip "The Chosen Family" weekly in their publication. The LGBT* Centre was established in the early 1990s as the "LG" Centre with funding from UWSA, and has led a number of initiatives. They host regular social events such as dances (billed in the early 90s as "All People's Dances," then later as "Homo Hops"). The UWSA passed a referendum to collect a small amount of money from student fees (between 50 and 75 cents per student) to fund a positive space campaign in 2009. More recently, the student-led "Inclusive Gym Initiative" has set aside hours for women and non-binary students to use athletic facilities such as the weight room which can be uncomfortable places for people who are not cisgender men; the UWSA also spearheaded the move to establish gender-inclusive washrooms and change rooms beginning in 2014, several of which feature gender-inclusive signage. 2SLGBTQ*-positive student services include both the Aurora Family Therapy Centre, led by Dr. Narumi Taniguchi, and Klinic, the campus health centre.

Current administration

Since the arrival of President Annette Trimbee in 2014, there have been several highly visible initiatives supported at the institutional level. This support has lent important symbolic capital and material resources to 2SLGBTQ* inclusion, beginning with UW's first official participation in the Winnipeg Pride parade in 2015, when the President walked the route carrying the UW banner. (The student association had

maintained an official presence in Pride for many years by this time.) UW's Pride participation came about as an offshoot of an unofficial "LGBTQ-engagement" committee of faculty and staff which had been spearheaded by Marketing and Communications officer Naniece Ibrahim, with an initial mandate of reaching out to potential students and donors, but which soon expanded into a broader "issues and initiatives" committee that meets in the President's boardroom on a range of projects and led to the organization of the UW's first involvement in Winnipeg Pride in 2015.

In no small part because of the institutional legitimacy conferred by the President's active support and encouragement to participate, 2SLGBTQ* initiatives have been acted on swiftly and with the involvement of various administrative units such as Physical Plant, Events, and Communications. The University first raised the Rainbow flag during Pride week, 2016, and again, but at half-mast, after the Orlando nightclub massacre on June 12, 2016. In 2017 the University raised the Two-Spirit flag along with the Rainbow flag at a ceremony officiated by the President and Two-Spirit leaders.

There has been a close alignment between 2SLGBTQ* and Indigenous aspects of the UW community. Jarita Greyeyes (director of Community Learning and Engagement) chaired the 2016 Pride Committee, and co-chaired the 2017 committee with Métis professor Dr. Chantal Fiola (Urban and Inner-City Studies). Greyeyes brought a vision of capacity-building through institution-wide engagement to the task, and under her leadership both events were well supported not only by faculty and staff but by various administrative departments such as Physical Plant and Athletics. The most ambitious institutionally-sponsored 2SLGBTQ* initiative to date has been October 2017 "Two Spirit & Queer People of Colour: A Call to Conversation with LGBT and Allies" conference (C2C), an historic international event co-chaired by Dr. Fiola and Dr. Sharanpal Ruprai (WGS) with institutional resources provided by the President's office and supported by a SSHRC Connection Grant, Research Manitoba Connection Grant, and internal UW Research Grants. C2C convened leading scholars and community members from across Canada in a three-day think-tank to develop Calls to Action for moving forward in a spirit of reconciliation and coalition-building efforts in various personal and institutional spheres that have been affected by colonization. Many delegates from other universities noted that the event would never have happened at their institutions and that no other university president would have given up two days to participate in it.

In spite of these efforts, the inclusion of 2SLGBTQ* people into the academic life of the university seems to be limited to the Faculties of Arts and Education, and even there, the inclusion is limited. One participant in a focus group of UW Faculty of Education students described the experience of being a 2SLGBTQ* person in the sciences at the University: "I am in the sciences and just my personal nature, I don't have any real desire to be like that overt with my sexuality, and like, just people walking down my hallway, for instance. . . . I don't know that it comes up naturally a lot, and I don't know—it's something I've been thinking a lot about lately, like some internalised homophobia that I've got as well, where it's like, this is kind of how I choose to act, and it's like, story-patenting. But other people have a personality type that I think is more outwardly theatric, and, I think, might be associated more with homosexuality, at least in gay men. And maybe that's more prevalent in the arts, I don't know . . . I would definitely feel weird and out of

place with dyed hair, you know, in the Faculty of Science. . . . I think there's an element of professionalism that is maybe tied up in heteronormativity, so, like, you don't really dye your hair, or do really crazy stuff with it in the sciences." This focus group also empahsized the importance of funding 2SLGBTQ*-related research in the UW Faculty of Science because "there's a lot of important work by and for queer people, [that] could be done within the sciences."

Other related initiatives undertaken since 2014 include the following:

- 2SLGBTQ*-inclusive job postings for all UW positions now include the wording, "persons of any sexual orientation or gender identity" in the list of those encouraged and welcome to apply, and applicants for staff positions can self-declare as 2SLGBTQ* in their online application. Some employment forms such as stipendiary contracts need to be updated.
- Agreement to include a non-binary gender option on official documents such as application and registration forms, and preferred-name class lists (approved but not yet implemented), which involves changing admissions and registration forms to ask not only for names on students' official documents but for their preferred name.
- Human Resources VP Laurel Repski and retired Human Rights officer Diana Scarfe ensured that 2SLGBTQ* identity was included in the UW's recent equity survey of staff, in which 8% of UW staff self-identified as 2SLGBTQ* (similar to the percentage identifying as First Nations, Métis, or Inuit).
- As part of the UW Pride 2017 initiative, Alumni Affairs hosted a "Queer Alumni and Friends" event and established an alumni-supported 2SLGBTQ* scholarship in 2017.

Overall, the University has a long history of 2SLGBTQ* initiatives going back almost thirty years, and is seen as a 2SLGBTQ*-friendly institution, but the majority of related initiatives have occurred quite recently. We undertook this study to identify how current students and staff experience the University, and to develop recommendations on where UW might best apply our efforts in future as we continue on the path towards meaningful inclusion of 2SLGBTQ* people in all aspects of campus life.

Methods & Description of Data

Our study of UW's campus climate for 2SLGBTQ* people involved three main activities: (1) an environmental scan of the institution, including a "visual survey" of 2SLGBTQ* visibility through postering and events on campus, a scan of access and inclusion discourse in official communications, recruitment and institutional documents, curriculum documents, etc., and a cataloguing of course offerings with 2SLGBTQ* content; (2) data collected through the UW Campus Survey focusing on student and staff perceptions of the University's access initiatives; (3) and finally, a series of interviews and focus groups with prospective students, current and past students, 2SLGBTQ* faculty and staff, and key allies among faculty, staff and administrators.

Our research questions revolved around the perception of campus climate for 2SLGBTQ* students and staff, with particular attention to its context in the larger UW discourse of social justice and inclusivity. Specifically, we asked: How well are 2SLGBTQ* students respected/included at UW and welcomed/integrated into campus life? How well does UW communicate that 2SLGBTQ* people are welcome here? Are some places more welcoming than others? Is the UW currently an anti-oppressive place (i.e., one that goes beyond safety and inclusion to "queer" hetero-/cis-normative experience and invite a gender-and-sexuality paradigm shift)? Does UW work at respect, inclusion, safety, and equity—and do our efforts appear to be successful? In short, our aim is to understand how well the University is doing in making the campus welcoming for 2SLGBTQ* students, staff, and faculty, and what we could do better. Through the larger Engaging Marginalized Children and Youth ASU project, we secured ethics approval through the UW Research Ethics Board in May 2015 and submitted amendments with our interview and focus group protocols (#HE04581(2-2-1)).

The UW Campus Survey was administered during the 2016 Fall Semester. The survey's purpose was "to see what various constituencies at The University of Winnipeg know and think about programs we offer that engage marginalized communities." The questionnaire, designed to be completed in approximately 10 minutes, included questions about community learning and the active integration of the University into the social, cultural, and educational life of the community. The questions addressed general knowledge of the University's community learning policy and specific community focused initiatives. Participants were offered an opportunity to enter a draw for one of three $100 gift cards.

Finally, interviews and focus groups were conducted with prospective students, faculty and staff, and current students. Interviews with prospective students included two focus groups in Spring 2016 with Gay-Straight Alliances (GSAs) in two of UW's feeder school divisions in Winnipeg, Seven Oaks School Division and River East Transcona School Division. We received ethics approval from each school division to conduct these focus groups during the GSA's regular one-hour meeting time; we contacted the facilitator of each high school GSA in advance to ask them to share project information with their group by providing GSA members with information about our project and to ask whether they would be interested in participating in a short focus group (30–45 minutes). During each focus group, we asked questions to probe GSA members' perceptions and reputation of the UW campus climate for 2SLGBTQ* people.

On campus, we interviewed staff and faculty, administrators, and students. In each case, we did a targeted recruitment of interviewees. Following the UW involvement in Pride 2016, we interviewed President Annette Trimbee and members of the Pride Planning Committee, who represent a wide range of positions and areas in the University including the President's Office, various faculty, Indigenous Affairs, Marketing & Communications, Human Resources, Physical Plant, Sustainability Office, and Athletics; these interviews were conducted between June and September 2016. Further, we contacted several former employees and students for interviews who had historically been actively involved in 2SLGBTQ*-inclusion efforts at UW. And finally, we conducted interviews with students involved in 2SLGBTQ* efforts and one focus group with Education students who had established a GSA within their department (Winter & Spring Terms 2017).

Environmental Scan

In an environmental scan conducted on the main UW campus between September 2015 and September 2016, we observed that 2SLGBTQ* institutional presence was primarily located in the University of Winnipeg Student Association's LGBT* Centre in the Bulman Centre (see fig. 1 and fig. 2), the 49 gender-neutral washrooms (an initiative put forward by the UWSA) (see fig. 3), the permanent Positive Space display on the fourth floor of Centennial Hall (see fig. 4 and fig. 5), and a few offices featuring a "Positive Space" sticker (see fig. 6), including the UWSA offices in Bulman Centre. In 2017, the Bill Wedlake Fitness Centre in the Duckworth Centre implemented reserved gym hours for people who identify as cis or trans women or as non-binary in response to the UWSA's Gym Initiative Campaign (Dow; Jones). The Duckworth Centre also includes the Wellness Centre, housing services from the Klinic on Campus, which "offers client-centered services that are supportive to all ages, genders, faiths, and sexual orientations."

Figure 1

The remaining 2SLGBTQ* presence found on campus was through promotion for external organizations and events, including a stand for *OutWords Magazine*, and posters for the Reel Pride Film Festival, the UWSA Homo Hop, the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority's Two-Spirits Indigenous LGBTQ Reach Out, and the Winnipeg Roller Derby League Pride Bout, (see fig. 7, fig. 8, fig. 9, fig. 10, and fig. 11).

Figure 2

Figure 3

Figure 4

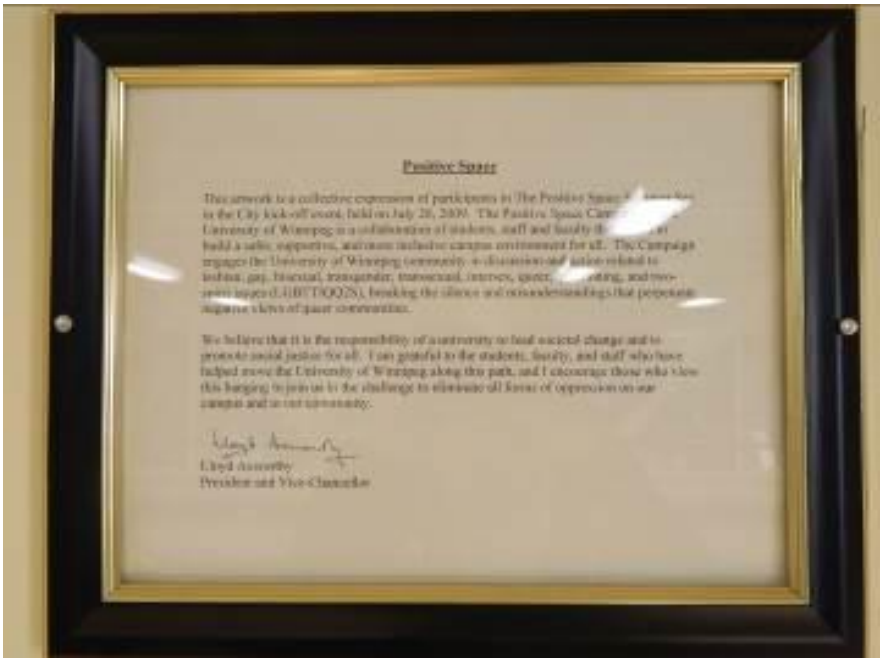

Figure 5

Figure 6

Figure 7

Figure 8

Figure 9

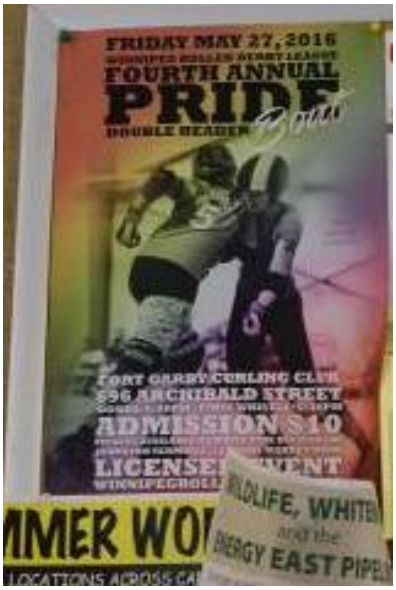

Figure 10

Figure 11

The UW campus supports Pride Week by putting together more 2SLGBTQ*-inclusive displays, including the raising of the Pride Flag in front of Wesley Hall (see fig. 12) and the School Pride: LGBTQ2S Voices + Collections at the UW Library (see fig. 13)

Figure 12

Figure 13

Overall, then, signs of openness and respect for 2SLGBTQ* people on campus fall into three categories: temporary, event-specific posters which come and go, and are easy to miss, and a mix of campus-based and wider community events; flag-raisings, which are also temporary, but more dramatically visible while they are up; and permanent signage for the student LGBT* Centre in the basement of the Bulman Centre, scattered positive space signage or displays, and gender-inclusive washrooms in some but not all campus buildings.

UW Communications and Online Presence

A scan for 2SLGBTQ* content in the UW online presence revealed that most 2SLGBTQ* content was connected to the University of Winnipeg's Pride Week activities, Dr. Catherine Taylor's Every Teacher Project, and the recognition of specific 2SLGBTQ* faculty (Drs. Roewan Crowe, Angela Failler, Heather Milne, Trish Salah, and Catherine Taylor) and their research-related events (e.g., Drs. Roewan Crowe and Trish Salah 2014 Writing Trans Genres: Emergent Literatures and Criticism Conference and 2015 Decolonizing and Decriminalizing Trans Genres Symposium; Dr. Catherine Taylor's 2016 Every Teacher Project Report launch; Drs. Angela Failler and Heather Milne 2017 Museum Queeries Workshop).

There was a significant increase in 2SLGBTQ* content in UW news stories beginning in 2014 (on average, seven times more stories were featured). In 2017, the UW created a sub-site for UW Pride (http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/pride/index.html), which includes related events (UWinnipeg's Pride Parade participation, the Museum Queeries Workshop, a film and lectures series, the UWinnipeg Queer Alumni & Friends Cocktail Party) and information (Orientation Pride 101, volunteer opportunities). Additionally, Taylor and her colleagues have created a UW sub-site for their RISE (Respect, Inclusion, Safety, Equity) research program on 2SLGBTQ*-inclusive education (http://uwinnipeg.ca/rise/), documenting their research (the Every Teacher Project; First National Climate Survey of Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia in Canadian Schools; National Inventory of School District Interventions in Support of LGBTQ Student Wellbeing, RISE Project on LGBTQ-inclusive Teacher Education), as well as a media archive, related publications, and links to external resources.

Most recently, the UW publicized its "C2C: Two Spirit & Queer People of Colour: A Call to Conversation with LGBT & Allies" conference that was held from October 20–22, 2017 (see: http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/c2c/index.html).

The University of Winnipeg Archives features the Two-Spirited Collection (https://www.digitaltransgenderarchive.net/col/c247ds206), which includes newsletters, journals, magazines, reports, newspaper clippings, correspondence, poetry, photographs, posters, art, textiles, books, videocassettes, and other ephemera that document the Indigenous Two-Spirit Movement in Manitoba and throughout North America. A finding aid is uploaded to the Manitoba Archival Information Network to facilitate access.

UW policies that pertain to 2SLGBTQ* climate, include their Respectful Working and Learning Environment Policy (https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/hr/policies/docs/respectful-work-learn-enviro-policy.pdf) as well as 2SLGBTQ*-inclusive job postings.

The UW Collegiate also has a Gay-Straight Alliance, which is featured on the UW website: http://collegiate.uwinnipeg.ca/student-life/clubs-and-sports/gay-and-straight-alliance.html.

UW Courses and 2SLGBTQ* Content

2SLGBTQ* students entering the university will look to the course calendar to find courses with 2SLGBTQ* content. Course descriptions will assist them in finding courses on 2SLGBTQ* topics. For the purposes of our research, we are listing courses in this section of the report that clearly indicate in their titles or descriptions that they include this content. While there are likely additional courses offered that include 2SLGBTQ* content, students won't find them if the content is not evident in the title and/or course description.

The 2015–16 Academic Calendar for UW contained 16 regularly offered courses with 2SLGBTQ* content in their course descriptions:

- Queer Literature, Culture and Theory
- Critical Theory: An Introduction
- Critical Theory
- Topics in Gender, Literature and Culture
- Field of Cultural Studies
- Topics in Genders, Sexualities, and Cultures
- Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies
- Boys, Men and Masculinities on Film
- Sex, Sexuality, Gender and Audiovisual Media
- Food Cultures, Sex, and Gender
- Feminisms: Background and Fundamentals
- Feminisms: Current Perspectives
- Queer Studies in the Global Postmodern
- Gender in Fairytale Film and Cinematic Folklore
- Gender and Sexuality in Muslim Societies
- Post-Baccalaureate Special Topics in Education: Sex and Gender Diversity

Unsurprisingly, a large percentage of these courses (56%) are housed in the Department of Women's and Gender Studies. We found the second largest concentration in the Department of English (37.5%), and the only other departments that offered courses with 2SLGBTQ* content are the Department of Religion and Culture and the Faculty of Education. (Two of these courses did not actually include explicitly 2SLGBTQ* terms, but referenced gender and sexuality instead.)

In the 2015–16 academic year, the English Department offered 8 courses with 2SLGBTQ* content:

- Intro: Topics in Literature: Satire, Comedy, and Race
- English 1A: Genres of English Literature
- English 1A: Insiders and Outsiders
- Topics in Women Writers: Women and Comics
- Eighteenth-Century Studies: Libertines, Whores, Mollies, and Female Husbands: Transgressive Sexuality in the Restoration
- Early Eighteenth Century
- Advanced Studies in Young People's Texts and Cultures: Children's Media Cultures and Audience Studies
- Topic: Orientalism and Inspiration; Topics in Film and Literature: Horror Film/Topics in Visual Cultures: Horror Film)

The Masters in Cultural Studies program has offered a number of 2SLGBTQ*-inclusive courses throughout its inception in 2009; the majority of these courses fall under the Topics in Genders, Sexualities, and Cultures area.

- Topics in Genders, Sexualities, and Culture: Queer Theory
- Topics in Genders, Sexualities, and Culture: Thinking Through the Skin
- Topics in Local, National, and Global Cultures: Queer Studies in the Global Postmodern Topics in Visual Cultures: Graphic Biography
- Topics in Cultural Theory: Concepts in Cultural Theory
- Special Studies in Cultural Theories and Practices
- The Children's Museum: Cross-Disciplinary Approaches to Young Audiences and Participatory Cultures
- Topics in Genders, Sexualities, and Cultures: Trans Cultures and Literatures
- Topics in Genders, Sexualities, and Cultures: Channelling Wonder: Sex, Sexuality, Gender and TV Fairy Tales
- Topics in Genders, Sexualities, and Cultures: Affect Theory
- Topics in Genders, Sexualities and Cultures: Transgender and Transbiology in Traditional and Popular Culture
- Topics in Genders, Sexualities, and Cultures: Sodomy and the Self in Early Modern England Topics in Genders, Sexualities, and Cultures: Affect Theory/Ugly Feelings

- Topics in Genders, Sexualities and Cultures: Libertines, Whores, Mollies, and Female Husbands: Transgressive Sexuality in Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Great Britain
- Topics in Genders, Sexualities and Cultures: Queer Counterpublics

Courses Related to Gender and Sexuality Across the University

When expanding the search for courses with content about gender and sexuality more broadly, 98 courses matched the criteria. Of these courses, the departmental breakdown is as follows:

- 24% in Women's and Gender Studies
- 22% in History
- 12% in English
- 8% in Psychology
- 8% in Rhetoric, Writing and Communication
- 5% in Political Science
- 5% in Education

The remaining 16% came from International Development Studies, Religion and Culture, Sociology, Biochemistry, Geography, Disability Studies, Mennonite Studies, Indigenous Studies, East Asian Languages and Culture, Antrhopology, Spanish Studies, German Studies, Linguistics, Economics, and Biology.

Though these courses have varying focuses on gender and sexuality, many of them feature inquiries into gender and sexuality alongside other identity categories, such as race, ethnicity, and class.

The 2016–17 Academic Calendar added two regularly offered courses with 2SLGBTQ* content in their course descriptions (Disabilities, Sexualities, and Rights; Sexuality, Sex and Gender in the Greek and Roman Worlds). It also included a new Biochemistry summer institute in disease and policy that evaluates the impact of disease and policy on gender and sexuality, among other categories. In Winter 2018, the Faculty of Education offered the first iteration of its undergraduate course on 2SLGBTQ*-inclusive Education, Special Topics: Sexuality and Gender Minority (SGM)–Inclusion Elementary.

Analysis

Despite the university's reputed status as 2SLGBTQ*-friendly, fewer than half (44%) of the 2SLGBTQ* participants in our campus-wide survey saw the University as attempting to engage with the LGBTQ

community, compared to 67% of non-LGBTQ people. [2] In this section we ask, how do participants experience the university climate for 2SLGBTQ* people?

Institutional forms and documents

Marginalized people tend to be experts at reading their environments. When 2SLGBTQ* people enter into a new social context, they cannot be sure how welcome they will be and what effect being known as 2SLGBTQ* would have on their experience there. Often their first interactions as prospective university students are with some form of official documents. They may watch for mentions of 2SLGBTQ* on the University website, or perhaps in recruitment materials distributed at Career Fairs and Open Houses. Once they step onto the campus, they might scan the walls for posters that feature 2SLGBTQ* events. If they make the decision to apply for admission, they may notice, and trans* students certainly will notice, whether the gender boxes on application forms include a non-binary option or whether they have the opportunity to supply a preferred/affirmed name alongside the name on their official documents. As they scan the course calendar and timetable for their first university courses, they may look for signs of 2SLGBTQ* content. When they attend their first classes, the professor may call attendance by reading a class list of official names in which trans* students are mis-gendered.

Several 2SLGBTQ* participants described their first encounters with official documents and forms. Former UWSA President and UW alumna Lauren Bosc reported attending an open house as a Grade 11 student:

> . . . the Women's and Gender Studies table was right at the front and I was confronted with rainbows and, you know, these things that I was like, 'This is amazing that this is at a university and I can't wait to get here and I'm only fifteen and I need to get here now!' . . . I don't even think I went to the University of Manitoba's open house because I came here first and it was like, you know, that's where I'm going to go.

As a student, though, Bosc reported a different experience of official forms, and became determined to ensure that "all of the forms that people filled out from beginning to end of being in university would not . . . say 'gender' first of all and then 'male' and 'female'—but would give the option for people to self-declare, self-identify in a different way." She and other participants expressed a strong preference for self-identification (e.g., "another gender identity; please specify" over the more common "other" option. Similarly, University librarian Dr. Michael Dudley noted that the library has decided to modify their student-accounts forms to ask for preferred pronoun and preferred name in order to avoid misgendering people in personal communications and formal introductions, as happened when he introduced a speaker in the

[2] These figures are based on the campus-wide survey (reported in Hall, 2017 in this report) in response to the question, "Which of the following on and off-campus population groups do you believe the University of Winnipeg attempts to engage/work with as part of its community learning program?"

Library's Pride Week lecture series (who then related to Dudley how they had been repeatedly misgendered by a professor despite numerous reminders).

As Bosc put it,

> . . . it seems like such a small thing but then it's such a huge difference to somebody who is interacting with the university on the very material level to not have to check a box that they don't identify with and they're being forced to check that box for reporting purposes, like that's the line I kept getting fed. Okay I get it but I don't get it. . . . those things add up to like you know, they're like little but it's like death by a thousand cuts, right?

The persistence of binary-only gender options and official-name only on official student and employment documents has been frustrating to many 2SLGBTQ* and ally students and staff. However, the reason for inaction on this superficially small issue is not lack of institutional support or understanding, but two types of systems barriers beyond the university level. The first barrier, as VP Human Resources Laurel Repski explained, is that insurance benefit providers still require a binary gender identification because their actuarial tables are based on male and female health and longevity calculations; the second is that the university, like most other Canadian universities, leases its employee and student records software, and the software providers have not yet agreed to make these changes. However, Repski is committed to making what modifications and workarounds we can while continuing to press benefit and software providers for actual systems change.

2SLGBTQ* Resources

The following supports and resources are available to 2SLGBTQ* students on campus:

- **Klinic Community Health Services**: Klinic is a community health clinic that is supportive to all ages, genders and sexual orientations. They are one of the key health-related resources for trans* people in Winnipeg. Klinic has a space on campus located in the Duckworth Centre to serve the UW community.
- **Student Counselling**: The University offers free counselling services to students and can assist students who are struggling with issues related to gender and sexuality, among other things.
- **Inclusive Gym Initiative**: The UW gym has specific hours reserved exclusively for women and nonbinary gym members.
- **Gender Neutral Washrooms**: There are 49 designated gender neutral washrooms on campus and most university buildings have at least one gender neutral washroom.
- **LGBT* Centre**: The LGBT* Centre is a social space open to all students. The centre offers a safe space for students to socialize. It offers safer sex supplies, acts as a community referral network to the larger queer community, provides education and support, and organizes events both on and off

campus in the hopes of promoting positive attitudes towards LGBTTQ people. It is operated through the University of Winnipeg Students' Association.

In spite of the availability of these resources and services, our research indicates that many students are not aware of them. Information is not readily available during student orientation and on the university website so that students in need can be aware that these services are available and find out how to access them. (As of publication, UW's Communications department is developing a Q-Hub, a consolidated 2SLGBTQ* online presence on UW's website that includes a listing of research and researchers, courses, student services, initiatives such as Pride, and UW news items.)

Inclusion of 2SLGBTQ* content in curriculum

Our findings suggest that UW students do not experience much integration of 2SLGBTQ* content across courses and departments. The respondents in a focus group of UW Education students expressed this concern within their own Education curriculum, and found their Faculty to be a very heteronormative environment where 2SLGBTQ* people and issues were largely invisible. While some of the respondents had taken Women's and Gender Studies (WGS) courses as electives, they felt that if they hadn't sought out these courses, they might have completed an undergraduate degree without encountering any 2SLGBTQ* content. This lack of 2SLGBTQ* representation extended into the Education students' after-degree program; one Education student elaborated: "there is no representation in the Faculty of Education, in the classes that we're studying, so that I notice there's a big difference between my undergraduate [in WGS] and my after-degree—I feel like it's invisible." When LGBTQ content is incorporated in Education courses, the focus group participants found it to be cursory, such as a ten-minute discussion of LGBTQ issues in schools within a social studies context. One student also suggested that this discussion is often limited and not particularly integrated: "I think I maybe heard about queer issues in maybe one class . . . I think it was the inclusive approach to teaching exceptional students in class, like the umbrella, like, this is all the special kids in one class." Another student identified 2SLGBTQ*-related opportunities that could be explored within the existing science curriculum: "I think there could have been more time spent on situations where in the curriculum there actually are LGBTQ issues. Like, I did the grade eleven circulatory system unit in my last practicum, and part of that curriculum involves talking about donor restrictions, and that didn't come up in . . . the curricular course, and so I just kind of like went at it. And I don't know, that's the first time I ever taught it. I'm an LGBTQ person, so I had some of the tools to be able to talk to people about that sort of thing. But I imagine anyone who wasn't particularly mindful of that, would just go into that curriculum and probably not touch that at all, or just not deal with it really well." In her interview, Lauren Bosc expressed a similar concern about UW science curricula: "in my biology courses where there was like the potential, you know, even to include examples that didn't follow very heteronormative script, there were opportunities and I saw the opportunities but they were never taken up right, like it was—the norms were just reiterated every single time they could be."

Though our findings show that the majority of 2SLGBTQ* content can be found in UW humanities courses, a current UW student who identifies as trans found there to be a lack of 2SLGBTQ* representation in

Faculty of Arts courses as well: “I took first-year English. I don’t think there’s any queer content in that at all. I took a few history classes. I can’t really remember any queer content in that at all. I’ve taken some disability studies courses. There might have been, I think, some queer content in the one I took last year, called Theorising Disability, but never like a very central part of the curriculum, more like kind of like in passing, or just like bringing up as an example.”

In addition to noting the lack of 2SLGBTQ* content in courses, some students felt that professors could be more proactive in creating a safe and inclusive learning environment for 2SLGBTQ* students. A student in the Education focus group raised the question of training for faculty and staff regarding creating safe and positive spaces during classes: “I wonder if there’s any training sessions, like professional development for professors. Because I feel like maybe they need to be more informed of how much their voice of authority matters in taking charge of moments, like if anything problematic is said.” In this regard, the student acknowledged that it can be particularly difficult to moderate discussions in class, but stressed that the professor is the “authority” in that space and has a responsibility to facilitate respectful, inclusive conversations in keeping with the University’s mandate.

Our focus group with the Miles Macdonell Collegiate GSA revealed that high school students are in favour of a more wide-ranging integration of 2SLGBTQ* content across the arts and sciences, seeing an interrelationship between the two often siloed subject areas: “if you have, in sciences, queer visibility on that subject matter, I think that’s a way for them to be self-reflective about what they're teaching, also bring into the sciences those questions of identity. Because ultimately, like both science and arts, we’re talking about the same things in different ways.” This focus group also suggested that they would be interested in a course specifically about 2SLGBTQ* history.

Michael Dudley, the UW Indigenous and Urban Services Librarian, confirmed this need for a more widespread integration of 2SLGBTQ* content across disciplines: “It’s not just that there’s a course on Women’s Studies or Gender Studies, but that, really, everything can be looked at through that lens and to provide insights . . . whether it’s history, sociology, psychology, theology . . . overlooking the gender component is a real mistake.” Dudley, commenting on how a pathologizing discourse about sexual and gender diversity is structured into the Library of Congress classification system (which categorizes LGBTQ issues alongside sex crimes and pedophilia) and thereby “cemented in our library,” also suggested that the university library should develop a separate 2SLGBTQ* subject guide for the library’s online resources. (Following this interview, in Fall 2017, the library developed and launched a Queer Studies guide online [http://libguides.uwinnipeg.ca/queerstudies], in addition to the library’s Women’s and Gender Studies subject guide.)

Keith Fulton, a retired Professor in the UW Department of English, identified courses and curriculum as a key area for improvement and opportunity to make 2SLGBTQ* issues visible: “I put a lot of stock into curriculum. What is happening inside the courses? What is the subject matter, and what is the context for? Like, how is it being animated? So how do we use—how do we talk about this stuff? And I mean, this was

kind of old days of feminist critique of the disciplines, which just, you know, began by exposing absences. But I think we're still there—and so, wherever the university can make presence instead of absence . . ." She also suggested that the university work on "a project that identified . . . content and relevance across the curriculum, and . . . contact . . . each teacher and put together a kind of presence—and not for the purpose of analysis, but more like a map of the neighbourhood. How would you move around and see where you can learn different things?"

Supports for 2SLGBTQ* Faculty and Staff

Our research reveals that 2SLGBTQ*-identified faculty and staff at the UW experience few 2SLGBTQ*-related supports and inclusive hiring practices. Though position vacancies now include gender and sexuality as part of their equity statement, the current hiring packages for staff and contract employees ask new hires to identify as either male or female on their employment forms, which excludes employees that identify outside of this binary.

Keith Fulton, former Professor in the UW Department of English, spoke eloquently about the challenges of feeling welcome and included at the university as an 2SLGBTQ* person:

> it's a complicated situation that . . . a lot of people would recognize, because we seek to be welcomed. And we adapt our behaviour to be welcomed. And even when, as I was, we're aware that our value is in being whole, when we walk through those doors, great chunks of us fall off, and we arrive at our offices more manicured, more uniform, more remote. And so, when you ask that I feel welcomed, both yes and no, because I was aware of that struggle. And I was also fairly alone in that struggle. Now, of course, I wasn't totally alone, but it was easier for me to forge alliances outside the university, and then try to carry that strength into the institution than it was to seek connections or even accept connections that focused on my being a lesbian inside the university.

Jarita Greyeyes, UW Director of Community Learning and Engagement, suggested that 2SLGBTQ*-identified faculty and staff and their allies, like the Indigenous community on campus, could establish a similar model of on- and off-campus support networks as:

> I think that maybe . . . as part of the indigenous community, we have lots of ways to engage with one another off-campus, you know. And so I think if we kind of can—not replicate, but mirror those ways of interacting, you know, because we do have a connection. You know, the other indigenous people on campus have a connection with them that extends beyond the university because we're part of the same sort of Winnipeg Indigenous community. And I think that's important because, you know, obviously we don't all think alike and act alike or work on the same projects or in the same departments here, but we have found a way to engage with one another that allows us to support each other, even if we're not working on

> the same things or even think that we should be working on the same things in the same way, right?

Alana Lajoie-O'Malley, Senior Advisor for Research and Sustainability, spoke of the importance of sustainability in terms of social and community terms:

> [T]here's this social foundation that we need to have established to have healthy resilient communities. . . . So the inclusiveness piece is a huge part of that social foundation. . . [If] we're living in a community that's marginalizing people then we don't have the social foundation we need to thrive as a community and so. . . part of my office's role has been to sort of try to identify where some of those gaps are but in many ways there are so many other departments that kind of already do that that we don't tend to have a very active role. I mean like we've already got an office that does health and safety, we've got a diversity officer, we have . . . you know, like that stuff's going on so there's no need for us to start developing programming around it, but from a sort of planning, coordinating, understanding the big picture perspective certainly we would want to look and be aware of places where we do have gaps in some of those areas and then try to start to identify ways of filling them.

President Annette Trimbee spoke about the need to create a safe environment with appropriate supports on campus, highlighting the need for a comprehensive approach that accounts for difference and integrates supports:

> [I]f you want to create a safe environment where people belong, you have to acknowledge that people experience U of W in different ways. . . . So part of it is finding the right supports to help a group that feels marginalized but doing so in a way that doesn't make them feel marginalized. . . . So that's the art: trying to find a way to provide the supports but to allow those students the opportunity to see themselves in a whole variety of ways and not just one that's defined by their orientation. They're more than that. They're that and more, right? . . . Well, if you create a safe space. Is it a space just for them or is it a space—right? . . . [W]hat's an appropriate mix of supports? What's an appropriate level of recognition? I don't know. We have an Indigenous advisory circle. We don't have an LGBTQ advisory circle. Do we need one? Do we need more structures? Or do we have the structures we already have? . . . We talk about creating a place where everybody belongs. We talk about visible minorities and disabled and Indigenous. I don't think in our strategic plan we use the word [LGBTQ] . . . . [U]niversities should be a few steps ahead of mainstream culture. So you should feel safer here than anywhere else.

In this, Dr. Trimbee's rhetorical questions highlight a thoughtful consideration of how to provide support that does not further marginalize or alienate 2SLGBTQ* students, faculty or staff within the broader UW community.

Similarly, Communications Officer Naniece Ibrahim, who organized the unofficial "LGBTQ-engagement" committee of faculty and staff that led to the University's first institutional Pride Parade participation in 2015, observed that this committee could provide consistent, ongoing efforts at the institution through an ongoing 2SLGBTQ* committee:

> Some people have fabulous ideas and they don't go places because there isn't the manpower or the buy in, but I think with this particular case and how the committee operated, the buy in was super easy because no one wants to take on the responsibility of the first committee I had. It's a big. . . responsibility and you need a lot of time. You need to be focused and it should be measurable so I think that task is probably more important than the Pride Parade to be honest because it's an ongoing thing. Pride is once a year and there's a lot of things that are important that need to be dealt with I think on an ongoing basis but no one has the time or willing to commit to the responsibility. . . . but I think the committee does more valuable work in the fact that it's not seen and it's done in a way that . . . is a more important and relevant thing for the LGBT community on a daily basis than a parade. I really think that the university should form that original committee, like strengthen it. I mean we want to get it recognized by the President's Office [and] there is buy in.

Ibrahim highlights the need for a facilitator to spearhead these efforts to ensure continuity within the committee's efforts.

The work of the 2SLGBTQ* committee could be complemented by the work of the Empolyment Equity Committee. Laurel Repski, UW Vice-President (Human Resources, Audit & Sustainability), suggested that the Employment Equity Committee has additional work to do on making the UW an inclusive environment for 2SLGBTQ* faculty and staff, including improving the teaching evaluation process, which, like such processes widely used elsewhere, currently often favours white, heterosexual, cisgender men.

2SLGBTQ*-Inclusive Branding and Communications

Our findings from interviews and focus groups with current, former, and prospective UW students and UW staff indicate that the UW could improve their communications strategy by including more 2SLGBTQ* content in their overall branding and recruitment materials, and promoting UW 2SLGBTQ* research and 2SLGBTQ* events and news on campus in both online and physical spaces at the university.

A former LGBT* Director for the UWSA and current UW student recommended that 2SLGBTQ* students be more visible in both UW recruitment materials and other promotional channels around the campus; however, they also suggested that these should be developed carefully to ensure that they were respectful: "I guess . . . this is where it gets tricky, right, because you don't want to like portray LGBT students as looking a certain way and everything like that. But like I guess, yeah, having like promotional materials around campus, like the different signs on the TV screens and stuff like that showing . . . students that look

different than the average white cisgender person." Additionally, they suggested that the UW website explicitly state that it's "a safe learning environment for queer students, racialized students."

Both of the focus groups with high school GSAs at Miles Macdonell Collegiate and Maples Collegiate agreed that there should be more 2SLGBTQ* visibility in the UW recruitment promotional materials. The students at Miles Macdonell also suggested that there should be higher visibility of 2SLGBTQ* events held at the UW beyond the university community, as well as promotional materials that feature both heteronormative and 2SLGBTQ* couples.

A former UW student and Wesman athlete wanted to see a queer positive communications strategy on campus, such as the presence of more queer positive posters, including 2SLGBTQ* people of colour, in the campus hallways. She added that "people think they're not a very big deal, but they're a huge deal." She also suggested that 2SLGBTQ* content could be more consolidated in promotional materials, especially in making related services more visible; however, she emphasized that there needs to be a respectful balance in making these services visible and safe: "I can understand to a point, where you wouldn't necessarily want to advertise all things, because maybe people should be able to access services anonymously and to keep those safe, those spaces as safe as possible, really shouldn't be as visible. But I do think that it's important for, in some way, to make it public and visible so that people know."

One faculty member suggested that 2SLGBTQ* content could be better highlighted in UW online communications, including on the UW website; they expressed disappointment that the UW didn't report Catherine Taylor's speech at the Steinbach Pride Parade in 2016 in any of their communication channels (note: it has since been uploaded to Taylor's research site at uwinnipeg.ca/rise).

In addition to highlighting and promoting 2SLGBTQ* content more generally through the UW communications channels, our research also indicates that the university should be specifically promoting UW participation in Pride. Sarra Deane, the Executive Assistant for UW Indigenous Affairs, suggested that the university should be communicating and promoting its participation in Pride "for it to have a campus-wide effect."

Inclusivity and Diversity

The University of Winnipeg has participated in Winnipeg Pride for the past three years. The raising of the Pride and Two-Spirit flags for Pride Week sends a powerful message of inclusion and respect for diversity; as Dr. Narumi Taniguchi put it, "the first time I saw the rainbow flag flying it made me so proud and happy to be a part of this University." However, the flag is usually raised only during Pride Week in June when most students are not attending classes, and we found that the message of 2SLGBTQ*-inclusion is not conveyed consistently throughout the year or across the campus. (In 2017, the Pride and Two-Spirit flags were also raised during the C2C conference from October 19 to October 22, which visibly demonstrated the significant institutional support for the event to the conference delegates.) For example, there are no pride

flags or banners at the entrances to university buildings (Centennial Hall, Richardson College, and Buhler) where students do see other signs of diversity and inclusiveness.

Our research indicates that some students who identify as QPOC (Queer People of Colour) and/or Two-Spirit often feel marginalized from the LGBT* Centre and from 2SLGBTQ* events on campus because they perceive them to cater mainly to white LGBTQ students. One former student noted "myself and two of my very close friends, we either identify as Two-Spirit and Métis or queer Métis, Two-Spirit Indigenous and we don't see ourselves on campus." Another explained, "there are a lot of queer people of colour that I'm talking to currently, who are newcomers, who find it really difficult to connect with queer white people, they just, there's like the cultural differences. And for them to feel totally safe would mean, you know, connecting with other queer people of colour and being able to talk about their experiences culturally and have an understanding that way." The university should not only work towards creating an environment that acknowledges and affirms intersectional identities, Two Spirit, and queer people of colour, it should also actively work to decolonize queer spaces on campus.

Gender Neutral Washrooms

The university has several designated gender neutral washrooms and most campus buildings have at least one gender neutral washroom. However, students who use these washrooms note that they are often perceived as unsafe or inconveniently located. One trans-identified student noted that in order to use the washroom during a class, he had to travel from the fourth floor of Centennial Hall to the main floor, which entailed missing much more class time than he would have missed had there been a washroom closer to the classroom. The washroom on the second floor of Manitoba Hall has a door that does not lock and a stall that does not close and is widely perceived to be unsafe; this washroom has generally gone unused since the lock was removed approximately three years ago.

Recommendations

Our study confirmed that many individuals, including University administrators who are in a position to effect change at the system level, want the University campus to be a safe and inclusive place for 2SLGBTQ* students (and staff). However, many of the initiatives undertaken so far have not been very noticeable to students in their everyday lives (e.g., participants were generally unaware of the University's Pride participation or flag-raising). Based on the findings from our focus groups, interviews, climate scans, and survey results, we are offering the following recommendations for consideration. We feel that the implementation of these recommendations will significantly improve the campus climate for 2SLGBTQ* students, staff, and faculty.

1. Intersectionality, Diversity, and Inclusion

More effort needs to be made to ensure that the campus is a safe and affirming space for 2SLGBTQ* students and staff of all racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. Two-Spirit and racialized LGBTQ* students

and staff often feel doubly marginalized at the university, and tend to feel that the LGBTQ* campus culture is not attentive to racial and cultural diversity. Consideration of intersectional identities (notably, Two Spirit/2S and queer people of colour/QTBIPOC identities) should be at the forefront of all efforts to improve 2SLGBTQ* inclusion at the University of Winnipeg, and efforts to increase visibility and ameliorate marginalization among these identities should be consistently foregrounded. These efforts might take the form of including 2S/QTBIPOC acronyms within or alongside LGBTQ* in equity statements and hiring documents; concerted attention to providing space for 2S/QTBIPOC individuals at queer-themed activities on campus, such as Pride; or adopting the practice of placing "2S" at the beginning of "LGBTQ" to acknowledge that Two-Spirit Indigenous people were the first sexual and gender minority people in North America, and thereby demonstrate respect and increase visibility (a practice that we have adopted for this report).

2. Two-Spirit Inclusion in University Indigenization

One obvious opportunity for intersectionality is the inclusion of Two Spirit content in the university's Indigenization efforts. The Indigenous Course Requirement (ICR) at the UW could include 2S content. The UW has begun this work already through its support of C2C conference and its inclusion of 2S Elders in ceremony; for instance, the UW's invitation to Albert McLeod (Two-Spirited People of Manitoba Inc.) to participate in the flag-raising ceremony for 2017 Pride celebrations helped to forefront racial and cultural diversity and position Two-Spirit identity prominently in UW's Pride celebrations. We recommend that the university continue to find ways to foreground Two Spirit content in courses and participation in campus events.

3. Positive Space Campaign and Professional Development Opportunities

We recommend that the university implement ongoing professional development opportunities through an organization like the Rainbow Resource Centre. Professors, support staff, and other employees could participate in this training in order to learn how to implement positive changes in their workspaces to ensure that they are more explicitly inclusive for 2SLGBTQ* people. Upon completion of ally training, participants are provided with a UW-branded sign or a sticker for their office or workspace indicating that this is a 2SLGBTQ* positive space. Positive space campaigns send a powerful message of inclusion and diversity and let 2SLGBTQ* students know that this is a safe space. Other universities and colleges, including Red River College, have implemented positive space campaigns and ally training and have had positive results. The UWSA attempted to institute a positive space campaign in 2009 but the event seemed to have lost momentum as student government changes from year to year and each student government has different goals and mandates. For this reason, we feel that initiatives like a positive space campaign should be overseen by the university itself (perhaps in consultation with the UWSA and the LGBT* Centre) to ensure continuity and consistency.

4. A 2SLGBTQ* Advisory Circle to the President or President's Task Force on 2SLGBTQ* topics

We recommend the establishment of a group of staff and faculty members who are committed to equity and inclusion for 2SLGBTQ* students and staff. This task force would be available for consultation on a broad range of issues and could take the lead in implementing some of the changes recommended in this report. Support of the President's Office for key initiatives such as Pride has been important to engaging segments of the university community that might not otherwise have become involved in a 2SLGBTQ*-related event. This broader engagement strategy has great potential to build capacity and solidarity.

5. Education for Professors

Professors need guidance and education on how they might make their classrooms as safe and inclusive as possible for 2SLGBTQ* students. This should include guidance on best practices for respecting students' pronouns and preferred names and addressing homophobic and transphobic comments from other students in the classroom.

6. Inclusion of 2SLGBTQ* Topics in Curriculum

At present, 2SLGBTQ* topics are present in the curriculum in a handful of academic departments (Women's and Gender Studies, Writing and Rhetoric, English, and Education). We would like to see other academic divisions and departments incorporating 2SLGBTQ* content and issues in their courses in a positive and affirming manner across the university, including in the Faculty of Science. For example, one strategy to increase students' access to 2SLGBTQ* content in their courses would be for departments to develop 2SLGBTQ*-specific courses, or to expand selections of departmentally cross-listed courses that would provide students with opportunity to enrol in existing courses with 2SLGBTQ* content. Further strategies could develop through the work of an 2SLGBTQ* Advisory Circle or as outcomes of the capacity-building inherent in positive space training.

7. Supports for 2SLGBTQ* Faculty and Staff

We recommend that steps be taken to ensure the university's commitment to diversity in its hiring practices, and to ensure that all units across the university are safe and respectful environments for LGBTQ, QPOC, and Two-Spirit-identified staff. Almost all of the out, 2SLGBTQ*-identified faculty members at the university teach in the Faculty of Arts. The lack of openly 2SLGBTQ* staff and faculty deprives 2SLGBTQ* students of the benefit of role models and deprives other students of the opportunity to counteract some false beliefs they may have about 2SLGBTQ* people.

8. Registration Forms

Whenever possible, students should not be made to declare a gender on university forms. When the declaration of gender is necessary, students should be give more inclusive options. Rather than the options of "male," "female," and "other" students should be given the options of "male," "female" and "another gender identity (e.g. Trans, Two-Spirit, Non Binary, please specify _____)."

9. WebAdvisor

A preferred name and pronoun option should be made available on WebAdvisor and instructors should be advised to use these in all interactions with students. This would relieve students of the burden (and potential stigma) of having to ask their professors to call them by their preferred name or pronoun.

10. Student I.D.

Students who are legally changing their gender and name should not have to pay to change their gender on their student I.D. and other university documentation. Many transgender students face employment barriers and familial estrangement and as a consequence, have very little money. The cost of issuing a new I.D. can be prohibitive.

11. 2SLGBTQ* Inclusive Branding and Communications

The University could send a positive message of diversity and inclusion by including 2SLGBTQ* visibility and messages of inclusion on promotional material. This could consist of a small rainbow flag and a medicine wheel on university promotional material and brochures. It could also include the use of visibly 2SLGBTQ* students in advertising campaigns and on the UW website; these ads need not feature 2SLGBTQ* themes or content, but they would show that the UW is open, diverse, and inclusive by representing 2SLGBTQ* students as part of the university community.

12. Information on 2SLGBTQ* Resources During Orientation

Students should be made aware during orientation of the services and supports available to 2SLGBTQ* students. This could include information on inclusive gym hours, gender-neutral washrooms, the LGBT* Centre, the counseling services, and Klinic, as well as other supports and resources. Our research indicates that students are often not aware that these supports are available to them. Our focus groups with high school GSAs indicated that students would appreciate information about the university's attempt to make the campus more inclusive for 2SLGBTQ* students, and would appreciate information about campus resources and that this could inform their decision to attend the University of Winnipeg.

13. Pride Flag at Front Entrance

A rainbow flag or rainbow banner hanging at the entrance to each of the main buildings on campus would be a simple gesture that would send a powerful message of inclusion. This would be especially important in buildings which do not currently have other forms of 2SLGBTQ* visibility and which may house faculties not typically associated with 2SLGBTQ* inclusion. Further, several participants noted the symbolic power of seeing the Pride and Two-Spirit flags flying from the campus flagpole during Pride Week or to demonstrate UW's solidarity during special events or to commemorate tragedy (e.g., for the C2C conference in 2017 or the Pulse nightclub shooting in 2016). We recommend that the university continue to raise the flag on such occasions in addition to the permament installation of a rainbow banner at the entrance to key buildings on campus.

14. Gender-Neutral Washrooms

More attention needs to be paid to the location and safety of gender-neutral washrooms. Students indicate that some of the gender neutral washrooms in Centennial and Manitoba Halls feel unsafe due to doors that don't lock and the location of washrooms in busy and conspicuous locations. Information regarding the locations of these washrooms should be made available to students and staff who need them but this needs to be done in a way that does not compromise safety.

Engaging Marginalized Members of the Community in the Axworthy Health & RecPlex

David Telles-Langdon & Nathan Hall

Abstract

Children and youth in Winnipeg's inner city are differentially affected by poverty, racism, and diminished life opportunities. The untapped resources of a university provide a cornucopia of engagement opportunities for children, youth, and other community members to be physically active, to join sport teams, and to take advantage of the university sport and physical activity resources. This study was an exploration of how successful the RecPlex and Community Charter has been in providing these opportunities.

[FULL ARTICLE STILL IN DEVELOPMENT]

“We Are All Relations”: An Indigenous Course Requirement (ICR) as Part of a Good Way to Reconciliation

Helen Lepp Friesen[1]

Abstract

This mixed-methods study consulted with students, faculty, and staff members to develop insight into the range of their experiences of the Indigenous Course Requirement (ICR) in its initial implementation in the 2016/17 academic year at The University of Winnipeg. Although students and instructors had suggestions for how to improve course content, development, delivery, and support, there were far more positive reactions to the ICR experience than negative.

Faculty indicated concern about a potential backlash from students especially in “dominant locations”, but findings showed a better than expected result. The engaged, enthusiastic students had a direct impact on professors also having a positive experience, whereas the disengaged antagonistic students caused concern for both professors and classmates. Themes that emerged from the positive learning experiences were the importance of relationships, respect, safety, an eagerness to learn together with and from Indigenous peoples, and a desire to work together towards reconciliation for a better and more inclusive educational system and society.

Challenges that faculty, staff, and students indicated were the pressure on Indigenous students to take on the role of token authority on “the” Indigenous experience, how to sensitively support students and staff when talking about a traumatic history, and how to manage contentious discussions in class. There was consensus that racism and lack of knowledge exists and that education and relationships are key to changing stereotypes.

Recommendations for improvements were gleaned from participant suggestions. Necessary components to moving forward in a good way included providing students with more information about the ICR and the intentions behind it, and more support services, training, and debrief mechanisms for all involved.

Keywords: ICR, Indigenization, racism, reconciliation, TRC, UNDRIP

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[1] This study was conducted as part of a larger collaborative research project funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council to study The University of Winnipeg’s existing access initiatives. Research assistance by Tyler Andrade.

Terms used in the Report

Holistic education: The educational philosophy that seeks to engage students emotionally, physically, and spiritually besides the traditionally single intellectual pursuit.

Indigenous: People who identify as First Nations, Métis, or Inuit.

Indigenization: Changing the education system to include Indigenous content and pedagogy. Indigenization is about safety of learners, of cultural experience, of grieving, of identity, about our well-being and the opportunity to learn and grow together (Lamoureux, 2017).

Marginalized: To be treated as less than equal.

Reconciliation: An Indigenous student in this study described reconciliation in a succinct way that I will posit as a definition here: "recognising that there are unforgivable histories that have become intertwined through direct action, and now direct action is required by an oppressive party, by a colonial party, to find out what their place is in solving the problems that can be solved and in encouraging healing in areas where there is, potentially, unhealable damage."

Settler: A relational term to describe peoples of original European descent (Vowel, 2016). In our survey, "white" was one of the ethnic identifiers, but in the report, we changed the identifier to "settler" since that is how some participants identified themselves. We recognize that using identifiers like settler, Indigenous, and International are problematic and that there is no one group that is uniform or homogenous. Therefore, we do not use these identifiers lightly. We apologize if these identifiers are offensive. We recognize that each individual in this research project has a name with a unique background and heritage, and that is how we would like to refer to participants, but the reason for this choice is to strive for anonymity as much as is possible.

Trigger: An experience that takes a person back to a memory or flashback to a traumatic event.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC): TRC was established as part of the Indian Residential School Settlement to inform Canadians about what happened in Indian Residential Schools. Completed in December 2015, the TRC documented survivors and communities' stories and included 94 calls to action to redress the residential school legacy.

Turtle Island: Ojibway term for the land known as North America.

Two Row Wampum Belt: The first agreement in 1613 between Indigenous and Dutch settlers in North America, which formed the basis for all other treaty relationships. The treaty outlined the commitment to

friendship, peace between nations, and living as brothers and sisters (Venables, 2009). The Two Row Wampum Belt symbolized “two vessels travelling down the same river in the same direction, living and learning together but never crossing paths or interfering with one another” (Koblun, 2016). The treaty was to remain in effect for all time.

UNDRIP: United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Background

The University of Winnipeg (UW) is a medium-sized urban university with a student body of about 9,400 students where 13% of the student population self-identify as Indigenous (UWinnipeg Fast Facts, 2017). The University of Winnipeg and Lakehead University in Thunderbay, Ontario are the first universities in Canada to put into effect an Indigenous course requirement (ICR) for all incoming university students. Both universities started the implementation of this new requirement in the fall of 2016 (Indigenous Content Requirement, 2017). The goal of the ICR at UW is that all students learn basic knowledge about Indigenous people and culture (Indigenous Course Requirement, 2016). This is a brief history of how the ICR came into effect at UW. Students played an integral role in the process, and eventual implementation of the ICR and these are some of the events that led to the ICR inception.

In a ceremony in the fall of 2012, Wab Kinew, then director of Indigenous Inclusion at UW, presented Lloyd Axworthy, then President and Vice-Chancellor of UW, with a sacred Anishinaabe pipe as a "way to build bridges between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities" (Axworthy & Kinew, 2013). At the time, Idle No More movements marched their way onto main streets and front pages of newspapers across the country, reminding everyone "that this country began with co-operation between Indigenous and European peoples" (Axworthy & Kinew, 2013). The response garnered divided reaction "making supporters of some 'average Canadians' and drawing vehement and occasionally, vitriolic opposition from others" (Axworthy & Kinew, 2013). Indigenous peoples were standing up not only for themselves but for the benefit of all Canadians. Kinew and Axworthy (2013) saw the beginning of a new relationship and committed to "work toward mutually beneficial solutions. Let's be divided no more."

In February 2013, racist graffiti in a UW washroom targeted First Nations peoples, and disparaging comments about Idle No More appeared online. Axworthy and human resource officials took the actions seriously, expressed their apology, committed to revising the University's respectful workplace policy, requiring staff to take workshops, and offering a seminar by Wab Kinew. The Aboriginal Students Council applauded the response indicating that Aboriginal students were not the only ones experiencing discrimination on campus, and that learning about mutual respect would benefit everyone (Graffiti at University of Winnipeg, 2013). In 2015, *Maclean's* published Nancy Macdonald's article entitled "Welcome to Winnipeg: Where Canada's racism problem is at its worst." The city and University took these accusations seriously and again committed to working on what they recognized was indeed a problem. Although both Axworthy and Kinew had left the University by 2014 and 2016 respectively, the established commitment of Axworthy and Kinew's work combined with racist incidents on campus collectively contributed to the years of 2015–17 bringing major curricular changes to the University.

In 2015, the Canadian federal government released the 94 Calls to Action to redress the previous wrongdoings to the Indigenous peoples of Canada (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada [TRC], 2015). This was in an effort to rebuild relations with First Nations peoples (TRC, 2015). To incorporate

Indigenous knowledge into coursework acknowledges that UW is located on Treaty One land in the heart of the Métis Nation (Indigenous Course Requirement, 2016) and takes the TRC's calls to action seriously.

The University of Winnipeg Student Association (UWSA) was aware of the political, social, and local climate and initially formed the ICR concept in response to national and local events. Through informal and formal discussions, debates, and research the UWSA proposed the course to the University's Senate. The new course requirement, first proposed during Axworthy's presidency was approved by the Senate in November 2015 and in the fall of 2016 was implemented for all undergraduate students (Indigenous Course Requirement, 2016) with the support of Dr. Annette Trimbee, who succeeded Axworthy as President and Vice-Chancellor. In the 2016/2017 academic year, 27 unique courses with a total of 46 sections were offered across 9 different departments.

This study reports student, faculty, and staff response to the first year of the implementation of the ICR. The overarching research question of this study was: How does the University attempt to engage marginalized students through the ICR? How does the ICR's goal of engaging marginalized students fit into the wider objectives of the University?

Data Collection and Recruitment

Multimodal data were collected during the winter of 2017; collection started on January 31, 2017, and ended on April 24, 2017. Data were collected through individual faculty and staff interviews, student surveys, and focus groups. Faculty and staff were recruited through direct contact with departments that offered ICR courses. Student survey participants were recruited through a mass email to all UW students that had taken an ICR course in the fall term of 2016 and winter term of 2017. Focus group participants were also recruited through the mass email that went to the same pool of students that received the survey invitation.

Sample Size, Participant Demographics, and Research Methods

Data were collected from the following:

- 10 faculty and staff from six departments participated in the individual 30-minute voice recorded interviews.
- 164 students responded to a survey invitation sent to 1,230 students who had taken an ICR (13% response rate).
- 19 students participated in one of three 60-90–minute focus group discussions.

Where analysis permitted we compared the experience based on gender, ethnicity, and length of time at the University. This report presents descriptive statistics including demographics and length of time at UW and how these variables influenced the quality of participants' experience with the ICR course they took during the 2016/2017 academic year. Qualitative data were organized into meaningful themes and categories using selective and axial coding as suggested by Kleiman (2004). Quotes that pertained to the selected themes and categories were inserted under corresponding headings to quilt together a patchwork of quotes. Next, in the process of axial coding, we connected, interrelated, evaluated, and interpreted common themes that emerged. We then offered a "textural" description of the ICR experience.

Gender

Gender: 63% of the survey respondents identified as female, 19% identified as male, less than 1% identified as transgender, and 18% chose not to identify. The sample seems representative, since the UW "gender breakdown" for undergrads shows 62% of the student body is female (see Figure 1).

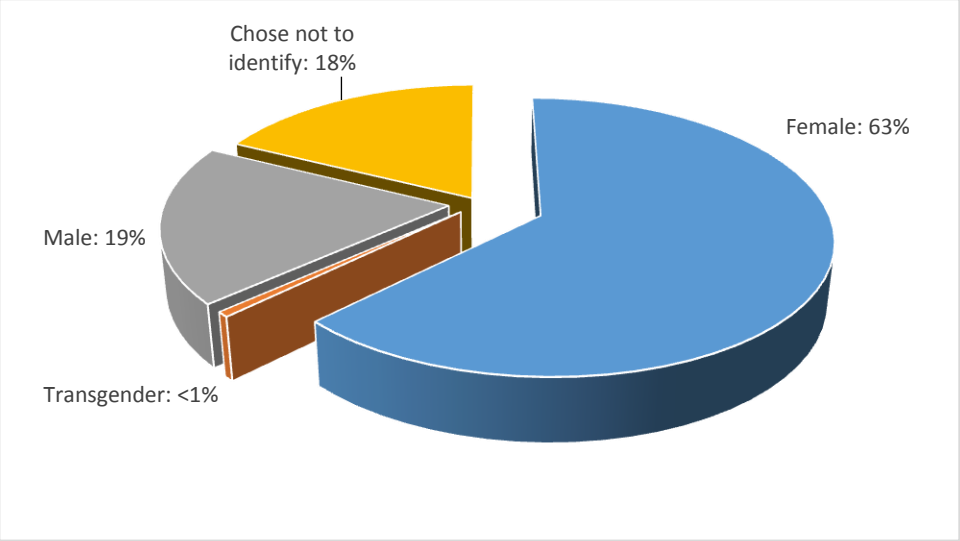


Figure 1: Survey participants based on gender

An interesting finding from the survey was that female students reported having had a much more positive experience than males. Four-fifths (80%) of female survey participants gave their course a positive rating, whereas only 45% of the male participants gave their course a positive rating (see Figure 2; numbers on the chart are number of participants).

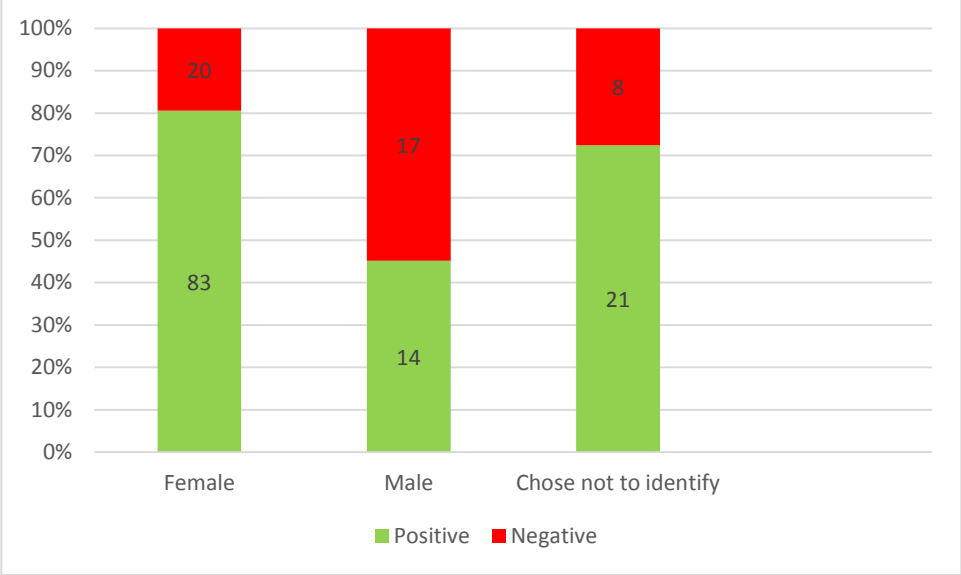


Figure 2: ICR student experience based on gender
(Note: Too few cases to report on trans* participant experiences.)

Racial Self-Identification

Racial self-identification: 17% identified as Indigenous, 51% as White (note: in the survey, I used the term "White"; however, participants often used the term "settler" and, therefore, in my report I use the term "settler" as well), 9% as Asian, 4% as Black, and 1% as Hispanic, while 18% chose not to racially self-identify (see Figure 3). At 17%, representation of Indigenous participants is slightly higher than the 13% of the student population that identifies as Indigenous enrolled at UW (UWinnipeg Fast Facts, 2017).

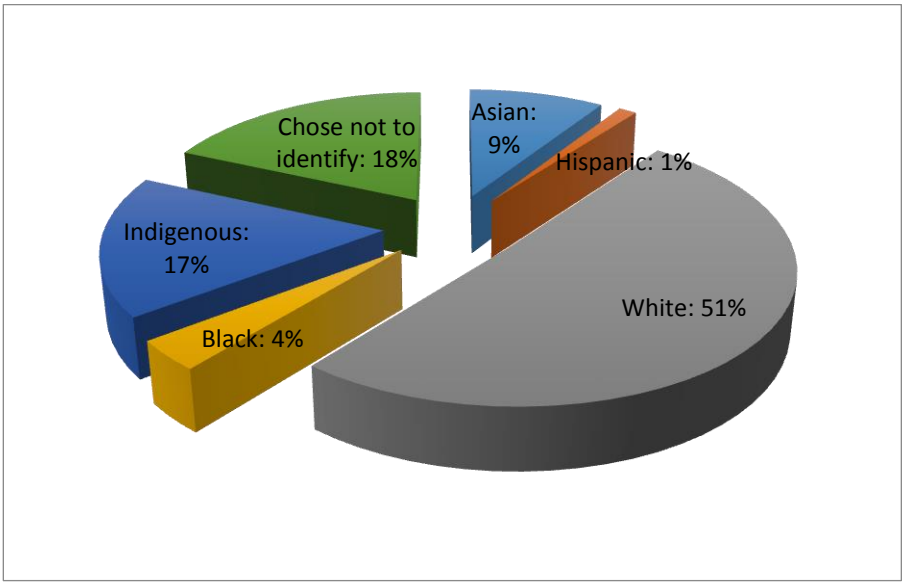


Figure 3: Survey participants based on racial self-identification

The process leading up to and subsequent implementation of the ICR came with many emotions and polarized views. Looking at the experience based on ethnicity, although Asian students consisted only 9% of the participants, their satisfaction rate of positive was 93%. Indigenous students' experience was 82% positive and White students 70%. Black and Hispanic students comprised only a small segment of the survey population and their satisfaction rate was 50% (see Figure 4; numbers on the charts are number of survey participants).

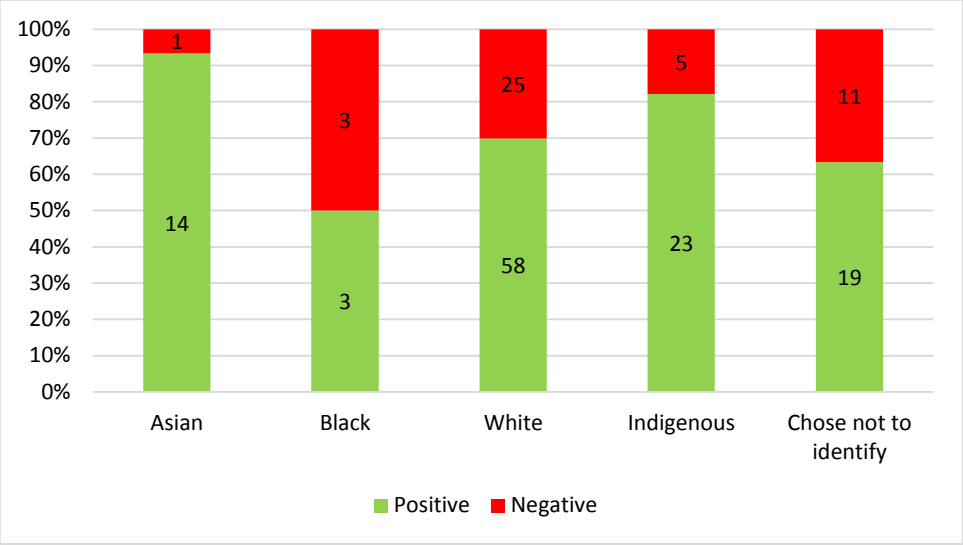


Figure 4: ICR Student experience based on racial self-identification
(Note: Too few cases to report on Hispanic participant experiences.)

Length of time at the University

The length of time at the University: 30% of the students had been at the University for less than one year, 20% for one year, 9% for two years, 26% for three or more years (see Figure 5).

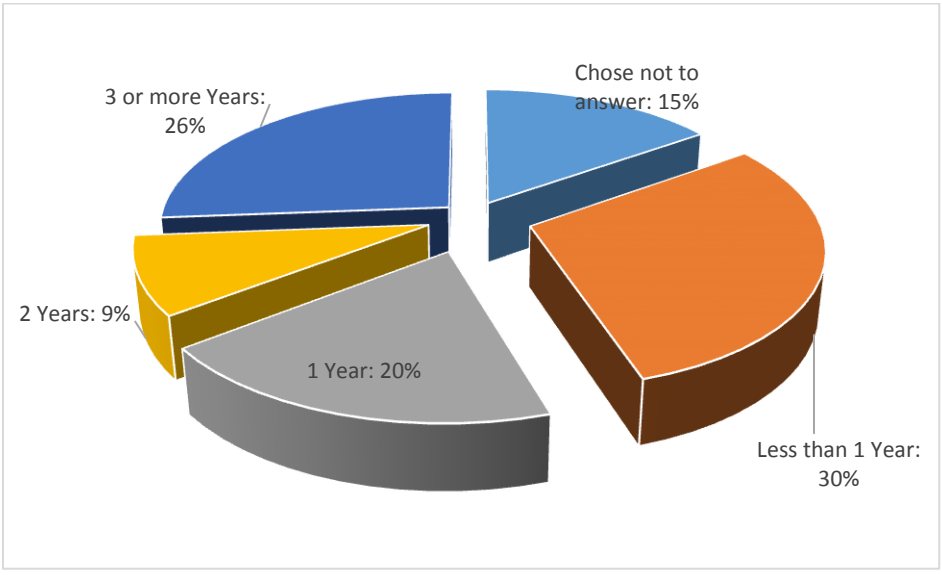


Figure 5: Survey participants based on length at the University

An unusual finding in the survey results was that 35% of the students who took an ICR course did not have to, as they were second-, third-, and fourth-year students. This suggests that they took the course because they wanted to, did not know they did not need to take the course, or were taking it as a departmental Indigenous requirement in Education or Religion and Culture. Of the students taking the course in their second, third, or fourth year, 90% had a positive experience, whereas only 59% of first-year students had a positive experience. This may suggest that electing to take a course versus being required to take a course promotes satisfaction. It is also possible that when students are in their later years, they have more maturity to recognize the importance and ability to handle the themes of these courses (see Figure 6; numbers on the chart are number of survey participants).

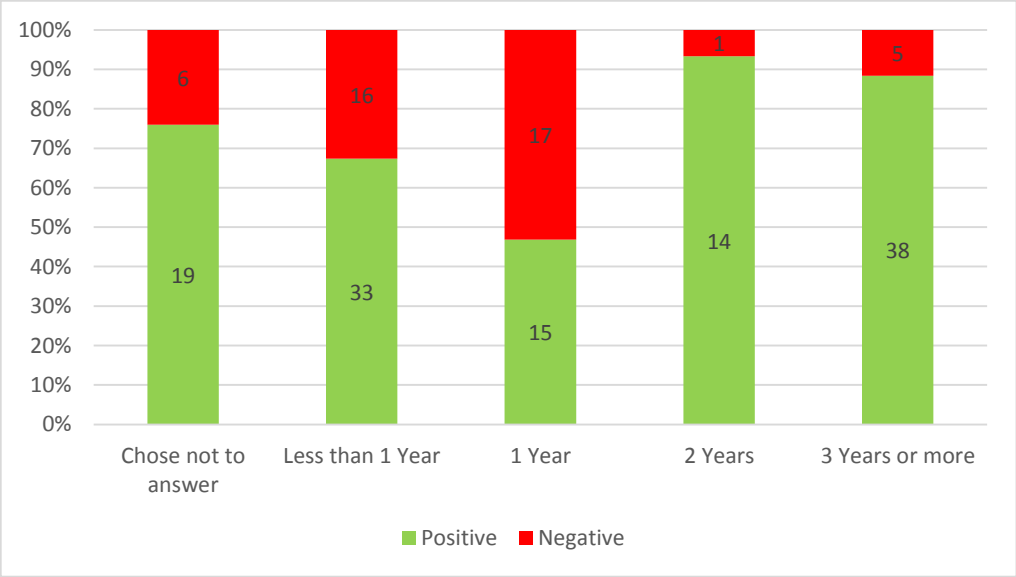


Figure 6: ICR experience based on length of time at the University

Results and Discussion

ICR Student Experience

The purpose of this study was to assess faculty, staff, and student experience of UW's Indigenous Course Requirement (ICR) that was implemented in September of 2016. The overarching research question of the project was: How does the UW attempt to engage marginalized students through the ICR? How does the ICR's goal of engaging marginalized students fit into the wider objectives of the UW?

Findings revealed that although there is, as might be expected in the first years of implementation, room for improvement in course content, development, delivery, and support, there were more positive overall reactions to the ICR experience than negative. Although there were definitely polarized views on the ICR experience, we take into consideration that 72% of the students indicated they had an experience that ranged from neutral to "wonderful." Neutral responses included students indicating that the class was the same as any other university class with nothing exceptional or unusual to one of the best classes they took.

Only 28% of the student experiences ranged from support in principle of the ICR but stated they would like a stronger pedagogical approach, to an antagonistic resistance going into the course and a very negative assessment of it going out (see Figure 7 for the overall ICR student experience).

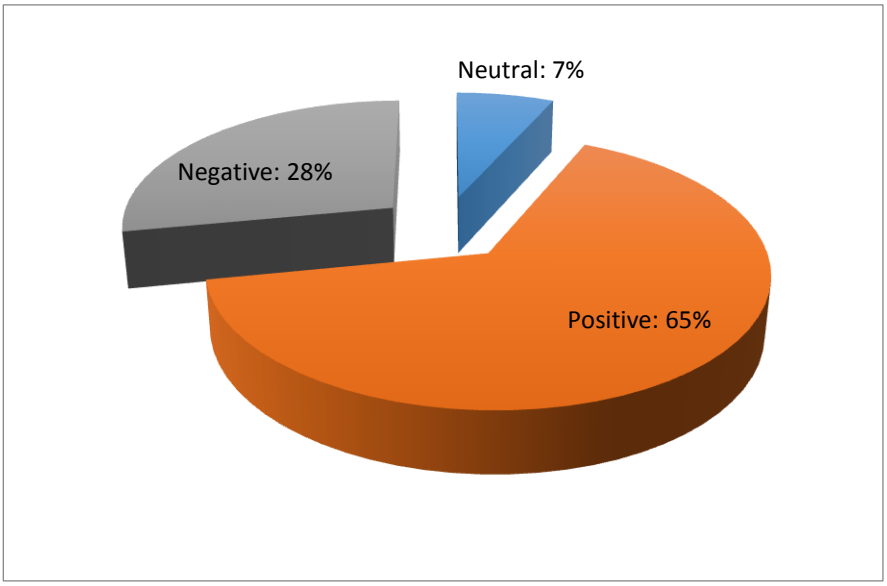


Figure 7: Overall student ICR experience

As we report on the ICR experience as a "room divided," we keep in mind that overall 72% of the student experiences were on the positive end of the spectrum. Here we look at the aspects that made the ICR experience a positive or negative one for students. Placing the positive experience next to its negative counterpart illustrates the stark juxtaposition of experiences (see Table 1).

Table 1: Student responses to their ICR

Positive Responses	**Negative Responses**
Awareness and understanding	Detrimental impact on GPA
Respect	Outrage
Reconciliation	No need for more reconciliation
ICR a wonderful idea	ICR a disappointment
Very welcoming attitude	Very unwelcoming and "bad teaching"
Healing emotional responses	Antagonism
Opened the door for conversations	Silenced

Some of the positive emotions that students experienced in relation to the ICR experience included: awareness and understanding gained in the course, respect for Indigenous knowledge, the desire and need for reconciliation, and emotional responses like surprise and relief to be able to open the conversation.

Like the divided response to the Idle No More movement, the ICR garnered enthusiastic support from the majority, but also "vehement and vitriolic opposition" from a minority. People experience cognitive dissonance when new information that they learn is not psychologically consistent with their previous knowledge (Festinger, 1962). Frimer, Skitka & Motyl (2017) explain that cognitive dissonance causes discomfort and people avoiding exposure to information that creates a personal psychological clash is a self-defense mechanism. Further, "People have a fundamental need to feel mental synchrony with others" (Frimer, Skitka, & Motyl, 2017, p. 1), and for some, the ICR course was an experience of conflict with their peers. Many students experienced cognitive dissonance in their ICR classes. For some students, the dissonance resolved into acquiring and owning new knowledge that changed their thinking and action. Others left their ICR course in a stage of anger and even hatred. Some of the negative emotions that students experienced in relation to the ICR experience included: outrage, antagonism, and adverse reactions to professors. The process leading up to and subsequent implementation of the ICR came with strong emotions and polarized views as evidenced by the following themes that emerged. We alternate between positive and negative responses represented in Table 1 in order to give a sense of mixed reactions to the ICR.

Awareness and understanding.

Students of all ethnic backgrounds expressed appreciation for the awareness and understanding gained by taking an ICR course. Students enjoyed learning about their own culture and sharing knowledge about their culture with other students. Because people often "get the wrong idea" (student) about Indigenous culture, Indigenous students hoped that with the learning "other's perceptions may change about my culture" (Indigenous student). Students expressed appreciation that this gap was being addressed:

> I love learning about First Nations people, my people. Any knowledge is worth the time. (Indigenous student)

> I am an international student and have not learned much about the history of Canada. With the Métis history course, I learned how Manitoba was formed and then how it was taken and the history hidden and retold. It showed me how words can be twisted to fit whatever outcome you might want and that a person should be careful when reading because it might not be the full story. (International student)

For many non-Indigenous students, taking the ICR course was an eye-opening experience. They learned things for the first time and with an open learning attitude:

> I think one of the most eye-opening was, you know, when you're taught it in school you always think we were the first ones here when in fact we weren't; you know, the Europeans. I didn't realize there was over eight million Indigenous people in North America when Columbus landed the boat. So it was really quite an eye opener, you know, and being an older student I had no knowledge. (Settler student)

Although this student was not required to take the ICR course, she saw it as necessary because she felt that in her professional work, she needed to know more about Indigenous peoples: “So I need to understand and that’s why I took this course and I'd like to take more courses, you know, dealing with these students … and the issues that they have to deal with. We were never taught that in school—I applaud the University for having these courses. It's an awareness that needs to be brought to the front” (Settler student).

Many students embraced the opportunity to learn as it broadened their view on political, economic, and social issues that they realized affect us all in different ways. Students expressed appreciation that the UWSA recognized the gap in the understanding what colonization really is and what its impact has been on Canada. They saw the ICR was addressing a gap in the educational system, a good step forward, and something that should have been implemented in younger grades a long time ago.

Detrimental impact on GPA.

Instead of seeing the course content as leading to a greater awareness or understanding of Indigenous knowledge, some students talked about the ICR course having a detrimental impact on their GPA and the subsequent personal stress from concern about their GPA. For instance, one student said: “It has impacted my GPA negatively and affected my personal life as the work load was that of a 3rd-year course” (Settler student). Students held professors responsible for their low GPA and unfair grading system: “Not impressed. I feel as though if I had a better more experienced professor, it would have been better. I got a 98 in the course, and it ended up being an A not an A+??? Course requirements should not bring down your GPA especially if you're receiving a mark in the high 90s” (Settler student). For these students, GPA did not seem to be associated with a measure of learning, but rather a token to be gained for something else. A specific desired number seemed more important than what they learned.

Respect.

Taking the ICR course helped students gain respect for Indigenous knowledge and that there are many ways of knowing and expressing knowledge. Students realized that there are many viewpoints of the world and that the European way is not the only perspective. Respecting each other and different worldviews were essential to learning with and from each other. A settler student explained: “When I received an essay back, it was pointed out in my feedback that I had provided context for the matter and addressed it from a Euro-centric viewpoint. It was true, and I hadn’t thought of it that way. I appreciated the feedback and the opportunity to consider how I could have written it differently.”

Taking the ICR resulted in students having “more respect for Indigenous people and their history” (Settler student). As a result, they were interested in taking more courses. By taking an ICR course, students also learned to be careful of stereotypes: “The ICR course has taught me to be careful of stereotypes. Learn the history and the people before making general assumptions or agreeing with others on careless and uneducated thoughts and comments. As well this course has made me want to help Indigenous people in the future once I get into the working field (after my studies,) so more than likely I will be taking more

Indigenous Studies courses" (Settler student). An International student said: "we are on treaty land, and we should be respectful of that."

Outrage.

Some students entered the ICR discussion with repressed antagonistic emotions. Students indicated that they felt it was a waste of time and money and did not appreciate being forced to take a class they did not want. "My most vivid memory was dealing with the outrage leading up to it. On three occasions I saw non-aboriginal students arguing to aboriginal people nearby about how the requirement was 'stupid' and 'a waste of time.' On the first day, the people in my class seemed very angry that they had to take the course. I remember the room feeling very divided. I felt uncomfortable for the aboriginal students" (Indigenous student).

Some students expressed resentment about being forced to take a class they did not choose to take. "Forced" was a word that came up in many of the negative student responses. Because they felt forced, they went into the course with a negative attitude, which made it difficult for them to learn. They did not appreciate having to pay for the class that they thought was unnecessary. They felt it was unnecessary because they had already learned the material or had no interest in learning it. Although it is important that students acquire a certain knowledge base about Indigenous history that impacts current practice, the goal of the ICR is not forcing knowledge. Settler students expressed their frustration:

> Blame white people for everything.
>
> What I now feel is that we should have assimilated the Indigenous peoples by force.
>
> It WAS indigenous land. But not anymore. This land belongs to Canada and its rightful citizens.
>
> When they weren't spewing social justice bs and actually focusing on the course material was when their teaching was most impactful.
>
> Yeah. Don't force students to take this course. And if you are, do it free of cost.

Reconciliation.

In recent years in Canada, reconciliation has been a much-discussed topic. Vivian Ketchum (2017), an Indigenous woman from Wauzhushik Onigum Nation, said: "Reconciliation is an ugly word." She continued to explain that many lofty words have been said and discussed, and much money spent to try to understand what reconciliation is, without any action coming of it. Sometimes reconciliation starts with an acknowledgement of past wrongs and a desire for restitution and making things right.

In this research, we acknowledge that we are once again talking and discussing reconciliation, with the humble hope that we learn how to move into action. Taking an ICR gave students the opportunity to think about reconciliation in a concerted way. They realized that we all have much to learn about reconciliation, that reconciliation and indigenization are a complicated process, but students were willing to engage, think about it, and take action where necessary. An Indigenous student defined reconciliation as "recognising that there are unforgiveable histories that have become intertwined through direct action, and now direct action is required by an oppressive party, by a colonial party, to find out what their place is in solving the problems that can be solved and in encouraging healing in areas where there is, potentially, unhealable damage." About the ICR, an International student said: "It helped me understand that reconciliation is something we all must work at. It is a constant and living process. There are many ways to get there and we all can have a hand in it. While it did help me see the big picture it showed me how I can do things day to day to help."

A complicated process.

The ICR helped students realize that reconciliation is ongoing and would not happen at the same time for everyone. "It is a complicated process that relies on all levels of society" (Settler student). Students acknowledged that action was necessary and "saying we're on someone's territory and not backing it up with actions is not reconciliation" (Settler student).

Settler students found the process of indigenization of the academy an invaluable experience for their learning about Indigenous histories and contemporary movements on Turtle Island. It helped them understand their context as white settlers, and provided them with the learning required to better support reconciliation. The courses laid the framework for reconciliation by learning about traditional ways of life and knowing, along with the ongoing effects of colonialism. The ICR helped students understand that "reconciliation is still a long way off and the struggle for reconciliation must be continuously fought" (Settler student).

An arduous process.

Besides reconciliation being a complicated process, students also indicated it being an arduous process, going in the right direction, but not as fast as it should be. It needed to involve everyone in society, not just relegated to a few. "Reconciliation will be a hard and arduous process that may never come to full fruition. It is hard to meet the needs of both sides as there is much hurt on one side and much stigma on the other" (Indigenous student).

Students acknowledged that the Canadian government broke many of its promises to Indigenous peoples, that there is effort being made at improving the relationship, but that there is still much work to do. "In class we talked about how Canada still has a long ways to go and we need to keep moving in the right direction" (Settler student).

Reconciliation “cannot be done with a sum of money. Reconciliation is a long process that needs to involve more people than the victims and perpetrators of residential schools. The entire country and government needs to be aware of what happened and how to prevent similar events” (Settler student).

No need for more reconciliation.

Evidence of the long and arduous process ahead, foreseen by some students, is exemplified by the following student quotes. Some students felt that taking an ICR course was “a complete waste of time and money,” and that reconciliation is not necessary. “I thought myself liberal before taking the course. But when I was shown what actually happened, I realized we are only prolonging the inevitable. We need to cut the b…s... And force them to adapt to modern way of life. They will die out in a couple hundred years if we don't. And I don't want people to keep dying and living a shitty life on the reserves. That's not fair to them” (student that did not provide ethnic identity). An Indigenous student indicated: “Enough reconciliation has taken place.” A statement like this could mean two things: there is nothing more that needs to be done, or enough talking has happened and it is time for action.

ICR a wonderful idea.

Both settler and Indigenous students supported the ICR and recognized that they had a role to play in reconciliation and that implementing the ICR is a good step forward in education and reconciliation. Many indicated that it was a “wonderful idea.” All degree programs have requirements and prerequisites that are associated with cost and time. Since students are required to take a humanities course, the ICR course fulfills more than just one requirement, which some students acknowledged. Passages like the following evidence support for the ICR:

> I think it's a wonderful idea. As a white settler living in Treaty 1 territory, I know far too little about the context of this area and the Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island. (Settler student)

> I think that the ICR was a great decision. I think it's extremely important that everyone is aware of Indigenous life in the past, present, and future. (Indigenous student)

Many students agreed that the ICR should definitely be mandatory because there are still many issues to address regarding Indigenous peoples of Canada. An Indigenous student said: “I would say it exceeded my expectations and became one of the best classes I've taken in University.”

ICR a disappointment.

Many students wanted to interact with the material and with their professor and were disappointed when their expectations were not met either because the interaction was uncomfortable or did not happen at all. An Indigenous student said:

> When we got our syllabus for the course, [they] had written that we were going to have a ceremony with an elder which I immediately—like this is amazing, that's awesome.… Never.

> So there was no interaction. It was honestly just like [they] talked about it, we just watched these… videos, we went home and that was the course… that definitely was not what I wanted to do.

An International student explained:

> I just wish we'd had more class discussions; I mean, I understand it's a big class, so that's kind of complicated. Even then, I wish [they would have] had more time to talk after class, because we watched videos—[they] read off a PowerPoint—I just wish there was more interaction between the professor in there.

Very welcoming attitude.

Most students talked about the professor as playing a pivotal role in making the ICR class a good or bad experience. Students went into the class with a range and mixture of emotions including hesitant, dreading the course, looking forward to, and not knowing what to expect. Students expressed appreciation for the welcoming environment that was created in ICR courses. They appreciated it when professors were competent at relaying information, able to manage classroom dynamics adeptly, and sensitive to students who may experience discomfort in participating in unfamiliar ceremonies or exercises.

> I think the biggest takeaway for me was understanding that I have so much more to learn and that there's so much more work to be done in this area. The professors I have are really, really awesome and the courses I took were really good at getting content and the classroom itself and the dynamics of watching it all play out. How much work we have to do in order to make the University like a somewhat decent place for all students. (Indigenous student)

A settler student talked about her professor's sensitivity:

> Actually, in my section, we did have a smudging ceremony as our first class and it was—yeah, it was very nice and it was very welcoming. Like my professor didn't want to make everyone do it if they didn't feel comfortable but everyone had the option to and it was—like to participate in the ceremony so it was really nice to have that and I definitely think my professor like definitely had a huge impact on like what the course did for myself. (Settler student)

Very unwelcoming and "bad teaching"

Some students expressed criticism of the classroom environment, teaching methods, and strategies. They talked about teachers not being prepared to teach the course, about bad teaching, discomfort in knowing how to offer opinions, feeling like not all contributions were welcome, and disappointed when professors did not allow time or space for interactions.

Some students indicated that although they may have good intentions, professors were not prepared to work with sensitive material that needed to be handled carefully. Several students suggested that the way the content was presented was through a colonial lens, which caused deep frustration. They noticed that professors did not have the skills to manage classroom dynamics that sometimes became tense. Even the lack of enthusiasm or care for the content caused frustration.

> And so I think the ways the profs are teaching, is very unprepared, because I feel like they're doing it with good intentions, but in the way they're presenting, the information is really kind of just thrown out. (Indigenous student)

> It was awful. If you're going to make a class required, PLEASE assign good profs. Literally none were good. All bad teaching. (Settler student)

> But I did notice that there was like a lot of backlash cattiness in those group discussions. And I didn't see the—the prof wouldn't really address it, they just kind of like brushed it off, and it really daunted me. (International student)

> And then even when presenting Indigenous knowledge, it's really from a colonial point of view, and it's never from an Indigenous person interpreting what it is. (Indigenous student)

Healing emotional response.

Taking an ICR course came with a range of emotions like surprise, relief, curiosity, intensity, or sadness. Although some students experienced intense emotions like sadness, having an emotional response can still lead to a positive learning experience, but it was incumbent on the professor to create a context where that could happen.

Non-Indigenous students noticed class dynamics when some students did not speak up: "Scattered in the back that wouldn't say anything at all and they didn't—a lot of them seemed actually quite interested but they didn't speak up at all" (Settler student). Situations like this made them wonder about their classmates' voices that were silent.

Some students were surprised by their ICR experience. They were surprised by the content that was new to them and that it was more interesting than they had anticipated. They were surprised at the number of Indigenous students at the University. They appreciated excellent professors and indicated that the ICR really changed their view on Indigenous peoples.

> I thought it was going to be just another requirement that I was not going to enjoy as much, that the content was going to be dry or boring. I really liked the course; I learned much more than I expected to (thinking I knew enough information about the Indigenous of North America). It was an enlightening course because I learned about the origins of their

> ideologies and their ways of life, and the resilience of their people. I actually was inspired by the beauty in their views and culture, the demise of it all and how resilient some people have been through the midst of all the betrayals they faced. (Hispanic student)

Not only did settler students express surprise that the ICR course went much better than expected, but the course content powerfully and deeply impacted Indigenous students. Information that students had never heard before had an emotional impact: “I mean, like we had this amazing culture, some of these amazing cities, you know, thousands of years before Jesus, you know, and the societies we had is you know, and sitting in class, watching ... I think it was 500 Nations, people would openly cry, you know? It was that powerful” (Indigenous student).

Antagonism.

For some students, taking an ICR course came with extreme negative emotions. Students expressed their antagonism towards the course in comments such as: “It was a horror show of confusion and incomplete information” (Settler student). Not only were non-Indigenous students resistant to the course, but Indigenous students as well: “I thought it was stupid going in and still thought so after I was done” (Indigenous student). An International student stated: “The whole course sucked.”

ICR opened the door for conversations.

The ICR opened the opportunity for conversations that students wanted to have, but did not have the venue or vocabulary to know how to go about it. The learning in ICR courses went much further than just classroom and book learning. Students talked about having conversations outside of classes about what they learned. Those conversations took place at home, over drinks in the bar, or in the hallway. Active learning was going on in many places.

Photo: Aboriginal Student Services Center

An Indigenous student said that taking the ICR course “gave me the vocabulary to talk with my grandpa about our culture, and that was something that we were, kind of, missing. Like, we knew we were Métis and like, we went to some events but we lacked the vocabulary to talk about, like the complexities of the politics of our history and it, kind of ... it's something where now he's using that vocabulary. So on a level, like a personal level, it really built this stronger connection to who I am and who my family seeing ourselves as who we are” (Indigenous student).

The ICR also gave non-Indigenous students the vocabulary to correct faulty perceptions:

> When I'm out in the world it made me stand up. When people say things that are inappropriate I correct them. If you can learn racism you can unlearn it. (Settler student)
>
> Actually, that was a conversation with my friends, which kind of shocked me when they said that, but they were just very quiet. I don't know if it changed their mind, but they changed the subject; but it was a first step and I hope it put a crack in the door for further conversations, and that's what these courses are supposed to do, hopefully, is open the door for conversation. (Settler student)

Silenced.

Some students felt discomfort when they felt their voice was not heard. Some felt that their professors were biased and not open to hearing views that did not fit with their worldview. One student explained: "The group discussions were terrible because I felt I couldn't have my opinion without being bashed. Maybe the teachers shouldn't be biased and open up to non-Indigenous opinions without making students feel bad. Offer explanations to those opinions" (Settler student).

Tension was palpable in student comments. About the opinions that settler students may want to express in class and sometimes did, an Indigenous student expressed annoyance about questions that she thought were ignorant: "And I think it's really annoying to think that profs are okay with allowing these ignorant comments to be made, because the whole point of the course is to educate them. And if someone openly says an ignorant comment about an Indigenous person, how come you're not going to address it? It's really been frustrating, because I love the traditional lifestyle. I always felt that I was attacked in courses" (Indigenous student).

Faculty and Staff ICR experience

Most students and professors seemed surprised that the ICR experience went as smoothly as it did. Students had expected the ICR class to be more painful and professors expected more backlash, although as evidenced in some students' responses, they did not always feel free to speak their mind. In conversations with professors, we heard many positive perceptions of students and their engagement. Findings revealed that the faculty and staff experience came with unexpected surprises as well as challenges (see Table 2).

Table 2. **Faculty and staff responses to their ICR**

Surprises	**Challenges**
Anticipated backlash and exception	Pressure on Indigenous students
Engaged students	Tension in the classroom
Relationship building	Negative student evaluations

Anticipated Backlash an Exception.

Some professors took the opportunity to discuss the ICR at the beginning of their course by opening the floor for an open and honest dialogue. Students being able to feel free to say that taking the course was not fair gave professors the opportunity to field questions and comments openly rather than students feeling like they needed to repress their honest emotions about the topic and the requirement. This openness led to positive change and an openness to be a part of the class with an open mind.

> Well, I wondered if there was going to be some backlash particularly from students in dominant social locations, white students in particular, and I've been happy to see that, for the most part, people are just super-engaged, you know, and they want to learn and they don't want to repeat the mistakes of the past. (Indigenous professor)

> My first impression is that there is far less pushback than expected. I've had one student in the previous second year half course who was more or less openly grumbling about all of this, but that was it. (Settler professor)

Engaged students.

Not only was there less backlash than professors expected, they also found that students were more engaged than they anticipated. Professors expressed that students seemed genuinely interested in learning and came prepared to discuss contemporary issues.

> So the second and third year students are in there because they want to be and that is awesome. So having probably a significant portion of the students who are there because they have to be versus this very small number that is there for desire is interesting because that can lead to a very negative classroom dynamic and so far, I'm not seeing that. (Indigenous professor)

> As much as students—particularly settler students—might not have a background in Indigenous politics, they are paying attention to what's going on in the media and just what's going on in general, so they are much more informed and aware than I expected them to be when they came into class. (Settler professor)

Relationships.

Faculty and staff talked about the importance of relationships. A staff member said: "I don't think that there's an unwillingness to engage with tough topics; I think it's a respectful approach that places the importance of relationship first in these conversations." The types of relationships that were addressed were: the original relationship, Indigenous-Settler relationships, interpersonal relationships, and relationships with the surrounding community that were essential to the reconciliation process.

Original relationship.

Faculty talked about the original relationship between Indigenous peoples and settlers. The Two Row Wampum Belt was symbolic of the original agreement in 1613 in between Indigenous and European peoples on Turtle Island. It was a commitment to mutual friendship, peace between nations, and living together as brothers and sisters (Venables, 2009). That original relationship was to last forever "as long as the grass is green, as long as the water flows downhill, and as long as the sun rises in the east and sets in the west" (Powless, 1994, p. 21). A settler professor said: "Whenever we're talking about contemporary issues, I encourage them [students] to shed what you've learned over time of Indigenous people being subordinate to Canada, and remember that original relationship. And we talk about two-row wampum and how do you think things should be today if we were to keep that original relationship intact?"

Photo: Two Row Wampum Belt, 2017

Interpersonal relationships: We are allies.

Professors talked about the interconnectedness of people. If we indeed are all related, then we all share the responsibility to watch out for each other and work for the good of the whole community. The goal of the ICR was to teach Canadians about the "true history of this country, about contemporary realities, and that we're all in this together, so we all have a part to play. The grand goal is to impart knowledge as well as ways of knowing that go beyond the western that serve as a corrective for the knowledge that's been disseminated for hundreds of years. So when you do that, you hopefully help Canadians of all backgrounds and even temporary visitors see themselves as relations, so a lot of indigenous cultures use a phrase that is or sounds like we are all relations; it's not a metaphor, it's not symbolic, it means we are literally all relations" (Indigenous professor).

A UW staff member acknowledged that it was important to forge good relationships with students, "primarily students who are Indigenous and have lived experience with the topics being talked about in class which should absolutely be honoured, you know, in any course, looking at indigenous content."

The importance of Indigenous and non-Indigenous relationships, and educating the general Canadian public about Indigenous realities, stems from the TRC's calls to action. Establishing ally relationships was important and extended beyond just classroom material. Events like the Weweni Indigenous Scholars Speakers Series foregrounded the important work being done and provided opportunities for networking and for "people from different backgrounds to meet each other—learn about the cool work that we're all doing and build relationships because I think that's a key in indigenization, a key in understanding the world from an indigenous perspective, its relationships. We are all—like we are all related in some way; we're all connected and it's our responsibility to figure out how are we related and therefore what are our mutual obligations, our responsibilities?" (Indigenous professor).

In reference to the original relationship in between settlers and Indigenous peoples, faculty and staff worked towards changing reference points. Relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples are key to reconciliation. "We can encourage an environment where we're sharing like that, I think we can do a lot for bettering Indigenous and non-Indigenous relationships" (Indigenous Professor). Faculty recognized the necessity of reframing the relationships:

> That's kind of the objective of my class is just to get people thinking different about the relationship. I definitely try to challenge the way that contemporary society looks at Indigenous and Canada's relationship. So we look from a strength base of Indigenous nations being autonomous and sovereign, so I think kind of reframing that relationship. (Settler professor)

Relationships with surrounding community.

Not only were relationships within the classroom and University community important but also beyond the University walls. We know that Lakehead University in Thunder Bay is traveling the same road we are, one professor said: "we could learn from each other, we could help each other out. If the idea is to better relationships across the country, why wouldn't we collaborate, have our two institutions talked about this?" (Indigenous professor).

The University also has the opportunity to establish relationships with the wider community:

> With the ICR, indigenization, I mean we're educating and training the public that lives around us right, so I think that there will be positive impact. In the meantime, I think it would be really beneficial to create more relationships between academia and community. Like Indigenous community does amazing stuff, like grassroots community stuff, the North End is just—it's amazing in terms of community and collaboration. (Indigenous professor)

Participants talked about relationships leading to building bridges: “So if we can build bridges, you know with the University and talk with them, collaborate, and increase those kinds of relationships, I think that would also help” (Indigenous professor).

Challenges

The challenges that faculty and staff talked about pertained to the pressure that they felt Indigenous students were exposed to as token authority, the tension in the classrooms, and negative student evaluations.

Pressure on Indigenous students.

A non-Indigenous professor expressed gratitude for the expertise that Indigenous students brought to the classroom: “I’m very grateful for having Indigenous students in class because they are just as much teachers in these scenarios, providing information from their own experience from what they know, what they’ve experienced firsthand, which puts things into perspective” (Settler professor). An Indigenous professor added: “Sometimes what happens is the visibly Indigenous students, those who have identified themselves to the class, get put on the spot to be experts.” An Indigenous student confirmed this experience: “there were times where questions are asked about Indigenous spirituality, or Indigenous knowledge, or Indigenous traditional living styles, and I always get looked at by the prof, because I was the Indigenous student in the class. Indigenous students are now targeted, because of this information” (Indigenous student).

Non-Indigenous students and professors leaning on Indigenous students for real-life examples was problematic because it assumed that all Indigenous peoples’ experiences are the same. It could put Indigenous students in a bad position in that they felt that they had to explain or they had to teach the class in some ways. “So as a non-Indigenous instructor, I can't speak about it first hand, and so I think students would like to hear that first hand and then they turn to Indigenous students to try to get those stories and that's—they don't always have them, it's not their responsibility to teach, you know, to share them” (Settler professor).

Tension in the classroom.

A challenge that professors did not anticipate was the tension in classrooms. Some professors taught classes that previously were populated by predominantly Indigenous students, but with the new Indigenous Course Requirement, non-Indigenous students now joined these classes. Previously the classes were safe spaces where Indigenous students could learn about their culture and where their identity was celebrated and affirmed. The reaction of non-Indigenous students to an Indigenous centered classroom was very different. “It was, in some cases very negative, because this is the first space they’d ever encountered where the story wasn’t all about them and it was hard; it was very difficult actually. They would become very defensive” (Indigenous professor).

Learning about colonialism and understanding history for Indigenous students was a very different process. For non-Indigenous students the history of colonialism felt like a personal attack, even when it was not meant to be. That was something professors had to adjust to.

> Their [students'] reaction was different, very defensive, insecure, awkward, threatening and so what would normally have been a classroom situation of empowerment, really wasn't that same way anymore and it was not the same experience for Indigenous students. And also tension within groups, right? So yeah, you're trying to kind of balance these sort of two sides. It was a bit more difficult in that situation. (Indigenous professor)

Added to the tension of different reactions to course content was the fear that students would resent that the course was required. "I'm not sure how the University really could mediate that more. I think with time that students will just accept it, like you have to take a science credit, you have to take your Indigenous course requirement" (Indigenous professor).

Faculty and staff recognized that "Indigenization requires tough conversations and demands that people not turn away from these conversations anymore, but it also recognizes that for many people these conversations can and will be traumatic" (staff).

Negative student evaluations.

Professors indicated that because the course was required, students would go into the course with negative perceptions and therefore evaluate the professor negatively:

> Biggest challenge I faced is because of the type of course it is and it's mandatory. My evaluations per se will go down dramatically compared to a non-mandatory course. There's a lot of students that are actually very receptive to Indigenous issues. There's not all resistance, but the way the course evaluations are set up, if you have one or two who are resistant, that reflects very heavily on your own course evaluations. (Indigenous professor)

Another Indigenous professor agreed:

> We'll see what the evaluations are. When these kinds of things are introduced there's typically a backlash where professors get very, very poor teaching evaluations as a reaction to students feeling forced to do something and sometimes those can come across very racial as well. If I get cranky responses because they didn't like the material or they didn't like how it was presented, they didn't like the textbook, well of course I look to how I might change this, again because this is a first prep for me so I'm assuming I'll tweak it as I go along. (Indigenous professor)

Conclusion

Using multimodal research methods, this study examined student, faculty, and staff experience with the ICR in its initial implementation in the 2016/17 academic year. Findings revealed that although students and instructors had suggestions for how to improve course content, development, delivery, and support, there were more positive reactions to the ICR experience than negative. The 72% of student participants that expanded their learning in a neutral or good and empathetic way indicated their increased awareness and understanding of Indigenous issues. They appreciated the open conversations and the acquisition of new vocabulary to be able to participate in the dialogue in a respectful way. They applauded the University for the ICR initiative and wished they could have learned these things a long time ago.

Of the student participants, 28% had negative experiences, some not because they were opposed to the idea of an ICR, but because their particular class did not meet their expectations. Others may have experienced cognitive dissonance that did not resolve in a positive learning experience. Reasons for the less than desirable experience was the sense that students felt forced to take a class they did not want or see as necessary, which in turn impacted their GPA. Some thought reconciliation was a waste of time and assimilation should continue to be forced upon Indigenous peoples. Besides the course content, professor pedagogy was criticized. Students felt that large classes limited discussions and interaction. These students felt professors were biased and not open to hearing a different point of view.

Professors expressed concern about a potential backlash from students especially in “dominant locations,” but findings showed a better than expected result. They were pleasantly surprised by enthusiastic student engagement. Disengaged antagonistic students caused concern and professors expressed a gap in knowing how to handle tension in the classroom. Professors expressed gratitude for the ally relationships that were being forged with colleagues. Although most Indigenous professors appreciated sharing the ICR workload with non-Indigenous allies, many students revealed a preference for Indigenous professors for the ICR course, though they also noted that overall good pedagogy was extremely important.

Challenges that faculty, staff, and students indicated were the pressure on Indigenous students to take on the role of token authority on the Indigenous experience, how to sensitively support students and staff when talking about a traumatic history that triggered profound grief for some and complete indifference or anger for others, and how to manage contentious discussions in class when there was evidence of overt or covert antagonism, racism, and tension. There was consensus that racism exists and that education and relationships are key to changing stereotypes. The ICR was seen as a positive step towards reconciliation but there was much work that still needed to be done.

Recommendations were gleaned from participant suggestions for improvements. Necessary components to moving forward in a good way included providing students with more information and intent about the ICR, more support services, pedagogical training, and debrief mechanisms for all involved.

Actions Recommended by Participants

As part of our research, we asked participants for their suggestions for how they thought the ICR experience could be improved. This section summarizes participants' recommendations with the hope that their contributions will be helpful to ICR instructors and to the University as we reflect on further development of the ICR as we go forward.

Most participants agreed that education is key. There was strong agreement from faculty, staff, and students that racism does exist and the University has a responsibility in changing racial stereotypes. The predominant strategy suggested for changing stereotypes was through education and the younger the better. Many participants concurred that the ICR could play a role in starting to decrease the amount of misinformation and stereotypes that exist.

The following recommendations have been developed from our reflections on participants' suggestions for administrators, faculty/staff, and students. As you read this long list, keep in mind that it represents the varied experiences of our participants; these suggestions are gleaned from the whole group who participated in this study and not simply those who recounted positive experiences—and we present them as possibilities for further reflection and possible investigation based on our consultation with a substantial, but still limited number of constituents, not as conclusive recommendations emanating from a system-wide program evaluation.

For administrators

One standardized course and more.

Many students suggested the ICR should be expanded to more than one course. Other students suggested that the University should offer one standardized first course that would include all the information that students should know, instead of many different courses. After the first course, students could then sign up for a second course in their area of interest. Having one standardized course would put a lot of pressure on the University to decide on uniform content and mode of delivery, which may infringe upon academic freedom. In response to this suggestion, it is understood that a tension exists between academic freedom and uniform pedagogy and course content, which is problematic. Aside from presenting the further challenge of deciding on one best approach and who would make the decision, one standardized course would lose some of the key strengths of the current approach of the ICR (university-wide ownership and contribution, reflecting faculty members' areas of expertise and pedagogical strength, offering students the opportunity to learn within the context of their own majors or minors, etc.).

Learning languages.

TRC Action 16 states: "We call upon post-secondary institutions to create University and college degree and diploma programs in Aboriginal languages" (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of

Canada, 2015, p. 2). Action 10.iv also states: “Protecting the right to Aboriginal languages, including the teaching of Aboriginal languages as credit courses” (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, p. 2). Understanding that language is key to culture, participants talked about the importance of Indigenous language instruction and, we recommend that the University make a concerted effort to develop more courses in Indigenous languages.

Clear information about the ICR.

Administrative glitches inevitably happened in the implementation of the ICR and they will be ironed out as time passes. Students were not sure about who needed the requirement and signed up for a course when they did not need it. Once they were informed by the professor, some dropped the course. Many students chose to take the course even though they were not required because they themselves felt it was necessary and important. Providing students with clear information regarding ICR requirement, intent, goals, and outcomes could help alleviate confusion.

Communicate with Lakehead University in Thunder Bay.

Since UW and Lakehead University are embarking on this journey at the same time, participants suggested communication between the institutions to share knowledge, strategies, and experiences.

Indigenous hires.

Many students indicated their preference for Indigenous professors and suggested that an Indigenous professor would have given them a more first-hand experience. Having Indigenous professors was very important to students, which they saw as part of reconciliation, but students were quick to add that using Indigenous pedagogy was just as important as being able to speak from personal experience. Indigenous hires in all positions at the University would be an active way to illustrate reconciliation: not only more tenured professors, but staff positions such as librarians, administrators, food service, and security. In the Truth and Reconciliation’s Call to Action (2015), number 7 states: “We call upon the federal government to develop with Aboriginal groups a joint strategy to eliminate educational and employment gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians” (p. 1).

Reconciliation circles.

A theme that emerged from the research was that establishing relationships was key to reconciliation, which addresses TRC’s Call to Action 46.iv that calls for “Support for the renewal or establishment of Treaty relationships based on principles of mutual recognition, mutual respect, and shared responsibility for maintaining those relationships into the future” (p. 5). In response to this Call to Action reconciliation circles have been established in many places. The goal for these circles “is to establish trusting, meaningful relationships between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous peoples” (Circles for Reconciliation). Reconciliation circles would address TRC’s Call to Action 53.iv, that we “Promote public dialogue, public/private partnerships, and public initiatives for reconciliation” (p.

6). As Sue Deranger (2017) explains, we need to right relations, which is one step further than reconciliation and requires that we all come together, sit together, talk together, live together, and we all stand together (Decolonizing Canada 150 webinar).

Research.

TRC's Call to Action 65 (2015) states: "We call upon the federal government, through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, and in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, post-secondary institutions and educators, and the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation and its partner institutions, to establish a national research program with multi-year funding to advance understanding of reconciliation" (p. 8). We are grateful to the University for this opportunity to research the ICR experience and recommend that the University continue to support research that promotes and explores reconciliation.

For Faculty

These recommendations were gleaned both from professors talking about their own pedagogy and suggestions students had for what worked well for them. Although course content was very important, how the content was delivered was just as important. "Race" relations is a sensitive topic and needs to be treated with care.

More open discussions.

More open discussions would be beneficial rather than lecturing. Professors could facilitate a safe space for conversations in which students could explore their emergent understandings and learn from each other. Some students felt that in the large classes were a "hurry up and ask your question" environment. They wanted an environment where they felt comfortable to ask questions and have discussions. "I feel like because the classroom sizes are so large and the time is so short, that it makes it really impossible for students to comfortably discuss what's going on" (Indigenous student). Both professors and students expressed an appreciation for the knowledge and personal experience of Indigenous students in the ICR courses, but also acknowledged the drain and strain on Indigenous students who were expected to act as living resources on course content. Study participants expressed the necessity in open dialogue for sensitivity to students who may be experiencing trauma.

Circles.

Similarly, instead of the traditional hierarchical approach to teaching, professors encouraged everyone to be open to learning from each other, which also included the teacher learning from students, even though sometimes the teacher was standing at the front of the room. The visual form of a nonhierarchical learning environment was a circle instead of desks in rows. One professor succinctly explained the rationale for this structure: "We're all learning together. Everybody is on a learning journey. Everybody has specific gifts and challenges. They may be different from the person

sitting next to you, and to just recognize and be patient with each other because we don't know what the next person is dealing with" (Indigenous professor).

Groupwork or clanwork.

Professors talked about a project-based approach in their pedagogy, where students were given the opportunity to develop their own creativity by doing a project based on a topic instead of writing a 10-page essay about it. When students worked in groups or clans, professors encouraged students to bring their strengths to the projects: "You guys can't all be the spokesperson, but you all bring to this your own strengths; don't think about the weaknesses, think about what is it I'm good at? What could I bring to this?" (Indigenous professor).

Relationships.

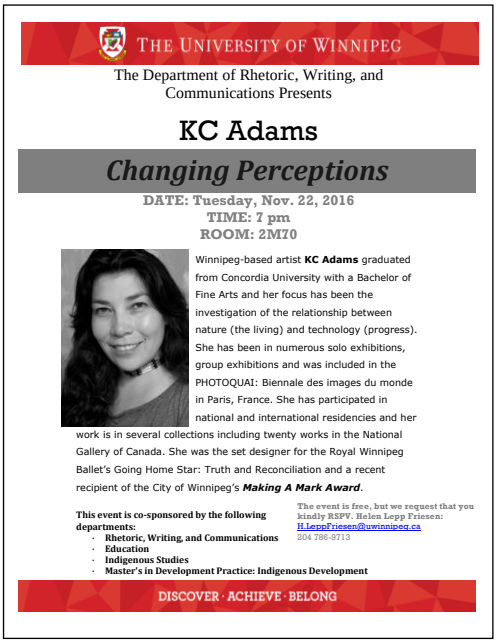
Participants expressed a strong desire for relationships. Content covered in classes was the jumping board for conversations, and there was an eagerness to have conversations in informal settings, to learn from each other, and to establish friendships in keeping with the understanding that "we are all relations". Like the workshops for ICR professors, workshops could be organized for students, staff, and mixed faculty, staff, and students, where everyone would be welcome to engage in dialogue.

Elders in the classroom.

Although the disrespect shown for Elders as classroom speakers was one of the reasons for the implementation of the ICR, participants suggested that bringing in Elders to teach a class would be helpful in understanding and would teach students respect, and one noted that teaching respectful behavior towards Elders in our society would be beneficial.

Guest speakers.

Participants explained that having Indigenous guest speakers that humanize the issues was important. (See e.g., photo of KC Adams poster [right].)


THE UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG

The Department of Rhetoric, Writing, and Communications Presents

KC Adams

Changing Perceptions

DATE: Tuesday, Nov. 22, 2016
TIME: 7 pm
ROOM: 2M70

Winnipeg-based artist **KC Adams** graduated from Concordia University with a Bachelor of Fine Arts and her focus has been the investigation of the relationship between nature (the living) and technology (progress). She has been in numerous solo exhibitions, group exhibitions and was included in the PHOTOQUAI: Biennale des images du monde in Paris, France. She has participated in national and international residencies and her work is in several collections including twenty works in the National Gallery of Canada. She was the set designer for the Royal Winnipeg Ballet's Going Home Star: Truth and Reconciliation and a recent recipient of the City of Winnipeg's ***Making A Mark Award***.

This event is co-sponsored by the following departments:

- **Rhetoric, Writing, and Communications**
- **Education**
- **Indigenous Studies**
- **Master's in Development Practice: Indigenous Development**

The event is free, but we request that you kindly RSPV. Helen Lepp Friesen:
H.LeppFriesen@uwinnipeg.ca
204 786-9713

DISCOVER · ACHIEVE · BELONG

Storytelling and humour.

Storytelling and humour was an effective pedagogical strategy. It was important to clarify the strategy of storytelling as a teaching method since sometimes students thought it was entertainment. Information about relationships, histories, current issues, and policy documents could all be relayed in the form of stories that needed to be told rather than a dry, factual, formulaic form.

Many ways of communicating and evaluating.

Professors acknowledged that evaluating knowledge based on written work was a very important aspect of western education, but that there were many other different ways of communicating knowledge. Visual arts, music, and theatre were all ways of communicating knowledge. Professors indicated students' enthusiasm once they were given an alternative to the traditional research paper and were encouraged to use their unique gifts to illustrate their learning.

Hands-on learning.

Students desired more hands-on learning: "Sitting in desks in rows, listening to a single person lecture from a textbook while scribbling down notes is not an appropriate way to be learning about ceremony, traditional medicines, or creation stories" (Settler student); "Dialogue. Hands-on experience. Experiencing it through activities—learning and seeing the beauty of the culture. Textbooks are ineffective and won't lead to reconciliation" (International student). In a field course, students learned hands-on things like how to turn hides, work with an Elder and how that all fits into the land, to the region, and the region's history. It is not always possible to go onto the land, but professors tried to bring visuals into the classroom as illustrations.

Art and oral teaching.

Students suggested that art and oral teachings would be helpful pedagogical aids, “instead of just another textbook shoved in my hand. Makes everything feel so dull and painful” (International student). Students wanted to hear more personal stories, experiences that happened to individuals.

Science courses for science students.

Some students suggested ICR courses in the sciences to better coincide with their own interests. “If it could be taught in a course that has less of an artistic or social science focus. As a science student, I would love a course focused more on science” (student).

Support services.

Participants talked about the necessity for support services for students, faculty, and staff that could experience trauma as a result of studying traumatic history. Counselling services could be readily available for students, faculty or staff that were triggered or were hurt by insensitive or outright racist comments made in class.

Training for faculty.

Students expressed the need for special preparation and training for educators to know how to deal with issues concerning racism. Since Indigenous education can open wounds and students can be triggered, faculty and staff need to be prepared in knowing how to anticipate and deal with sensitive and highly emotional situations. Students also suggested supports for faculty in terms of pedagogy and interaction with students.

Pass/fail course.

Some students wanted the University to consider having the course be a pass/fail course to take the pressure off students to perform in a certain way. Another suggested (idealistically but perhaps problematically) that perhaps students could be graded on how and whether they changed their thinking in any way that is beneficial to an inclusive society.

For Students

Take interest.

Many students' recommendation to other students was to have a learning attitude, to take interest, and participate in conversations because the ICR and reconciliation "is very important and not at all boring" (student).

Get involved.

Many students wanted to contribute to the further development of the ICR. Since the ICR was a student-led initiative, perhaps students can continue to be instrumental in shaping it and moving it forward.

"Knowing what we can do to help."

As a result of gaining knowledge, students wanted to know what they could to do to move forward with reconciliation. They wanted to know how they could be a part of the process. For these students, the end of the course marked just the beginning of learning. After the end of the course, students could continue to meet to brainstorm further reconciliation efforts. The University could offer a list of places where students could volunteer to learn more and put their learning into action.

In conclusion, this study did not undertake to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the ICR but to consult key stakeholders and to distill their comments into a set of stakeholder recommendations that reflected their experiences. Even those with negative experiences or attitudes that were not conducive to open and engaged learning provide useful feedback that can inform pedagogical approaches and course content. We offer these experiences as a contribution to the UW's ongoing dialogue on how best to move forward with the ICR and further our efforts to contribute to reconciliation, and to right relations, through education.

Acknowledgements

We acknowledge that there is pain on Treaty 1 Territory and the home of the Métis Nation, where we reside. In exploring the Indigenous Course Requirement (ICR) experience, we offer many thanks to all the participants in this study that gave their time to talk with us, complete a survey or attend a focus group. Thank you to students Sadie-Phoenix Lavoie and Kevin Settee and elders Ivy Chaske and Ruth Christie who consulted with us to formulate the survey and focus group questions in a sensitive manner. Thank you also to Sadie-Phoenix, Kevin, and Ivy who assisted with the focus groups. Thank you to Feast Café and Bistro for providing refreshments for the focus groups, and to Jeff Booth and Randy White in the Aboriginal Student Services Centre (ASSC), who generously offered space and drinks for the focus groups.

We are humbled that we were given the opportunity to conduct this study. We have done our best to walk carefully, take the words, emotions, and concerns you shared with us, and gather them to present them here in a good way. This report is completed with the best of intentions with the hope that it can serve as a building block to improve relationships and environments in the spirit of reconciliation.

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The Awareness and Opinions of the University of Winnipeg Population in Regard to the University Community Access and Engagement Initiatives

Nathan Hall

Abstract

Many universities have increased support for partnership development and community- relevant forms of scholarship. Building partnerships between universities and marginalized inner-city populations helps generate ongoing opportunities for public scholarship and teaching social justice. In 2009, the University of Winnipeg (UW) released a position paper focused on engaging community. Community-engagement efforts at the UW need to be continually assessed through various methods to ensure that community engagement efforts are maintained5 and that policy is fully implemented. The purpose of this study is to examine current knowledge and perceptions regarding the UW's community-learning initiatives.

[FULL ARTICLE STILL IN DEVELOPMENT]

APPENDIX

The following list of academic programs, units, and community initiatives have a strong emphasis on engaging educationally marginalized youth.

Collegiate

The Collegiate Model School

https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/indigenous/for-community/community-learning/model-school.html

Students from backgrounds that have traditionally been under-represented in both high school and post-secondary graduation rates are given the opportunity to attend the University of Winnipeg Collegiate through the provision of full scholarships. (Also: https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/about/fast-facts/model-school.html) See Chapter 4 above (Axworthy, DeRiviere, & Rattray).

Academic Programs

Access Teacher Education Programs

https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/access-education/

Access Teacher Education Programs offered by the Faculty of Education have graduated many teachers who work in inner-city schools. Beginning in 1998 on Nairn Avenue, then Selkirk Avenue, and currently on Ellice Avenue at the Wii Chiiwaakinak/Helen Betty Osborne Centre, Access offers several streams of programming.

Students in the WEC (Winnipeg Education Centre, https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/access-education/wec/index.html) program are individuals with inner-city experience who are provided with academic, personal, and financial supports to earn a B.Ed. In addition to its Ellice Avenue cohort, WEC has been offered on a number of First Nations including Sagkeeng First Nation.

CATEP (Community-based Aboriginal Teacher Education Program, https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/access-education/catep/index.html) students are Indigenous students

who pursue a B.Ed. while working as education assistants in several partner school divisions including Winnipeg and Seven Oaks.

The ITEP (Immigrant Teacher Education Program, https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/access-education/itep/index.html) enables internationally trained teachers to qualify for certification in the Manitoba school system, not only enriching the teaching population, but becoming important role models for immigrant youth who may have weak school attachment.

See Chapter 3 above (DePasquale).

Indigenous Course Requirement

https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/indigenous-course-requirement/

The Indigenous Course Requirement (ICR) was instituted in 2014. "Through the Indigenous Course Requirement (ICR), UWinnipeg graduates will have knowledge about Indigenous peoples and cultures. A student-led effort on campus, the ICR was unanimously approved by The University of Winnipeg Senate, the body responsible for academic governance. The decision exemplifies the University's leadership in responding to the recommendations made in the final report of the seminal Truth and Reconciliation Commission. . . . Students may choose from a number of three credit-hour courses in which the greater part of the content is local Indigenous material — derived from or based on an analysis of the cultures, languages, history, ways of knowing or contemporary reality of the Indigenous peoples of North America." See Chapter 8 above (Lepp Friesen).

Indigenous-focused Academic Programs

https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/indigenous/for-students/academic-programs.html

In addition to the academic programs listed above with a specific community-engagement mandate, UW offers several Indigenous-focused degree programs, including a Master of Development Practice (MDP) in Indigenous Development, an MA in Indigenous Governance, and a BA in Indigenous Studies, along with many Indigenous-focused courses in various departments.

Main B.Ed. Program

https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/education/

In addition, the B.Ed. degrees offered through UW's regular B.Ed. program include many courses that focus on urban inner-city education. These include a mandatory Service Learning course in first year of Education students' program (see Chapter 5 above, Block); mandatory courses in Aboriginal Education, Mentoring, Just and Effective Schools, and the School System; and a range of special topics courses in inclusive education.

Post-bacc program

https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/pbde/docs/PBDE%20Fall%202017.pdf

Similarly, the Post-baccalaureate Program for certified teachers offers many relevant courses such as Expanding Gifted Education; Meeting the Needs of FAS/FAE Students; Risk and Resilience; and Sex, Gender, and Diversity.

Urban and Inner-City Studies

https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/urban-inner-city-studies/

Urban and Inner-City Studies' "unique location serves as a gateway for north-end residents to enter the University of Winnipeg and as a place for the larger UWinnipeg student body to connect to and learn from the north-end community. The program combines a traditional urban studies focus with courses that examine various aspects of the inner city, such as the urban Aboriginal experience, the immigrant and refugee experience, and the role of women."

Writing Program

https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/rhetoric/

The University implemented a mandatory first-year writing course in 1988 as a way of providing all students, not just the most academically privileged students, with the opportunity to develop the academic writing skills needed to achieve excellence in university. It evolved into and is housed in the Department of Rhetoric, Writing, and Communications. The Rhetoric department also maintains a Writing Centre with tutoring services (https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/writing-centre/index.html). See Chapter 2 (Clary-Lemon).

Faculty of Kinesiology and Applied Health

Axworthy Health and RecPlex

https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/recreation-services/axworthy-health-and-recplex/community.html

The RecPlex is "the most comprehensive recreation and wellness facility ever built in Winnipeg's inner city. Our unique Community Charter guarantees neighbourhood youth and residents free access to space to run community-based programs. A weekly Pow Wow Club, hoop dancing class and drop in times for numerous activities such as soccer and basketball are underway." (See https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/recreation-services/docs/axworthy-health-and-reclex-community-charter.pdf for the RecPlex Community Charter.) See Chapter 7 above (Telles-Langdon & Hall).

Inner City Jr. Wesmen Sports Programs

http://www.wesmen.ca/community/Inner_City_Sports

The University of Winnipeg Athletics Department is embracing the concept of community learning and has created distinct inner-city teams for multiple sports under the Inner City Junior Wesmen umbrella. It has also embraced meaningful partnerships with neighbourhood organizations with a shared goal of realizing the needs and aspirations of inner city youth. The Inner City Junior Wesmen program now attracts 300 neighbourhood children and offers teams for both boys and girls.

SPIN Sports Clubs

SPIN aims to eliminate barriers that inner-city children face to participate in organized sport programming. SPIN provides opportunities to learn basic athletic skills, sportsmanship, teamwork, leadership and fair play in a non-competitive and safe environment.

Sun Life Diabetes Awareness and Education Program

https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/kinesiology/sun-life-financial-diabetes-program.html

Inner-city students in Grades 9–12 are brought to the University twice a week for eight weeks to learn about Type 2 diabetes, healthy eating, and active living.

University-level Initiatives

Aboriginal Student Services Centre (ASCC)

https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/assc/

The new ASCC (2004) is a “student centre and administrative hub “created to maintain a safe, educational and culturally sensitive environment for all Aboriginal students (First Nation, Métis and Inuit) as they pursue their academic studies at The University of Winnipeg. The ASSC strives to provide continuous student support and resources that will foster resilience in students to succeed from the application process to Convocation.” The Centre offers services in the areas of Academics (advising, transition year, study skills, tutoring, university preparation), Support Services (assistance with admission and registration, access to Elders-in-Residence and employers, peer mentoring, cultural and social activities), and Liaison Services (such as campus tours, high-school school visits, community presentation, student advocacy with Education Authorities and Sponsorship agencies, liaison with University faculties and support staff and with community organizations, and Aboriginal Student Ambassadors).

Accessibility Services (AS) and Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services (DHoHS)

https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/accessibility-services/

"In collaboration with the students, faculty, and staff at The University of Winnipeg, Accessibility Services (AS) and Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services (DHoHS) facilitate and promote the ongoing development of an accessible learning environment which provides students with disabilities or medical conditions the opportunity to participate fully in all aspects of campus life."

Adult Learner Services

https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/adult-learner-services/

Community Learning Policy

https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/community/index.html

UW's Community Learning Policy was approved by the Board of Regents in 2009. Policy can be viewed here: https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/institutional-analysis/docs/policies/community-learning-policy.pdf and Axworthy's 2009 position paper can be viewed here: https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/community/uwinnipeg-and-community-learning.pdf

Experiential Learning Network

https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/experiential-learning/index.html

Global Welcome Centre

The Global Welcome Centre (2008) offered programs and services related to language, education, and culture that help newcomers to Canada access and succeed in a post-secondary environment. The Centre works with students in high school, adult education, training and language training programs, college or university, and members of the local community.

Indigenous Advisory Circle

https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/indigenous/advisory-circle/index.html

The Indigenous Advisory Circle grew out of the Master's in Development Practice (MDP) in 2010/11.

Innovative Learning Centre

https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/community/innovative-learning-centre.html

Innovative Learning Centre (ILC) offers Adventure Kids Summer Camp and Science-Kids On Campus (includes tuition credit program). See Chapter 4 above (Axworthy, DeRiviere, & Rattray).

International Student Services

https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/student/intl/

Mentor Program in Student Services

https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/student/intl/services-for-all-students/mentor-program.html

The University of Winnipeg Student Mentor Program aims to build community on campus by supporting new, first-time students to UW.

Opportunity Fund

https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/index/opportunity-fund-index

This fund, initiated in 2007, helps to make it possible for inner-city youth to access university education through three funding programs:

- Tuition Credit Program (2012): Students as early as Grade 4 begin to earn university tuition credits by staying in school, maintaining good grades, graduating and participating in their community. By the time they enter university, full tuition has been earned.
- Fast-Track Bursary Program: Youth and adult learners who have financial need are assisted with their direct education costs (tuition and books).
- Youth-in-Care Tuition Waivers (2012): Students who grew up in the care of Child and Family Services have their undergraduate tuition fees covered.

Pride Committee

https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/pride/

The University struck an *ad hoc* committee through Marketing and Communications in 2014 to develop an enrolment strategy to attract LGBTQ students. The committee soon expanded to address many issues of campus climate for LGBTQ students and staff and organizes the Pride Week activities and participation in the Pride march. See Chapter 6 (Milne et al.).

Wii Chiiwaakanak Learning Centre

https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/wiichii/

Wii Chiiwaakanak is “designed to reflect our neighbours’ needs for an educational gathering place that is inclusive and accessible. . . . [The Centre] is open weekdays and provides the community with free and open access to the RBC Community Learning Commons, the North West Company Heritage room, community meeting spaces, after school homework clubs, and cultural programs” including Cultural Teachings, Let's Speak Ojibwe, Pow Wow Club. See Chapter 4 above (Axworthy, DeRiviere, & Rattray).