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# I Think You Are Ambivalent: The Realities of Indigenous Scholarship in Mainstream Universities

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## Introduction

Indigenous academics have been increasingly engaged in mainstream universities over the past 25 years, and in the last 10 years a growing number of these academics have begun writing about these experiences. Within these stories and reflections, across disciplines, commonalities emerge. For example, Plains Cree/Saulteaux scholar Margaret Kovach (2009) begins her piece about “being Indigenous within the academy” saying, “I trust I am not alone” (p. 51).

Indigenous scholars are commonly understood to carry dual duty. We are members of the academy accompanied by a set of rules, expectations, within departments, schools, and faculties—and—we are members of Indigenous communities, near and far. This dual duty manifests as we balance our responsibilities to teaching, research, and service with our responsibilities and expectations to membership in Indigenous communities—a concept described by Opaskwayak Cree scholar Shawn Wilson (2008) as relational accountability. Yet the two spaces—academy and community—do not always coincide, thereby creating a dual duty of expectations, roles, and standards to uphold.

Traditionally, these two spheres—academia and Indigenous communities—had little regard or respect for one another. This reality left first-generation Indigenous scholars walking in the

much-described “two worlds” (Henze & Vanett, 1993). While these two worlds are gaining spaces of overlap, the span of the two still creates a wide gulf to cover and reach.

Indigenous scholars such as Eileen Antone (Onyota’a:ka of the Oneida Nation) teaches us that making space in the academy for Indigenous worldviews need not be seen as a remedial exercise but rather as a possibility for contributions that expand the walls of the academy in similar ways that we each seek to expand the canon of knowledge within and across our various disciplines (Antone & Dawson, 2014). Sami scholar Rauna Kuokkanen (2007, p. 20) calls the inclusion of Indigenous worldviews in the academy “the gift of indigenous epistemes.”

We are three pre-tenured Indigenous scholars working together in a small and organizationally undefined Indigenous academic unit in a mid-sized, research-intensive university. We began our tenure-track positions within three years of each other and therefore are sharing the journey of striving for tenure, offering each other collegial support along the way. We each hold childrearing responsibilities and have large extended families and multiple community memberships, from local, to urban, to homelands far away. It is common for Indigenous academics to have large and intergenerational families (raising grandchildren or other related children), making for higher levels of family and community responsibilities. Each author came to academia at a different stage of life, with a previous career and life experiences, which inevitably influenced the experience of transitioning from graduate school into our tenure-track positions.

Indigenous scholars are often called to lead and coordinate Indigenization efforts and build and implement Indigenous programs, thereby attracting Indigenous students who are typically underrepresented at universities (Mihesuah & Wilson, 2004; Pidgeon, Archibald, & Hawkey, 2014)—and yet, little recognition is given to the internal organizational-building work we are called to do. This is considered as part of our service, which until recently has been deemed as part of the job that carries little relevance to the rest of an academic’s life, especially as it pertains to reappointment, tenure, and promotion. Therefore, service expectations are higher than many of our non-Indigenous colleagues; consequently, maintaining balance is critical, yet difficult to achieve.

Here we hope to add our story to this chorus of voices, as three female Indigenous education faculty members. The next three

sections, which begin with an expression in an Indigenous language, are individual perspectives of each of the authors. Subsequent to this is a section looking at the common themes that emerge from the collective experiences.

**“Ik’us giga’olnukwus ka kwax̣a’nakwā la lo!”  
(Your Parents Raised You Right)**

While many people in our age group are downsizing, my husband and I recently bought a larger home near the university. The house has a constant flow of family and friends. The openness of the home was new to my husband when we married 40 years ago, but it’s been my life experience. I grew up with relatives, family friends, and foster children coming and going. The space for family gatherings—to house a family member in transition, or to host graduate students who have come from their home communities for study—is important to me. A recent guest, who had come to Victoria to be with family when a community Elder passed away, spoke to me in Kwak’wala, saying, “Ik’us giga’olnukwus ka kwax̣a’nakwā la lo!”—your parents raised you right.

The open home isn’t just a peculiarity to my family; it is our way of being as an Indigenous family. I am a woman of mixed heritage; my ancestry is Kwakwāka’wakw and European. I identify as an Indigenous woman and am tied strongly to my family, my community, and my nation. The way I walk in this world and the way I approach my scholarship and career are not separate. I carry with me the responsibilities and teachings that I was born into. I carry a strong awareness that my behaviour reflects on my relations, past, present, and future.

I came to the role of assistant professor in Indigenous education late in my career. Like many Indigenous women, I began my post-secondary education as a mature adult. When my youngest child began kindergarten, I went back to school to get a BA and then an MA. I did this while raising my young family and working as an educator, in various capacities, in my community. My work brought me to Victoria, British Columbia’s capital city, and to a job in Aboriginal education with the provincial government. My plan was to stay for two years and then head back to my home community in the northern part of Vancouver Island. My heart lives in T’sax̣is, the

Kwakiutl community where my mother grew up and where I raised my babies. Fourteen years later, I still have not moved home.

After more than a decade of providing leadership in Aboriginal education for the British Columbia (B.C.) provincial government and a year after completing my doctorate in education, I moved into my role as assistant professor in Indigenous education. I feel fortunate to be in a position that aligns with my passion. I have the privilege of teaching, researching, and contributing as a community-engaged scholar in an area I care about deeply—Indigenous education and language revitalization. At least I have that privilege for now. This is a reappointment year for me. If I am successful, I will have another three years to prove myself worthy of tenure. Today I think I am on track. There are other days when I fear I am on a path to early retirement.

I am on a steep learning path. Transitioning from a position where I had designated authority to a position as a junior faculty member means I am negotiating and navigating the bounds of my role. I made the transition at a time when we were taking down the walls (literally) in government offices to create more collaborative working processes. I was surprised to find how isolating and individualistic the university environment feels. The physical environment of row after row of closed offices and few open gathering spaces is a metaphor for the division between the work of individuals within the organization. Of course, I could be doing more to break down those metaphorical walls, but as new faculty, my time is dominated by figuring out how to be a good teacher, develop a research agenda, and contribute through service.

I joined the university excited in particular to teach “EĒ TELNIWT and Indigenous Education.” This course is a requirement for all Bachelor of Education (BEd) students at the University of Victoria and focuses on Indigenous content and instructional practices that are aligned with Indigenous culture. In my years as a policy maker in Aboriginal education, I saw such courses develop in response to direction from the Aboriginal education community. It has been widely acknowledged in B.C. that all pre-service teacher programs should include at least one course in Indigenous education. In 2012, the Teachers’ Regulation Branch (TRB) made First Nations content mandatory to the equivalent of a one-semester-long course. Yet, the responsibility I feel is to the community who has put such hope in the systemic outcomes of this required content inclusion.

Perhaps because of this, I take marking for this course very seriously. For me, it is a critical opportunity to engage with students—future teachers—who are wrestling with issues of Indigenous-settler relations, particularly forms of racism and altruism that reproduce dangerous understandings of and behaviors toward Indigenous children and youth. I feel committed in my role to helping my students learn and develop respectful ways to be in relationship with Indigenous peoples.

A joy of my role in Indigenous education is working with our community-based partnership programs. I have the privilege of teaching and learning with Indigenous communities who are committed to the revitalization of their languages. Teaching in these programs requires a commitment beyond preparing a good syllabus, building lesson plans, and staying current in the relevant literature. To do this work in a good way requires showing up and building connections, along with co-teaching, participating in events, and maintaining relationships with students outside of course time. Yet, these activities are given little acknowledgement in reappointment and tenure processes. I have found that teaching takes as much time as one is willing to give it, and in my first year, I allowed teaching responsibilities to dominate. However, that is only one part of my job.

The other two components of my role as an assistant professor are research and service. Like teaching, I find great privilege, opportunity, and responsibility in both research and dissemination, and in wider service. As an assistant professor in Indigenous education, I have the opportunity to build a research agenda that is fueled by my passion for Indigenous language revitalization. It is research and practice that I hope will support my community and other Indigenous communities in the work to revitalize languages. I have come to this at a time when others have opened doors, creating physical, conceptual, and intellectual spaces for Indigenous language work. I am grateful to them, and carry the responsibility to continue to open such spaces for others. Like teaching, research could easily take up the whole of my time. Certainly, service on campus requires much more than the officially expected 20% of my workload. As Indigenous faculty, the call to sit on committees and to participate in events is high. It is challenging to know what is okay to say no to, particularly when requests come from senior people, the department chair, the dean, and the provost's office.

Finding some balance is necessary, in a large part because of the way I will be evaluated as an employee for reappointment and, later, tenure. There is a constant tension between the formal and informal requirements of my job, and also the responsibilities and relationships I carry with me as a Kwakiutl person, an Indigenous woman, and an educator. Preparing my yearly salary and merit package and soon my reappointment package is a challenging process. I am asked to represent myself as an individual, when my journey is collective. Like my home, I aim for my practice to align with my cultural teachings about relationships and community responsibility.

### **Kepiihchi—Thank You**

The late Zapotec writer Andrés Henestrosa (1997) said that one can speak twenty languages but the mother tongue is the one in which one dreams, thinks, cries, and prays. My arrival to the territory of the Lekwungen-speaking people (which includes Victoria) almost two decades ago has been a journey full of adventure, experience, learning, trial, and success. As a person of Indigenous Kickapoo heritage from México, my first language is Spanish, thus living constantly in a second language is not easy, even though I am considered to be proficient and competent in English. Transitioning from being an international student to pursuing a career in the same university where I completed my degree has required the development of new skills and new ways of thinking and being; and it has also required learning new languages—the language of the academic world and, most importantly, the languages of the Indigenous communities for whom I work and with whom I have established relational accountability. In other words, the work has required meeting the responsibility that a scholar/researcher has, to establish a relationship with the world around her in order to be accountable to all her relations. This has not been easy; it has taken me a few years to be recognized by some leaders in communities, to be acknowledged as a person who is worthy of trust and even friendship, as someone who is committed to developing partnerships, collaboration, and networks of support. Elders now welcome me and invite me to their homes—an honour, and a privilege that has developed over time.

“Where are you from?” was the first question Elder George asked when we first met in Vancouver on Musqueam traditional territory. I introduced myself and acknowledged the territory and the fact

that I was a visitor to the land. George greeted me in Kwak'wala, saying "Gila'kasla," and acknowledged he was a visitor to that territory too. This is part of the protocol I have learned as I navigate and learn about the complexities of geographical and historical occurrences, political disruptions, and present realities that permeate Indigenous communities and Canadian society. In tandem, I am also learning to move about in the academic world, where protocol and expectations about service, teaching, and research are considered separate from each other but held by common threads only every once in a while, depending on where the research is done, how it is done, and what is obtained from it. However, in the case of Indigenous scholars, these three dimensions are forever interwoven, requiring a commitment to people and their communities, to one's research, and to the larger society. As an outsider, learning what it means to be accountable to "all my relations" has been a constant learning exercise, a trial-and-error practice where there is no room for assumptions. I have learned that trust is established in different ways at different times, and I sometimes wonder how much my dark skin has helped me in the process and how much it has mired opportunities.

I was fortunate to gain some knowledge working with diverse communities in various capacities prior to my tenure-track appointment at a university. One of my early experiences was as part of a team facilitating healing circles, and designing learning opportunities for survivors of residential schools; this allowed me to learn first-hand about people's histories and stories, about their lives, their ways of being, and their aspirations for the future. It was in these circles that I learned the ethic of non-interference, the importance of local protocol, the relationships among families, and the accountability that is necessary when one is a member of a group, which was not very different from my own teachings and family dynamics; and yet, I needed to remember that in each group or community of Indigenous people there are commonalities and differences. The shared aspects of my worldview and my view of the world as I understood it from being an international Indigenous scholar intersected in the axiology, the ontology, and the epistemology—in other words, in the values, the ways of being, and the ways of knowing between my heritage and the customs of this land.

As a way to learn more, I have engaged with local communities in various capacities: as an instructor, as a researcher, and as a support person for programs where student teachers are involved. Since

one of my duties is facilitating courses for mostly non-Indigenous pre-service teachers, I feel a strong sense of responsibility, not only to create awareness about the historical wrongdoings and the political abuses and exploitations that Indigenous people have experienced but also to create spaces where social change is the aspiration of future teachers. Consequently, I am involved in projects, networks, research, and teaching courses beyond the faculty of education; I am unable to fathom an academic life isolated from peers, from other content areas, and from learning opportunities in diverse contexts. However, devoting oneself with unbridled passion to an academic life presents risks of various kinds. One such risk is dedicating a large portion of time and energy to service, which until recently has been deemed as part of the job that carries little relevance to the rest of an academic's life, especially as it pertains to reappointment, tenure, and promotion. Fortunately for us, this university is starting to acknowledge service as beneficial and necessary to scholarship and research. This is especially true given the recognition by post-secondary institutions of the need to engage in community collaborations through centers of community-based research or community-engaged scholarship. As Indigenous scholars, however, this recognition has always existed, and it is acknowledged at an individual and at a community level; it is understood that when one works in community one also works holistically.

One year ago I was given a three-ring binder to start collecting my documents to apply for tenure; this process has been a reflexive exercise, for it has allowed me to pay attention to who I am on paper, and to imagine who I want to become. Beyond the practical representation of a holder of my being, these three rings represent my life as a scholar: One ring represents research; another ring represents teaching; and one last ring relates to the most important aspect of my life: service. These rings are also reminders of who I am outside of the academic world: I am a mother of three pre-adolescent children who, like me, are on the cusp of transition towards "becoming." Not very different from who they are right now, and yet close to exploring new life dimensions, emotions, and experiences.

The Indigenous education unit at this university is still growing and expanding; we have non-Indigenous colleagues who are respectful allies and a support to the three of us—Indigenous academics who continue to navigate the complexities of an institution rooted in Eurocentric conservative values that are often in conflict

with Indigenous worldviews. However, it is my hope that with the unwavering support from my Indigenous colleagues, my journey towards learning the language of the academy will be a rewarding experience. It is also my hope that with help from the people of the various communities in which I work, my journey towards learning their languages will be a reciprocal one where, through participating in our language-revitalization programs, I will be able to help them dream, think, and pray in their mother tongue. For the continued opportunity to work with communities in a reciprocal relationship, I am thankful.

### **miyoskamin (Springtime)**

In the mid-2000s, it was not uncommon for Indigenous doctoral students to be hired into faculty positions and supported to complete their PhDs. It was also not unusual for these same Indigenous scholars to be hired into leadership positions within the academy, to assist with building Indigenous programs (and therefore attract more Indigenous students) within those faculties that were often largely void of both Indigenous faculty and Indigenous students (Mihesuah & Wilson, 2004). By these standards, I guess my life experience has not been unusual, and yet by the norms of the academy it is an uncommon trajectory.

I spent my first four years in the academy as a senior lecturer and Director of Indigenous Education while completing my doctoral degree. When I began the position, I had not yet completed my course work. Once my degree was completed I was reclassified as an assistant professor and continued to hold the directorship position. This marked the official start to my tenure clock. I have just completed a reappointment process that renews the tenure-track position. I am now working hard at the final stages of preparing for tenure, which looks to be about a year into the horizon. My current plan is to apply for tenure a year early, but it actually feels more like several years late, given my early start as senior lecturer.

I grew up in northern Saskatchewan where the boreal forest meets the prairie. It is equal parts bush country and agricultural. This part of the world has four very distinct seasons: Long cold winters, hopeful springs, rejuvenating summers, and contemplative falls. Experiencing these seasons through my life has shaped my worldview. If I am so blessed as to have a long life as an academic, I

may have the opportunity to experience all four seasons. My early engagement in the academy and (continued) road to tenure has felt like springtime. I have been there seven years, and it has been a time of hope, exerting invigorating robust energy—breaking down barriers like the ice flow when the rivers open up. I have had tremendous opportunities to collaborate in new program development, new course development, Indigenous community-university partnership development, grant writing, and new research endeavors. This is not to say that these new experiences will not be available to me again, but rather that this has been a very particular time—shaped by newness.

My tenure-track experience has been strongly influenced by coming into the academy in a leadership role. Elders often describe our life's intention as a calling. I was called to assist with building up Indigenous education in a largely non-Indigenous faculty, and while my teaching responsibilities were reduced, the expectations around research and scholarship were not. Of course, my early years were spent focused on completing my doctorate, although I did some publishing during that time as well. Yet, my development as a scholar was continuously interrupted by my leadership and administrative duties; but then, was it? This is the tricky thing about scholarship. What counts? Universities have created a difficult pattern of hiring pre-doctoral Indigenous faculty to build their Indigenous presence and programs, while holding them to the same standards as all other faculty members who do not have these aims or responsibilities but are then reluctant to recognize program development as scholarship. Increasingly we are seeing examples of change to recognize these kinds of scholarly contributions, for example, the recent addition of "Community-Engaged Scholarship" to our home department's tenure and promotion policies.

I received a wide variety of advice in my early days as an academic. Some would say, "Head down; write, write, write; repeat-teach the same course all year if you can to reduce your preparation time, and pave your way to tenure—nothing else matters until you have that." Other advice I received was, "Do not worry about tenure, if you are doing everything that you are supposed to, it will come." I was also told, at the time, that nothing that I did as a senior lecturer mattered for tenure, so worry about it once you complete your PhD. Others would say, "No, it is your lifetime of work that matters, so never slack!" More recently I have received the advice that I have

“got to get out of leadership in order to develop myself more completely as a [real] scholar.” The message was: The academic unit and the programs and courses that I have been collaboratively involved in building, and that are beginning to fill the void of Indigenous students and faculty in the academy, are meaningless on the road to tenure. Leave leadership and become a “real” scholar. When I pushed back and tried to explain my understanding of Indigenous scholarship, of collaboration, of innovation, of responsibility to community for both research and academic partnerships, I was told, “I think you are ambivalent ... about being a scholar”—a major blow for someone who has spent the last fifteen years working towards this moment. However, I came to understand this experience as a clash of world-views, and my Elders have long since taught me that all those who arrive in your life are there to teach you something.

Academia is a culture like any other, its origins over a thousand years old, rooted in northern Europe, with an all-male, all-white cast. Fast forward a thousand years on a new continent colonized by the same crowd, ban Indigenous peoples from institutions of higher learning until the 1960s, slowly welcoming us and later inviting us to help fill the void they created. Often this inside crowd thinks itself to be beyond policies of assimilation but continues to insist we become just like them. They want us to dress like them, think like them, talk like them, write like them, and teach like them. And if we don’t ... we are invited to leave under the auspices of a tenure process. This may seem like a cynical view, but the systems we operate within are structural and slow to change, and we (Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike) are still right here in it. In this moment, we are still growing and learning together, we are still opening our eyes to the ways that universities work (intentionally or unintentionally) toward the assimilation of Indigenous people through hierarchical structures of almost all positions of power, held by non-Indigenous peoples who cannot separate themselves from their own worldview. Additionally, they (or the institution) refuse to create parallel positions of power specifically for Indigenous contributions to governance or structures within the universities, such as independent academic units or Indigenous-specific faculties as safe havens for Indigenous scholarship to grow unencumbered of worldview gatekeeping.

So where does this leave us? Where do we go from here? One challenge is the collective mentalities of Indigenous people offer a double-shock (cultural and organizational) to an environment where

individualism is rewarded and encouraged. So the crossroads is that we continue to work with our communities and with one another on the road to tenure—yet, the actual road to tenure we must walk alone. We will eventually stand alone before a jury of our peers to determine if our scholarship and our contributions are enough, the right kind, and worthy of support to be invited to stay.

We are all striving, Indigenous peoples and our allies, to better understand the world, to make a difference in our lifetime, to work with students to build them up and help them along their journey in any way we can. Despite the current challenges and historical hurts, we *are* making progress together as more social-justice-minded leaders make space and more Indigenous peoples take up leadership positions and battle the front lines to make it better for the next generations to come.

Now, the last energetic push towards tenure, the final breaking of the ice before the sweet sun of a rejuvenating summer not far off onto the horizon—not to lazily bask—but rather to watch the seeds begin to sprout, to see the buds unfold into leaves, and to feel the warm summer breeze blow like a deep exhale.

### Common Threads

While our stories are personal and unique to each of us, common threads weave throughout. There are commonalities with other pre-tenured faculty making career transitions, and there are commonalities shared between us and with other Indigenous scholars who have paved the way in their institutions, and who now serve as role models for the generations of emerging Indigenous scholars to come.

As pre-tenured academics needing to represent our unit in various committees, initiatives, and projects in the faculty, there are times when we have felt limited in our actions or in what we can say because we have less authority than our more senior and tenured colleagues. While this may be similar for non-Indigenous colleagues, there is a feeling of being chastised and not being allowed to be authentic or act with integrity in some of these instances. Onondaga scholar Keith James (2004) labels this as finding ourselves “in the ‘out’ group in the dynamics of departments and academic institutions, as well as at the bottom of the academic hierarchy” (p. 50). As we move through the system and learn how to hold our ground, we are repeatedly reminded that the institution is founded upon a culture

that is not ours, surrounded by a system that rewards individualism and independent work. However, as Indigenous scholars we are measured outside of the academy by our dedication and practice of collaboration.

Our very presence is political. We embody both the tensions and possibilities that exist in Indigenous-settler relations. Institutions of higher education are often thought to be above racism, above social inequities, but the reality is universities are made up of humans who all bring their cultures, life experiences, family histories, and biases. Universities are simply reflections of greater society. For Indigenous scholars, being in adversarial spaces and pushed into survival mode moves us away from our natural cultural way of being in the world: that of being generous with our time and resources, bringing a natural spirit of giving, and a collective and supportive spirit to our work with allied others. We are reminded of our natural way of being when given the incredible opportunity to work in our communities—it reminds us of how incredibly disruptive the university environment is to the development and nourishment of Indigenous spirit. In “community” (a colloquial phrase commonly used amongst Indigenous people to describe time we spend in an Indigenous community), we can relax and be ourselves. We are valued and appreciated for the knowledge and collaborative spirit that we bring. That is not to say there are never difficulties working in community, or that lateral violence does not exist there—it does—but we also have processes and ways of being that can work through these difficulties in natural ways that bring healing and new levels of connection and understanding.

Beyond this continuous experience of cultural incongruence, we are also constantly reminded of being outnumbered. Very few institutions have a proportional (or higher) number of Indigenous scholars, and so it makes it difficult to work with or be measured by others more like us. Turner (2008) concurs: “At this time in our development as an intellectual culture (as part of mainstream intellectual culture), our numbers are small ... which means that we must make our intellectual labor count” (p. 10). This reality amplifies our responsibility to make our work meaningful and create change for our communities. While the three of us have experience working with and for communities, the experience necessary to develop skills, knowledge, and academic acumen has been limited by the lack of an Indigenous mentor from whom we could have learned. Some of us

were assigned a mentor at the beginning of our tenure-track appointment, but these mentors were non-Indigenous, and often times our differing worldviews prevented us from engaging with them in meaningful ways to support our academic growth. This was a big challenge to surmount, and it illustrates the under-representation of Indigenous scholars in the academy.

Despite being under-represented, we acknowledge we have a role to play in decolonizing education and teaching practice, and in turn, to contribute to institutional and systemic change. Alfred (2004) asserts:

Like all Indigenous people, if we are accountable to our nations and truly cognizant and respectful of cultures, we have as a responsibility to do what we can where we are to ensure the survival of our culture and our nations. Being in the university, we as Indigenous academics have the responsibility to work to defeat the operation of colonialism within the university and to reorder academe. (p. 89)

One way in which this can be achieved is by creating spaces for dialogue, or what Willie Ermine (2007) describes as “ethical spaces,” the space where “two societies, with disparate worldviews, are poised to engage each other” (p. 193). Dialogue and relationship building guide this process, which acknowledges the complexities needed to establish equity and leadership in respectful ways as well as the place of emotion, uncertainty, and possibility leading to change and transformation.

This change also needs to be done in collaboration with communities, for it is the communities who inform and guide the work we do; therefore, we have the professional and ethical responsibility to be accountable to them. This represents another clash of worldviews; as articulated by Kovach (2009), “[R]ules are established and decisions are made as to what counts as knowledge and how that knowledge is generated” (p. 55). There is tension between what matters for the success of programs and what matters for tenure; there is also tension generated when thinking about what matters to the individual versus what matters to the collective.

In this regard, we are also aware that we need to embrace our allies, those who contribute to our Indigenous programs, to the betterment of our communities, to our professional development, and

to imagining a future where we all promote and participate in social change. This requires that we foster and nurture those relationships. However, establishing and nurturing these relationships requires more investment in service that takes additional time and energy.

### Closing Words

In contrast to Alfred's (2004) words about a responsibility to "reorder academe," James (2004) warns Indigenous scholars to be "realistic about their perceptions of academia" (p. 62) as they often hold an idealized view of what academic institutions stand for and how they function. Further, Cherokee Daniel Heath Justice (2004) questions the whole enterprise of "Indigenizing the academy" pondering, "Should we even do so?" (p. 101). He then softens his approach admitting that "[t]he academy can also be a site of significant cultural recovery work, a place where all people who are disconnected from their histories can begin their journeys homeward" (p. 101). We can certainly attest to the latter, as we have all witnessed and experienced this healing, cultural connection, and "returning home" that can occur for Indigenous scholars and students alike in higher-education settings. A post-secondary education can be a healing journey, a time and place to make sense of the intergenerational trauma experienced by our people worldwide, and providing empowerment through education to transform the future. Alfred (2004) affirms, "Indigenous academics can serve an important role: as teachers of an empowering and truthful sense of the past and who we are, and as visionaries of a dignified alternative to the indignity of cultural assimilation and political surrender" (p. 95). As Indigenous scholars we continue to walk in two worlds, and interpret such worlds with "two-eyed seeing" (Bartlett, Marshall, & Marshall, 2010), where the strengths of the Indigenous and the non-Indigenous contexts contribute to reciprocal relationships, responsibilities to our communities, and mutual accountability. It is only in this way that we will create a shared future where we can walk this academic path not with ambivalence, but with strength, beauty, and gifts to offer.

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