

FA Executive July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2015

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Newsletter Highlights:

- *President's Message*
- *CAUT Aboriginal Academic Forum*
- *CAUT Equity Forum: Perpetual Crises?*



A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

*Jacqueline Holler, President UNBC-FA
Associate Professor and Chair, History Program*

Happy spring! With the receding snows and the longer days come some new beginnings for the UNBC-FA. First, on 1 April 2014, the Labour Board will hear our application for a certification vote. With a historic 72% of members having signed cards, we are looking forward to the vote and will inform you as soon as the Board has decided upon when and how voting will proceed. We are also beginning negotiations, of course. You will soon receive a survey that we urge you to complete so that your negotiating team can enter bargaining fully prepared and empowered. You've already received two negotiations bulletins, and you can look forward to frequent communication as bargaining proceeds.

But this newsletter contains no reports on certification or negotiations. With those topics taking up so much room in the life of the Association, it can be easy to forget how many other important issues we deal with. And because much of what we do is best categorized as "putting out fires," we often don't pay as much attention to our vision and aspirations. This issue of the newsletter is dedicated to one of the most important aspirations we have as a

faculty association and institution: to respect diversity and promote equity. The Association sponsored two members to attend the CAUT Forum for Aboriginal Academic Staff in Toronto this fall. One of our attending members, Jessie King, has provided an extensive report on the conference, reproduced below. This year also saw the second CAUT Equity Forum in Toronto. Dana Wessell Lightfoot, one of the UNBC-FA's reps on UNBC's Joint Equity Committee, attended for the Association. Her report follows Jessie's. Both reports identify numerous challenges related to inclusion, but both Jessie and Dana have also identified clear ways forward. I hope you will enjoy their articles.



REPORT FROM THE CAUT FORUM FOR ABORIGINAL ACADEMIC STAFF

*Jessie King, Hadiksm Gaax
Sessional Instructor & PhD Candidate, Health Sciences*

The conference opened with high hopes of networking and discussing pertinent issues as laid out within the discussion circle topics. The goal for this year was to explore topics such as working with internal and external allies and how Aboriginal Academics at the conferences were pursuing each in their practice. Another discussion circle looked towards cultural revitalization to gather stories about how cultural revitalization is happening (and how it can happen) in the classroom. Finally, the conference's organizers looked towards igniting conversation on how to engage and educate senior administrators and colleagues about Aboriginal worldviews, collective experience, and how to be an ally.

Plenary Session: ***Being an Activist Scholar in the Community and in the Public Arena***

Chair: Rainey Gaywish, Access & Aboriginal Focus Programs, University of Manitoba

Panelists:

- Margo Greenwood, Associate Professor of First Nations Studies and Education, University of Northern British Columbia; Academic Leader of the National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health
- Greg Younging, Professor of Indigenous Studies, University of British Columbia; Served as Assistant Director of Research to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada

This panel introduced the conference attendees to activist scholars at UNBC and UBC. Each panelist took a different approach in sharing their story; whether it be through PowerPoint and linear sharing or through Dr. Greenwood's storytelling approach, both were inspiring.

Dr. Younging spoke of his experience going back to the 80's and 90's wherein he participated in many committees aimed at improving Aboriginal lives and



creating a dialogue with the Government. His activism ignited a conversation about making change in the university that will enhance the experience for both Aboriginal students and Aboriginal academics in the university. Currently Aboriginal students still face difficulties in university due to the institution not being a fit to their way of being and knowing. Aboriginal Academic staff also experience difficulties that range from locating allies within the institution and being overwhelmed by priorities to the community.

Dr. Margo Greenwood discussed her experience doing her PhD and working with the National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health housed at UNBC. She discussed her work in developing pamphlets, reports, and research publications based on Aboriginal health and how the NCCAH has provided opportunities for collaboration within and outside of the university. She is now the President of the Aboriginal Health division of Northern Health and is continuing her work and activism in that forum. Her message was to continue building collaborations and to continue working in the field you are passionate about. Seek out those who are willing collaborators and become involved with projects. Dr. Greenwood is a great example of making the university fit for Indigenous people – she has capitalized on opportunities due to her drive and positivity.

Discussion Circles: **Cultural revitalization**

In this discussion circle we were introduced to the concept of cultural revitalization in the university through various forms of expression and action. The first thing we discussed was the need for Aboriginal academics to be aware of their self-identity and where they sit in the university. Awareness is key to knowing your position and how others perceive you in the academy. Once this is achieved it is important to focus on cultural safety and developing safe spaces within the university (or finding those that already exist). For Aboriginal academics it is important to educate those around them about the language that is used in reference to Aboriginal people and to make yourself available to discussing important issues – with that said, it can also be dangerous to fall into a pattern of being overwhelmed and being the first point of contact for everything Aboriginal in the university environment (committees, proof-reading, guest lectures, etc).

As Aboriginal academics it is important to be okay with bringing cultural knowledge into the classroom and to incorporate it into our teaching frameworks if we are most comfortable with them. Sometimes this may mean something as simple as placing chairs in a circle to do circle work or utilizing stories to teach a particular lesson. Connected to this is the importance of knowing the traditional territory that a university resides upon and teaching the importance of recognizing traditional territories at the start of a class or event. I do this in each of my classes and every now and then I ask my students what the Traditional Territory is. I always receive great feedback when I do this and it is incredibly important for me as I am a visitor to this territory too – this all relates back to knowing yourself and where you come from. We wound up our discussion group with a great conversation about diversity and spreading awareness

of diversity on our respective campuses.

Discussion Circles: **Working with external allies**

In this discussion group we focused on how to engage with external allies and how we go about getting to know them. A major point of this discussion was to know the motivations of external allies – why do they want to partner with an Aboriginal academic in the university? What are their priorities? Are they genuine? Beyond this line of questioning it is also important to ask ourselves why we are looking to partner with external allies and understand what we are hoping to achieve through these partnerships. I discussed my work with bringing in guest speakers from Northern Health and engaging their Aboriginal Health team to introduce my students to professionals working in a professional field they are studying.

As Aboriginal academics our goal is to ensure that we are in control when we enter a situation where an external ally would like to work with us on a particular issue to ensure that any work being done with Aboriginal People is respectful and will not cause any harm. With this added feature it may be difficult to form partnerships due to the restrictions that may not be attractive to external allies – but they should be maintained in order to respect and be responsible for Aboriginal Knowledge. This led into the difficult discussion of knowing when to say no. Every so often we may come across a scenario where motivations are very different; as Aboriginal Academics we need to trust our gut instinct if a partnership does not feel right. The best we can do is to direct the potential partner to another person who may be a better fit to the Aboriginal group they are interested in working with so they can become informed on protocols with that specific group.

Our discussion ended with an emotional turn to equality in relationships. When we are looking to work with external allies there should be a clear understanding of an equitable relationship beginning. The main take-away here is to remain strong and disallow the perpetuation of historical relationships; any collaboration or relationship should be reciprocal at the end of the day.

Plenary Session:

Chair: Dan McDonald, Member-at-Large (Aboriginal),
CAUT Executive Presenter:
Adam Frogley, National Indigenous Coordinator,
National Tertiary Education Union (Australia)

Adam Frogley is of the Taunglerong from the Kulin Nation speaking on behalf of the NTEU – National Tertiary Education Union. His work is within assisting Aboriginal Academics by informing universities on hiring quotas and procedures. The NTEU releases recommendations of hiring and procedures for Aboriginal academics in Australia and they have seen a lot of success. Since their inception they have managed to track an increase of 87.5% of Universities hiring an Indigenous Employment coordinator to increase their Aboriginal Academic staff. This after initial difficulties with universities filling their hiring quota's with non-academic staff prior to more stipulations being released.



Their union is a national one that is built out of individual members that are elected. They operate on a local negotiation framework but return to the national group for decision-making and voting. Before his presentation, it was noted by the CAUT President that Adam was making this presentation to CAUT to allow attendees of the conference to consider what such a system would look like in Canada. As a young Aboriginal academic I was very inspired by the work that Adam is doing and saw it as a great opportunity for capacity building and recognition of Aboriginal Academics in Canadian universities. There are so few of us that it would be nice to help universities maintain a hiring quota of Aboriginal Academic staff so that we are no longer a minority in universities.

Plenary Session: ***Being an Activist Scholar within the Academy***

Chair: David Newhouse, Chair, Indigenous Studies, Trent University

Panelists:

- **Priscilla Settee, Associate Professor in the Department of Native Studies, University of Saskatchewan**

Priscilla introduced herself as an Associate Professor from the Department of Native Studies at the University of Saskatchewan. Her talk about where she came from and how she came to be at U of S was inspiring and reflective of my experience entering a university environment. She noted how strange it was to come into an institution that felt foreign to her way of knowing and being but finding a way to succeed by finding her place and voice in the academy. She noted that she doesn't call herself an activist scholar but that she is doing what she was meant to do which is social activism. Her social activism and position as an academic allow her to be involved in social movements. A message she sent out to young Aboriginal academics in the room was to know our role and responsibility to education. We have a lot of power in the university that can be extended to society as a whole – due to that we also have a lot of power to provide a sense of hope for society. By this she means that we have the opportunity to become involved in larger projects and movements to increase social awareness and education of Aboriginal Peoples, rights, and history to Canadian universities and society.

- **Marie Battiste, Academic Director, Aboriginal Education Research Centre, University of Saskatchewan**

Marie introduced herself in a similar fashion as Priscilla in that she also does not see herself as an activist scholar – there may be a pattern here. She was modest in her approach to this talk but hit some major points that I walked away with. First of all, Aboriginal academics need to unpack the Eurocentric frameworks in universities and rebuild them in a way that is responsive and respectful to Indigenous and anti-racist work. In doing so, a major obstacle some Aboriginal academics may face are those that are political and provide only distraction from our cause. If our way of being is deeply rooted in Aboriginal epistemologies, it is our duty to unpack them and frame them in a way that will work for us in the university. Ignoring traditional knowledges or

being afraid of the response people may have will only deter Aboriginal academics from being healthy in a teaching capacity.

- **Wanda Wuttunee, Professor, Native Studies, Faculty of Arts and Director, Aboriginal Business Education Partners, Asper School of Business, University of Manitoba**

Wanda echoed many of the topics presented by Marie, Priscilla, and others in attendance at this conference. What stood out for me in her talk was about becoming a making-space scholar as opposed to fitting within the mould of what we think a university professor should be. Aboriginal academics must find their own way and this may come in the form of meeting crucial mentors for developing this skillset and always being reflective of our practice. For those of us working in or with communities we need to be aware of the pain and suffering that may be happening (be this current or historical trauma). In doing the work that we do we must always ask ourselves to revisit the following question: How can I help? Aboriginal academics are not invasive and we should avoid projects or partnerships that ask us to be. Any work that we undertake must be mindful of reciprocal relationships that may continue even when the work is complete. We need to tread lightly and teach others to do the same.

Discussion Circles: ***Working with internal allies***

For this discussion circle I was lucky to be with many Aboriginal academics that had been in the university for quite some time. I took away many points from this discussion and felt validated by what was said due to the fact that I have been pursuing many of the things they shared when it came to how to successfully engage internal allies. First of all, it is important to get involved in committees that you are interested in (hiring committees, informant committees, and others that are seeking out an Aboriginal voice). If a gap exists within the university, feel safe to discuss creating a committee to voice concerns as opposed to working and living in a status quo situation. Connected to this discussion was focusing on action as opposed to reaction, which serves no one.

Within a university environment there is a political push/pull situation that everyone needs to be aware of. Sometimes this can lead to situations of lateral violence that need to be addressed when they happen, not avoided or ignored until they are unmanageable. With this said, the common theme of the conference returned in the form of "know your allies", bring more on board, and let them help you in situations where some support is required. This will allow the Aboriginal academic to leverage support and potentially leverage university policy for our needs.

The largest hurdle noted by many in this group was the need for mutual trust and being brave enough to ask questions to ensure you are clear on goals and objectives in the university. Aboriginal academics can of course support one another and mentor younger faculty coming up in the ranks by creating a culture of courage in the university. This may come in the form of grounding people in cultural or traditional knowledges and creating a safe place to share in these exchanges. The message we all came away with is that the university is loaded

with allies, we just need to find them and ask ourselves what we can do to better engage with them.

Educating colleagues and senior administrators

This talk was very exciting and full of energy for the end of the day. We had a great group of people in this room; our goal was to have fun in the doing and have fun in presenting and reporting back to the group. Major themes in this room were on finding the courage and bravery to not be afraid of speaking up or appearing as the squeaky wheel when things are not going so great for Aboriginal academics. Because this topic was focused on colleagues and senior administrators we spent a lot of time discussing scenarios where there was a bad situation that desperately needed to be addressed. Some in the room shared painful stories of being overlooked for tenure or not being approached to be on a committee dedicated to a topic or situation their research and interests were within. It was hard to be in the room for those moments, as a young academic I have to admit there was a bit of fear ignited in me by hearing some of the things people in the room had gone through.

What I take from this session is more on the focus of hope that we ended off with. Aboriginal academics need to maintain the hope that education will provide us with liberation and allow us to have healthy working relationships as long as we are willing to put in the work. Universities that have a cohesive group of Aboriginal academics were noted to be the most rewarding to work at. I shared our SAGE group in which students and professors are most welcome to attend; these are usually productive and refreshing meetings where new ideas and collaborations have happened in the past. The last lesson I take away is to educate people at all levels if it is welcomed and to be patient and strategic in movement through the university. To an extent, the university still needs to be decolonized and Aboriginal academics still face the danger of becoming re-colonized in an institution with a different mindset and way of knowing. But that day in that room I saw many strong Aboriginal academics that remained true to themselves through the bumps and obstacles; they inspired me to continue incorporating my way of knowing into the classroom... I'm thankful to have students who love experiencing my way of teaching.

Discussion Circle: Next Steps Forward

This discussion circle took on a culmination of the past two days of work and sharing. It was obvious that we were exhausted from the two previous days spent with heavy topics so it was nice to take a step away and look to the future. In our group we continued to discuss the concept of allies: finding them, educating them, and working on exciting projects together. A point that I mentioned was to partner with student associations in our respective universities. I note this from my recent experience as the Graduate Student Society President and how exciting it was to collaborate on events and/or meetings with faculty. On the NBCGSS board we have a First Nations Rep (as does NUGSS); being that some of the membership of these societies may become academics someday it would be interesting to see

collaborations happening earlier for students.

Another suggestion made included the idea of continuing to hold public forums on Aboriginal academics and to maybe consider the idea of ranking Canadian universities in regards to their hiring and support of Aboriginal Education. With this point being made I really began to appreciate what we have at UNBC in regards to support and Aboriginal education; that said, I do think there is always room to improve and would like to see where others would place UNBC on such a ranking scale – I think it would be something for our institution to be proud of.

Ending off this discussion was a call to CAUT to help universities engage and recruit Aboriginal academics and possibly develop manuals or workshops that provide insight on how to become an ally in the university. CAUT may also have the ability to lobby the government on Aboriginal issues and suggest hiring quotas for Aboriginal academics to Canadian Universities.

To end off this discussion I made one final point that centered upon mentorship for young Aboriginal academics. What I would like to see CAUT potentially do with the help of University administration is to produce a newsletter in which one or two Aboriginal academics are recognized for their work and any other significant achievements. I think this would serve as inspiration to young Aboriginal academics and would provide a buffer against the negative stories of strife some of us hear about. This group was the end of the conference and it was sad to have to go after meeting so many wonderful people.

Thanks again to the Faculty Association for the opportunity to attend!



CAUT EQUITY FORUM: PERPETUAL CRISES? DIVERSITY WITH EQUITY IN THE ACADEMY

*Dana Wessell-Lightfoot
Assistant Professor, History Program*

In early February, the CAUT sponsored "Perpetual Crisis? Diversity with Equity in the Academy", a forum designed to bring members of faculty associations from across Canada together to discuss the issue of diversity and equity in higher education. As the name of the forum implies, diversity and equity are contentious and ongoing topics in Canadian universities. The goal of this forum, therefore, was to identify concrete steps to advance equity and diversity at CAUT, within our own faculty associations and as individual faculty. Through a series of keynote talks, roundtables and guided breakout sessions, the forum pinpointed issues of equity and diversity at Canadian universities and worked towards finding instructive and imaginary ways to move forward in promoting equity and diversity in the academy.

The first keynote speaker was Dr. Camille Nelson, Dean of the Suffolk University Law School. Dr. Nelson described her administrative style as “critical race deaning”, by which she meant creating a 21st century university that mirrored 21st century society. To Dr. Nelson, diversity was a process and she used the word as a verb to emphasize that diversity should be constantly moving forward. She urged those of us who care about diversity to consider becoming deans, chairs, directors and university presidents who could therefore work to promote diversity within our own institutions. As advice on using diversity as a verb in our own institutions, Dr. Nelson presented a number of suggestions, including making the implicit explicit by surfacing underlying assumptions and unpacking hidden norms; questioning whose perspective is universalized at institutions of higher education; and seeking justice by fostering democratic inclusion as academic leaders.

On Saturday morning, a second keynote speaker, Dr. Philomena Essed from Antioch University, reflected upon and nuanced some of the ideas explored by Dr. Nelson by focusing on three broad issues of diversity and equity in higher education. Dr. Essed began with everyday oppression/racism which she defined as the integration of practices of racism and oppression in the normal flow of everyday life. To Dr. Essed (basing her arguments on critical race and gender theory), silencing was the most effective form of repression as it discouraged and actively eliminated dissent. Secondly, Dr. Essed highlighted cultural cloning in higher education; the privileging of likeness and the cloning of normal behaviour at the highest levels of the academy. Her final point explored the durable inequalities in higher education and how these were shaped by the tendency towards cultural cloning and standardization. Her advice to promote diversity and education in the academy was to work on decloning through non-conformity and disobedience; to emphasize universities as learning communities not corporations; and to focus on collaboration not competition.

The third session of the forum was a roundtable featuring four academics from Ontario and Quebec who spoke on “Visible Absences and the Neo-liberal University”. Each scholar reflected on their own personal experiences as well as research in the area of critical race theory and equity and diversity within the academy. They discussed changes made at their own institutions in terms of promoting equity and diversity but also emphasized enormous challenges they, and others, have faced. The overall message from these speakers highlighted persistent inequalities for faculty at Canadian institutions of higher education, despite various attempts at change.

In between each of these sessions, participants of the forum attended smaller “breakout” sessions where we discussed key points raised by the keynote and roundtable speakers. In the final of these breakout sessions, we developed potential pathways that CAUT, our own faculty associations and ourselves as individual faculty could take to promote diversity and equity in the academy. These suggestions ranged from having CAUT develop model equity and diversity clauses and policy statements that faculty associations could then adopt for

their own collective agreements to faculty associations working as social justice unions to individual faculty pushing equity and diversity policy and practices through institutional committee work. The list of suggestions at each level was long and complex and I'd be happy to share these in more detail.

Reflecting back on the various speakers I heard and the discussions I participated in at this forum, it is clear that distinct inequities and a lack of diversity persist at Canadian institutions of higher education and that discussion of such issues is complex, conflicted and contentious. Based on the discussion at this forum, I will be making a number of suggestions to the UNBC Faculty Association Executive with the aim of promoting equity and diversity for UNBC faculty.



Early morning light on Cerro Chaltén (Mount Fitzroy) Southern Patagonian Ecefield, Argentina

Photo courtesy of Brian Menounos, Associate Professor, Geography

Dear Colleagues,

I recently became the fortunate recipient of one of UNBC's new VOIP phones. It has a pleasant chirruping ring tone, and I suspect that if I were more technically savvy I could download an app to change the ring tone to anything I wanted. A couple of days after installation, I was surprised to find an email containing nothing but a ".wav" file. Normally, I have more sense than to run an application that shows up in my email, but it said it came from my phone, so I tried it and was treated to listening to a message that had been left for me on my office phone. This is all great for those of you who need to listen to your phone messages immediately, and I'm sure there are many of you, but for anyone who would rather not have their phone messages chase them around on various media, the kind people at 27773 (the phone help number) are happy to turn off the phone message forwarding feature.

Happy phoning,
Stephen Rader