

May 2019

## Report to CAUT Council

The Group met by telecall twice during the previous year and once at a face to face meeting in Ottawa on October 18, 2018 in advance of the tri-annual conference for Aboriginal academic staff. The Committee thanks Jean Becker (WLU) and Joanne Archibald (UBC) who have finished their terms on the committee. The 11-member committee welcomed six new members: Cash Ahenakew (UBC), Craig Proulx (STU), Karl Hele (Mount Allison), Zaa Joseph (BCIT), Sharon McIvor (NVIT) and Jacqueline Ottmann (USask). The continuing members of the committee are: Wanda Wuttunee (UMan), Priscilla Settee (USask), Rainey Gaywish (UMan), Marie Battiste (USask) and David Newhouse (Trent).

At its October meeting, the committee reviewed its mandate and considered its name and decided to continue with the term 'Aboriginal' in its working title.

The main activities of the committee for this year were to renew its membership, plan and offer the tri-annual Forum for Indigenous Academic Staff. The October forum was attended by approximately 170 faculty from across the country; the most well subscribed of any CAUT conference. At the November Council meeting, the Working Group offered a well-attended session on Indigenization. The committee also reviewed policies referred to it for comment from other CAUT committees as well as provided advice to CAUT staff on copyright and intellectual property issues as they relate to Indigenous knowledge.

The well-attended forum: *Advancing Indigenization* provided a snapshot of the tensions, challenges and successes for Indigenous faculty as this important project rolls out. The conference featured an opportunity for new Indigenous faculty to share their experiences in a panel discussion and a follow up set of discussion groups.

Faculty in the discussion groups indicated significant challenges in their institutions around issues of workload (little recognition of the additional responsibilities of Indigenous faculty for community relations, student support and university service), research and teaching. Members expressed particular concern about the lack of understanding of their research and how this affects tenure and promotion decisions as well as relations with peers. Others expressed concern about the challenges of teaching about Indigenous issues including the

particular challenges of teaching Indigenous-related courses when the institution has adopted an Indigenous course requirement.

Faculty participants at the forum also discussed the impact of Indigenization on Indigenous Studies departments and programs. As those who were in the forefront of Indigenization, they have not been beneficiaries of the move to Indigenize, which includes the hiring of additional Indigenous faculty throughout the university. The chair of the department of Indigenous studies at the University of Winnipeg reported that the department was overwhelmed by the teaching demands resulting from Indigenization. Cluster hires, a strategy used to hire Indigenous faculty in a group of related departments and programs, came under criticism as the strategy did not recognize that importance of social support that comes from being part of a group of Indigenous faculty members working in a common program. Indigenous faculty pointed out the increased workload that they have encountered as a result of Indigenization has also not been recognized. They are called upon to serve on numerous committees, act as consultants and advisors on Indigenization to other programs and to the institution itself. All wanted the effort to succeed but were afraid at this stage to let go of the work needed for the effort to be successful. Remaining seized by and directly involved in the effort was seen as important and worth the extra work. A decade of successful Indigenization efforts may help to make many feel comfortable enough to move into positions of support instead of positions of action implementation.

There was a spirited discussion about the challenges of Indigenization and more importantly whether or not Indigenization of post-secondary institutions was possible or if the development of separate stand-alone Indigenous institutions would be a better path to improve Indigenous post-secondary education.

The working group also held a pre-conference session on Indigenization for council members at the November Council meeting. It focused on helping members to understand the broad context and activities of Indigenization as well as an opportunity for members to add their perspectives for issues to be addressed. Members indicated that it would helpful to frame Indigenization efforts using the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Respectfully Submitted,

**David Newhouse**  
**Chair, Aboriginal Post-Secondary Working Group**