

Council of Ontario Universities  
Academic Colleagues Report  
303<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of Council, April 6, 2017

Council met on Thursday, April 6 at the David Braley Health Sciences Centre, McMaster University in Hamilton. The meeting began with a panel discussion on the role of faculty in the “indigenization” of universities. The guest panelists were David Newhouse (Chair and Professor, Department of Indigenous Studies, Trent University), Sheila Cote-Meek (Associate Vice-President, Academic and Indigenous Programs, Laurentian University) and Bonnie Freeman (Assistant Professor, Social Work and Chair, Indigenous Education Council and Circle of Indigenous Social Work Action Committee, McMaster University). Allison Sekuler, Academic Colleague for McMaster University, introduced the panelists and moderated the discussion. David Newhouse emphasized the significance of reconciliation, calling it the largest social project in Canada since the development of the national railway. Sheila Cote-Meek highlighted the practice of land acknowledgement and challenged universities to go deeper than the typical perfunctory recognition by learning the stories that build connection. Bonnie Freeman focused on faculty development and engagement, noting that faculty engagement with students is part of reconciliation. She stressed the need to understand that all students and faculty are colonized, and the need to examine the spaces we occupy. She also noted the importance of cultural competence training. The discussion with Council came to the question of measuring success. One way to identify success is through the development of a mutually beneficial relationship, one that enhances universities as well as Indigenous people. Universities should also be ready for failure, and understand that each failure may teach us how to collaborate in better ways. The bentwood box used in the Truth and Reconciliation process was used as an example of how progress can be measured. The box collected artifacts of the reconciliation process, and before an artifact could be placed in the box three questions were asked: Is the engagement meaningful? Is it mutually beneficial? Does it transfer leadership?

Following this discussion, Council proceeded with its regular business and reports. The new membership for the COU Executive Committee was approved. David Lindsay, President of COU, provided an update on the COU Strategic Engagement Campaign. Paul Davidson, President of Universities Canada, reported on national issues including the increase in international applications to Canadian universities.

Daniel Woolf, Principal of Queen’s University, will be the new Chair of Council when it meets again in the fall of 2017. Academic Colleagues will meet in Toronto on May 25-26, 2017.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Louise Hill  
COU Academic Colleague for Lakehead University