(DE)COLONIZING RESEARCH SERVICES

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ABSTRACT

The 2015 Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) prompted universities to consider Indigenization. Subsequently, in recognition of the need for a prior step, decolonizing became the focus. At York University (Toronto, Canada), while faculty hiring policies and curriculum development addressed some aspects of the calls, there was limited focus on staff involvement. David Phipps, then Executive Director of the Office of Research Services within the Division of the Vice-President Research and Innovation approached Associate Vice-President Research Celia Haig-Brown with the original focus, "What about Indigenizing the Office of Research Services?" Our work began. "How do research administration practices/polices create (or serve as barriers to) an enabling environment for Indigenous research?" became the driving question. Building on the university's commitment to Indigenous Futurities as a research opportunity in our Strategic Research Plan[1], the Journal of Research Administration's special edition on equity, diversity and inclusion provides a perfect site to reflect on our work and, we hope, provoke further discussion of the potential for decolonizing research services in other institutions of higher education. We begin this reflection and provocation in the article title. We bracket the (de) in the word decolonizing in the title to indicate our understanding of the complexity of a university, based as it is in a colonizing model, engaging in decolonizing work.

Keywords:

decolonization; indigenization; research; research services; indigenous

Authors' note to readers who seek guidance:

This paper is written as a narrative of our journey together as we make efforts to decolonize research administration. Since storytelling is a validated Indigenous method dating back thousands of years, we wrote this article in a storytelling format appropriate to research in Indigenous contexts. You may find that it is not written in the conventional style expected by most western academic journals. All the content of a traditional article (background, literature review, methods, results, discussion) is there but only by engaging with the story will you, the reader, fully understand the content. As either Indigenous scholars or scholars working in Indigenous contexts, we have crafted our research output to reflect Indigenous methods and a culturally appropriate form of scholarly dissemination. In this special edition focused on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, readers have the opportunity to benefit not only from the unique content of this contribution but also from its Indigenous-inspired form.

Some of this work was undertaken by a single author. Some was undertaken collectively. Relatedly, the voice of the storytelling moves at times between first person singular and

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1. https://www.yorku.ca/research/wp-content/uploads/sites/39/2020/07/Final-SRP-2018-2023.pdf, p. 22.

first person plural. This movement reflects the iterative and collaborative nature of the research. Some work happened in sequence, and some happened in parallel. For example, Sean was conducting the research project proper while Celia and David were conducting the first three workshops described below. Their stories come together in workshop 4. The conclusion then reveals how this limited scale project took on a life of its own and led to direction to the university as a whole.

The article ends with Implications for Research Administration. We encourage you not to skip to the conclusions but to work with the story and imagine how it applies in your context. Some questions that you can consider along the way include:

- What are the colonial drivers of research administration at your institution that serve as barriers to authentic engagement of Indigenous research and Indigenous researchers? How can the research undertaken by Sean Hillier in this article inspire similar efforts to create recommendations for decolonizing research administration in your institution?

- As your institution develops frameworks responding to opportunities for decolonization, does your office of research administration fit within these frameworks and do you have leadership for action such as that offered by AVP Celia Haig Brown?

- How can staff educate themselves by holding workshops by staff for staff as described by David Phipps?

- How can the office of research administration take responsibility to support Indigenous researchers and their community work, especially Early Career Researchers?

- How can the office of research administration take responsibility to support engagement of non-Indigenous researchers with Indigenous communities as we describe below?

We wrote this story to illustrate these questions and to provide guidance and inspiration to you. We encourage you to do the work to read our story in its decolonized format to seek that guidance and become inspired to start your own journey of decolonization.

Now, on with our story...

OUR CONTEXT

Our work started with the release of the Indigenous Framework (fall 2018) and it is located at York University in Toronto, Canada. The area known as Tkaronto has been caretaken by the Anishinabek Nation, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, and the Huron-Wendat. It is now home to many First Nation, Inuit and Métis communities. We acknowledge the current treaty holders, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. This territory is subject of the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement to peaceably share and care for the Great Lakes region.

This article tells our story of first steps to decolonize research administration at a large, research intensive, suburban university in the largest city in Canada. We determined that story was the best approach for an article concerning Indigeneity in the academy (Archibald, 2008). As the story unfolds, we contextualize our work, introduce ourselves, present working statements on relevant terms, detail the process of creating a series of decolonizing workshops for people in the Office of Research Services (ORS), and, finally, focus intently on the outcomes of an embedded research project conducted by Indigenous health researcher and assistant professor Sean Hillier.

Socio-historical Context

Why are universities so impervious to the existence of de facto forms of institutionalized discrimination that they are unable to recognize the threat that some of their accustomed practices pose to their own existence? (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 2001, p. 2)

Indigenous futurity considers how indigenous revivals might be viewed as expressions of "futurity," operating in resistance to those assumptions that consign Native American [Indigenous] peoples and lifeways to the past. (Teuton, 2018, n.p.)

While racism is mostly thought of as a kind of violent rejection, racist institutions in fact often do not want to fully expel the racial other; instead, they wish to maintain that other within existing structures. (Cheng, 2001, p. 12)

We begin with the acknowledgement that schooling in the Americas, as a historical and contemporary practice, has been and in most instances continues to be a powerful tool of colonialism (e.g. Battiste, 2013; Regan, 2010). Ironically, some might even say perversely, we work within and against the university as our way to counteract its shortcomings. Our goal is to create conditions that move the institution toward making it more accessible and inclusive, useful and desirable for all who seek the strengths it has to offer and to use those strengths to protect, advance, and engage with diverse knowledges. Recent publications (e.g. McGregor et al., 2018; Styres & Kempf, 2022) provide specific examples of the struggles to have university personnel at all levels develop understandings of "the diversity of Indigenous research methods…[These] relationships require work, commitment, energy,

communication, and continuous engagement" (McGregor et al., 2018, p. 307). There are no quick solutions. As people directly involved with research administration and conduct, we live daily with Maōri scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith's words, "The word 'research' itself is probably one of the dirtiest words in the Indigenous world's vocabulary" (2012, p. 1). At the same time, we are conscious of and take up the challenge expressed in the now classic article—completed in 1991 and republished extensively—by Cree scholar Verna Kirkness and Alaskan immigrant Ray Barnhardt. They conclude The Four R's—Respect, Relevance, Reciprocity, Responsibility—this way:

The only question remaining is, can those who are in a position to make a difference, seize the opportunity and overcome institutional inertia soon enough to avoid the alienation of another generation of First Nations people, as well as the further erosion of the university's ability to serve the needs of society as a whole? (2005, p. 15)

We also place our work purposefully within current articulations of Indigenous futurities. Deeply rooted in knowledges and understandings of the past including Indigenous traditions and the impacts of settler colonialism, such theorizing recognizes an imagined future always arising from current circumstances. In this light, our article fits with the theme of this special issue on equity, diversity and inclusion for research administration. Always conscious of the past experiences of many Indigenous Peoples with Eurocentric educational institutions, we imagine, indeed we dream of and work toward, a university that takes responsibility for creating respectful and relevant conditions with and for Indigenous faculty and students to engage in ethical community-engaged and driven research with full and appropriate institutional and administrative support.

And now a word about terminology. Always organic, always evolving, the politics of working in and with Indigenous knowledges, research, communities, and Peoples inside the academy requires constant attentiveness above all else. Simultaneously, it requires flexibility and openness to change which sometimes involves a circling back to Indigenous languages more fitting with contemporary awareness and traditional contexts for naming. For example, in this article and in the current discourse in our university, the term Indigenous is used to signify Peoples, communities, nations and knowledges that exist in relation to the first peoples—of Canada primarily—but then, within a broader consideration, the first peoples and nations across the globe where colonization and the creation of borders and new nation-states have often worked to erase, exclude and replace existing Indigenous "sovereign nations." (See Stewart-Harawira, 2005, pp. 1-31). Most important, Indigenizing the academy has come to refer to an acceptance of the legitimacy of Indigenous knowledges and the influence of Indigenous scholars within its walls. Before such acceptance, which requires fundamental shifts in much of what universities have considered legitimate knowledge(s), recognition and unpacking of the colonial roots and legacies of academe are essential. Even as the word Indigenous has come into common parlance, it is called into question as a term that, like Indian, Native, and Aboriginal, homogenizes difference. Many Indigenous People identify themselves with a larger grouping of peoples such as First Nations, Inuit, or Métis, or with a specific nation, such as Secwepemc, Anishinaabe, Cree or Mi'kmaw and sometimes with communities within those nations such as Stuctwesecm, Tk'emlúps, or Qalipu. The complexities and intricacies of varied traditional knowledges are most often based in specific relationships to and with land, waters, the sky, and the animals, which affect and challenge the work universities must do and the ways that work is named.

Which brings us to 'decolonizing', a word highly debated and often employed by users who seek to only take up surface level actions. We must ask ourselves, can we even decolonize such highly colonial institutions, such as universities and academic research institutes? For us, in order to even start the discussion of decolonizing our institutions, it is important to have at minimum a cursory knowledge of colonization, often sadly lacking in some of our most knowledgeable colleagues. Ania Loomba (2005) gives a brief and effective overview of what modern European colonization has brought to the globe. Pointing out that "... by the 1930s colonialism had exercised its sway over 84.6 percent of the land surface of the globe," (p. 19), she further defines colonialism as "the forcible takeover of land and economy, and, in the case of European colonialism, a restructuring of non-capitalist economies..." (p. 23). Inextricably linked to this restructuring were schooling systems that all too soon morphed into industrial and residential schools where training for labour was the main goal with an accompanying eradication of Indigenous languages, ways of being, and related forms of knowledge seen as integral to the creation of a pliable workforce (e.g., Haig-Brown 1988, TRC 2015). If we are to decolonize, if this is even possible, we must first recognize what structures and practices within the university are based in the limited set of possibilities defined by dominant European-based understandings of the way things should be in educational institutions. For us, in this project, considerations moved beyond a focus on faculty, students and curriculum to address research offices, administrators, and staff, their existing structures, supports, and practices. We were expressly focused on those aspects which have been and continue to be incompatible with much of the research related to Indigenous Peoples and communities and the conduct of research by Indigenous faculty members and students. What started with an emphasis on research services led to a much bigger view of the need for change across the

university. In the final analysis, in our everyday work, we three authors look towards

> ...not the replacement of one unjust power with another unjust power... [but] a revolutionary humanism, neither assimilationist nor supremacist, in which the Manichaean logic of dominant/submissive as it applies to people is finally and completely dismantled, and the right of every human being to its dignity is recognized. That is decolonization. (Smith, 2020, p. 25)

Our work with its focus on research services resonates with and builds on Montsion's consideration of the spaces for Indigenous student services in Ontario universities. In particular, his conclusion that Indigenous students are framed in "contrast to non-Indigenous students and their unspoken relationship to their settler identity," (2018, p. 143) led us to see the importance of speaking directly to settler-Indigenous relationships with our colleagues in the Office of Research Services (ORS).

Begin at the beginning: Who are we to do this work?

While in some ways, this article may read as a simple report and set of recommendations on research administration, looking more deeply into the process that guided our work provides a specific example of the necessity of taking the time to listen to Indigenous scholars and scholars of Indigeneity as one university turned its attention to research services. Let us begin the story of our work together by introducing ourselves as we have been taught is appropriate in work related to Indigeneity. As professor and Canada Research Chair Deb McGregor writes in her co-edited text (2018, p. ##), "An important and appropriate place to start applying an Indigenous approach to research is with 'self-in-relation' (Absolon, 2010; Graveline, 2000; Kovach 2009)."

Sean Hillier: Kwe! My name is Sean Hillier, I am a queer Mi'kmaw scholar registered with the Qalipu First Nation and grew up on the southwest coast of Newfoundland. My mother is Mi'kmaw and my father is of western European descent with family arriving on the island of Newfoundland in the 1700's. I am an assistant professor at the School of Health Policy & Management, Special Advisor to the Dean on Indigenous Resurgence in the Faculty of Health, and York University Research Chair in Indigenous Health Policy & One Health. My collaborative research program spans the topics of aging, living with HIV and other infectious diseases, and antimicrobial resistance, all with a concerted focus on policy affecting health care access for Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

David Phipps: Hi, I am David Phipps. I was born in England to white, British parents. When I was two years old, we emigrated to the land that some now call Canada when my father relocated to work in Ottawa on the traditional and unceded territory of the Algonquin people. I attended Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario (on traditional Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee territory) obtaining my Ph.D. in Immunology in 1991. I moved to Toronto (on traditional territories of the Anishinabek Nation, Haudenosaunee Confederacy and the Huron Wendat) for post-doctoral research in HIV/AIDS. I have been a research administrator (non-academic professional staff) since 1996 and have a passion for innovation in my field and in supporting growth of my profession. In fall of 2017, the Indigenous Council at York University released the Indigenous Framework. The Indigenous Framework embraced faculty and students but didn't once mention professional staff. That was the start of my ongoing journey of personal and professional decolonization.

Celia Haig-Brown: I am Celia Haig-Brown, Associate Vice-President Research at York

University at the time of writing and a professor in the Faculty of Education. I am a white woman of Anglo ancestry (my father came directly from England and my mother from several generations in the US). I was raised on the banks of the Campbell River in Kawkwaka'wakw territory; my children were born in Secwepemc territory and my grandchildren in the complex territories in and around Toronto—Wendat, Haudenosaunee Confederacy, Anishinaabek, now home to Indigenous Peoples from many nations. I have been working in post-secondary education with Indigenous students and researching in Indigenous contexts for more than 40 years. I have seen land acknowledgements—one small step of the university decolonizing—go from non-existent, to sparse, then from eye-rolling semi-tolerance to institutional embrace, and subsequent critiques of tokenism (e.g. King, 2019). In terms of truth and reconciliation, I remain with my 2018 position articulated in a national keynote: no reconciliation without more truth. Some of what this paper brings is more truth about the limitations of university support for Indigenous researchers. And maybe at this point we have to acknowledge no reconciliation just now. More on reconciliation, another problematic term, later in the paper.

Decolonizing research at York University: The institutional context

Sean: On November 5, 2017, York University launched the Indigenous Framework[2] as one approach to advancing the goals of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission[3]. Support at the highest levels of administration is integral to any serious engagement. In our case, commenting on its launch, President Rhonda Lenton is quoted as saying, "This

new framework will advance our vision of being a connected University through expanded participation of Indigenous students, faculty and staff, as well as increased engagement with Indigenous knowledge and communities".[4]

The Indigenous Framework's 10 recommendations are worth articulating in full as they served as the stimulus for York's current progress:

1. Expand the role of the Indigenous Council.
2. Increase the number of Indigenous faculty.
3. Enhance the recruitment and academic success of Indigenous students.
4. Expand Indigenous programming and curricular offerings which explore Indigenous life, cultures and traditions.
5. Facilitate research that is relevant to Indigenous life, and respects Indigenous approaches to knowledge and learning.
6. Engage with Indigenous communities to enrich the learning process.
7. Establish spaces for Indigenous cultures and community within the University.
8. Ensure that the perceptions and experiences of Indigenous community members are reflected in the classroom, on campus and in university life.
9. Develop and expand educational opportunities for Indigenous communities.
10. Ensure the process for developing, implementing and evaluating this framework involves Indigenous community members both within and outside the University.

Although the tenets of the Framework resonate with work conducted previously in

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[2] https://indigenous.info.yorku.ca/framework/

[3] https://nctr.ca/about/history-of-the-trc/trc-website/

[4] https://yfile.news.yorku.ca/2017/11/05/york-university-launches-indigenous-framework-appoints-special-advisor-to-the-president-on-indigenous-initiatives/

other universities (see Mihesuah & Wilson, 2004; Kuokkanen, 2008), York's version demanded our immediate attention. In particular, recommendation five proved relevant to the work of the Division of the Vice President Research and Innovation (VPRI).

> "Facilitate research that is relevant to Indigenous life, and respects Indigenous approaches to knowledge and learning."

This article outlines the process and outcomes of developing a series of five workshops focused on non-Indigenous research administrative staff in the Office of Research Services. Significantly, the ways some staff members have taken up their own personal and professional journeys of decolonization are recounted. Integral to the conduct of the workshops was an embedded research project designed to review the ways that York University attempts (and often fails) to support Indigenous researchers, students, and Indigenous ways of knowing. Most notably, this part of the project moved into and beyond the original intent of the workshops and its outcomes are unpacked below. The concerns researchers raised, and the immediate effects of their words took the original proponents into disturbing, but fertile, ground for change. It is in this element of our work that the potential and need for real structural transformation in the university becomes evident. It also serves as an indication of the importance of taking the time to listen to those scholars most directly involved with Indigenous research.

Introduction to the Office of Research Services

David: The Indigenous Framework makes recommendations for the institution as whole as a way to influence faculty and students' actions and understandings of Indigeneity and ultimately transform the university for the better. While the roles of non-academic

(i.e. administrative support) staff may be seen to be implicit in helping deliver on the Framework, there are no specific references to them or to their roles and responsibilities. In addition to research supports in Faculties and organized research units/research centres, York University has central research administration offices including the office of Vice President Research & Innovation (VPRI) which includes the Office of Research Services (ORS) and the Office of Research Ethics (ORE) and we work closely with the Office of Research Accounting (ORA). As we considered the potential roles of research administrators in supporting the Indigenous Framework, we arrived at the following question: How do York's research administration practices/policies create (or serve as barriers to) an enabling environment for Indigenous research?

More specifically: how do our practices/policies take seriously Indigenous knowledges; how may Indigenous approaches to knowledge creation differ from those of colonizing traditions and what does this mean to our work in research support offices; and what can we do in our professional roles to support the Indigenous Framework?

The staff in central research administration offices are diverse in terms of age, racial background, religion, and sexual orientation: however, all are non-Indigenous. Some staff have been in their roles for 17 years while some are in their first year. Approximately 1/3 of staff are unionized. Most staff had heard of the Indigenous Framework but were not familiar with its details. The potential to raise staff awareness of issues related to colonization and decolonization was seen as a first step to understanding how our policies, practices and procedures need to change to reduce barriers to research support and move closer to those that are relevant to Indigenous contexts and respect the varieties of Indigenous approaches to knowledge and learning. Recognizing that the work of

decolonization is primarily a responsibility of non-Indigenous people, the two lead research administrators Celia and David took up the challenge.

Drawing on the ongoing advice, support, and review of Dr. Ruth Green, Special Advisor to the President on Indigenous Issues & Associate Professor, York University, the two worked to develop a series of five workshops that were delivered over a 12-month period. The overall objectives of the workshops were to engage staff in educational experiences that challenge colonial paradigms; raise awareness of opportunities to decolonize our practices/policies; highlight the need for continuing learning; and ultimately reduce barriers to Indigenous related research. Further to those broad objectives, we set out to identify those practices that create barriers; to brainstorm more appropriate approaches; to develop specific guidelines/policies/practices; to implement changes; and to evaluate our steps over time.

Reviewing existing literature, we found few references to research administration in colonial context. In a notable exception in the Journal of Research Administration, Simon Kerridge undertook an international review of research administration (Kerridge, 2021). Research administration exists in colonial contexts around the world wherever research in Indigenous contexts is supported in institutions predicated on a colonial model. This is true for Canada, US, Australia, and New Zealand which have well-established research management associations as well as for other jurisdictions in which research administration is emerging as a profession.

Creating the Workshops

Celia: As we began planning the workshops, we recognized that they could only ever be a start to an ongoing process of decolonizing, a process that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission has challenged Canadians to

engage in. Like Indigenization, reconciliation remains a distant and elusive goal. We concur with Datta that reconciliation is "not a static process," but rather it is "complex, relational, and deeply rooted in the Indigenous history of colonization, land rights, self-governance, cultural heritage, socio-ecological justice and environmental well-being" (2020, p. 5). Despite this complexity, we do have a responsibility to act, to begin the process of moving toward the goal. I found myself thinking of a comment Paulo Freire made in a course I took with him years ago about the need for radical change in inequitable and unjust societies. Not holding out hope for immediate change in institutions where too many people are used to a comfortable sameness, he made clear, "In the meantime, we must wait, acting." In other words, the difficulty, some might say the impossibility, of what we are setting out to do is not an excuse to do nothing. In the case of decolonizing the VPRI/ORS, our actions took shape with the workshops and began what we know can only be a long journey. As noted above, I first became involved when David came to my office to talk excitedly about Indigenizing ORS. Talking together we quickly agreed that decolonizing was a prior step and began our plan.

Table 1: The Five Workshops

Workshop	Description
1. Setting the Stage	• Description of the treaty, the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt: Ruth Koleszar Green. • Understanding York's Land Acknowledgement https://yfile.news.yorku.ca/2019/01/14/new-video-explores-the-importance-of-understanding-the-land-acknowledgement/ • Colonisation Road, a video by Indigenous filmmaker Michelle St. John that uses humour to create an accessible approach to the persisting effects of colonization. http://www.cbc.ca/firsthand/episodes/ccolonisation-road
2. Colonization	The Kairos Blanket Exercise https://www.kairosblanketexercise.org/ • An experiential, three-hour workshop designed to walk participants through colonization in Canada from pre-contact to current times. • Conducted jointly by one Indigenous and one non-Indigenous facilitator • Not without controversy because Kairos was developed by Christian Churches, but we consulted with various Indigenous knowledge keepers who felt that the experience was a useful one especially when contextualized by the first workshop.
3. Decolonization	• 30 minute video by Celia Haig Brown from her research with the children and grandchildren of residential school survivors regarding their relationship to education broadly defined. • https://www.vtape.org/video?vi=6733 • Discussion with Celia on some of the themes arising from the film that are relevant to thinking about how to (re)design research administration practices: » Importance of language revitalization » Intergenerational effects of the schools » Self-determination "Our own systems, our own ways" » Caring for each other » Reciprocity » Land (e.g. sustainability) » Equity, diversity, inclusion and decolonization (EDID) – for some people, the journeys to understanding are more difficult than for others • How these themes relate to research administration
4. Examining our own practices	• Presentation of the research project by Sean Hillier » Goals and methods of research project » Data: primarily qualitative examples » Conclusions from qualitative data » Recommendations
5. Applying awareness to our practices	• Three staff presented their initial efforts to begin the process of decolonizing their practices » Knowledge mobilization » Research ethics » Pre-award grant support • Evaluation survey

For many reasons, attendance at the workshops for the staff of the ORS was optional. And interest ran high. Overall, there were 38 unique participants out of 52 central research administration staff (73%), although the majority did not attend all five workshops. Workshops ranged from 1-3 hours and an evaluation questionnaire (approved by York's Human Participants Review Committee, York's nomenclature for our Research Ethics Board [REB]) was distributed at the last session. Staff were provided with information on available supports for anyone feeling distressed or experiencing discomfort through attending the workshops.

As the first three workshops were underway, we recognized the need to identify what researchers saw as existing barriers to authentic engagement in research that is relevant to Indigenous life, and respects Indigenous approaches to knowledge and learning. The VPRI funded and Celia and David worked with Sean to create an Indigenous based and led research project to achieve this objective. Sean as the lead researcher documents the experiences of Indigenous researchers and some non-Indigenous researchers who conduct research with Indigenous Peoples as they related to York's research administration. The impetus for involving Sean was to avoid the recapitulation of conventional power structures and a potential lack of trust on the part of the study participants. A non-Indigenous President or Vice-President may be seen as central to creating those conditions Indigenous scholars are being asked to critique. Particularly for untenured faculty, this situation can limit responses as well as run the risk of re-traumatizing researchers when they are asked to recount years of challenges and efforts to overcome administrative barriers in front of those who are at least partially responsible for them. The results of the research are the focus of the rest of the paper. Ranging well beyond the attention on research supports,

the outcomes of this work have given York some clear challenges to extend our focus on decolonizing research to similar needs within the larger context of the university. Let's turn to Sean for this part of our story.

Workshop 4: Examining our own practices.

Sean: Having started my appointment at York in August 2018, I was approached shortly thereafter in September of 2018 to meet with Celia and David about a research opportunity they wanted to explore. At our initial meeting, they discussed the newly released Indigenous Framework and their interest in understanding how Indigenous faculty and other faculty who do Indigenous research perceive and interact with the VPRI and especially the ORS. They discussed their conceptualization of a new Indigenous workshop series for their staff to start the process of understanding colonialism and decolonization. As part of this process, they asked if I, as a new researcher to the institution, would be interested in conducting part of this work with them. In the proceeding weeks, the three of us met several times to discuss the proposed research, which focused on my speaking with colleagues about their perceptions and interactions with research services at the institution. Together, we solidified the research questions to be explored and I detailed the process by which I would independently conduct the research.

The research explored York University's research administration practices, particularly the barriers faced by Indigenous researchers, and the impacts those barriers have on research productivity, students, and the broader community. Considering the Indigenous Framework and its possible application to the ORS, ORA, REB, and the VPRI, we asked: how do our practices/policies create (or serve as barriers to) an enabling environment for Indigenous research; how do our practices/policies consider Indigenous approaches to knowledge; how are Indigenous approaches to knowledge different from

those of colonising traditions; and, what can administrators and staff do in their professional roles to support the Indigenous Framework?

In response to these questions, we captured experiences, opinions, and recommendations for York's research administration practices from Indigenous faculty members and non-Indigenous faculty who do extensive Indigenous related research.

The VPRI provided funding for the research which allowed the hiring of a research assistant and purchase of necessary materials including traditional medicines and gifts for participants. In early October, I attended my first Indigenous Council meeting at York where I spoke with members about the proposal. At that meeting, I gained their approval to move forward with the research and reported back to them at every meeting until the completion of the final report. Following their approval, I submitted an ethics protocol for approval, which was finalized and approved in December 2018.

Over the next five months from January 2019 to May 2019, I met with 17 participants, 12 Indigenous and five non-Indigenous (whose research programmes are substantially Indigenous focused). They ranged in academic rank from Ph.D. Candidate/Instructor to Full Professor, with the majority being Assistant Professors. This research incorporated storytelling as an Indigenous-informed method to gather knowledge (see Archibald, 2008; Kovach, 2009). This research thus incorporated storytelling as an Indigenous-informed method to gather knowledge. Participants were able to share their experiences, worldviews, and ways of knowing and being through traditional storytelling. Participants were consented through the offering of tobacco, based on their Indigenous tradition, at the start of each meeting. Upon completion of storytelling, the audio

recordings were transcribed and uploaded into the software program SQR*NVivo 2017. The transcripts were then coded within the software program. Carrying out the coding for this research started by creating analytical codes and categories from the data. These 17 meetings yielded 76 pages of transcripts, with 142 distinct "impactful quotes extracted" across 16 major themes.

To summarize, the participants addressed several major themes—specific to York but with possible implications for other places. Throughout the discussions, all faculty participants noted demanding teaching and service loads for Indigenous faculty members. Researchers also agreed that York does not appear to value or recognize Indigenous research as 'real research'. Faculty members commented on having a lack of time to build and maintain respectful community relationships, something that the university does not appear to prioritize.

A recurring theme amongst most participants, especially junior faculty, was a lack of knowledge about the ORS, the services they offer, or the overall function they hold. Of the researchers who were aware of the ORS, most were critical of it, calling their procedures unhelpful and counterproductive. However, not all interactions with ORS were negative. When faculty members used ORS services (excluding research ethics), they tended to have a positive interaction.

Researchers noted a general lack of support for hiring, funding, and retaining graduate students. Research ethics was a wildly contentious issue for all researchers interviewed. Researchers also found the ethics process to be cumbersome, with REB staff being unhelpful during external community reviews.

Participants did not believe research at York University lived up to the principles of

ownership, control, access, and possession (OCAP®)[5]. There was significant concern from researchers about how York values Indigenous knowledges in relation to the tenure and promotion process. Indigenous faculty frequently used the words 'token' and 'tokenism' to illustrate their points.

A number of Indigenous and non-Indigenous faculty members stated that they no longer keep their research money at York, instead holding it at other institutions or in community-based organisations. Researchers had concerns about the Finance and Accounting department, particularly the additional work imposed on them. Control over financial systems and processes posed a concern for most Indigenous faculty members. Researchers felt limited in what they could purchase and expense. Virtually every researcher discussed the lengthy process of getting paid by the university, either for reimbursements themselves or for participants and partners on their projects.

In July 2019, I attended the fourth workshop to present my initial findings. No one attending had received a copy of my findings prior to this. During this three-hour meeting, staff from the VPRI listened intently, asking only a few clarifying questions of the material and quotes being presented to them. They had been briefed on the importance of placing the voices of the Indigenous scholars at the forefront and focusing on what they had to say; attendees were asked to listen to the presentation rather than focus on formulating their own questions. As attendees left, they were asked to review the presentation slides in order to digest the information and come back with a response to their bosses as to how any issues presented could be within their purview and how they could address those issues.

I subsequently completed the final version of the 38-page report and its findings were presented to the Indigenous Council of York University for their review. Upon receiving endorsement of the report and its eight recommendations from the Council, I forwarded a final copy to the VPRI. In September 2019, the three of us met with the Vice-President Research and Innovation and discussed the recommendations. This discussion touched on the fact that they moved beyond his jurisdiction to take up many pan-university issues affecting all facets of life for Indigenous researchers. Therefore, he agreed with the three of us that, because this report had a reach beyond the VPRI and impacted all senior administration and their units at the university, it should be brought forward to the Presidents and Vice-Presidents (PVP) weekly meeting for further discussion and potential action.

Celia: A slight aside at this point. As we had been with the smaller group of research administrative staff, we were fully cognizant of the potential for defensiveness in response to the recommendations and wanted to ensure that it was also clear to all senior administrators that it would be an inappropriate response to the challenges issued by Indigenous faculty. Here was an opportunity to really listen. By making this clear from the outset, we hoped to sidetrack comments beginning with accomplishments the university could already claim, "But we already...." Rather, the opportunity being presented, the deeply thoughtful contributions made by the participants called for and allowed for responsiveness on the part of each and every member of the President and Vice-Presidents' (PVP) group to move to the next level of considering support for Indigenous faculty, students and knowledges. The reception was for the most part very positive; there were a few claims that much was

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5. https://fnigc.ca/ocap

already being done and, despite our efforts, there were a few understandable and perhaps inevitable desires to detail the initiatives already in place. It is simply not enough.

Sean: In January 2020, I presented the eight recommendations (Table 2) and fielded questions from the PVP about the report. The President of York University after the meeting noted that she fully endorsed the report and its recommendations, pledging to provide a written response to the Indigenous Council within six months. Again, we suggest that these recommendations may have some implications for other educational contexts where Indigenous researchers are engaged.

David: Recently the Council of Ontario Universities released a report on the experiences of Indigenous faculty at universities across Ontario (Council of Ontario Universities, 2020). The findings of the report align with Sean's research on the experiences of Indigenous faculty at York. For example, "many pre-tenure Indigenous faculty participants noted that the amount of service they are engaged in is very different from the responsibilities of non-Indigenous peers. Pre-tenure Indigenous faculty described providing consultation and representation at all levels of the university" (Council of Ontario Universities, 2020, p. 9). Apart from a call to action on research ethics, the report is silent on research administration services, something that Sean's research specifically highlights. However, the report did call for institutions to better support and recognize Indigenous research and Indigenous researchers. "As part of Indigenization and reconciliation efforts, new frameworks and approaches to supporting and recognizing Indigenous researchers are needed" (Council of Ontario Universities, 2020, p. 3). Addressing the eight recommendations from Sean's research will provide new frameworks and better research supports for Indigenous research and Indigenous researchers.

Table 2: Recommendations for York University

1	Indigenous faculty must be recognized for their extensive workloads. Service, teaching, and research responsibilities must be reasonable, appropriate, and meaningful.	This includes reviewing tenure and promotion requirements to establish the standards of excellence by which Indigenous teaching, research and service can be assessed moving beyond colonial practices for tenure and promotion.
2	York must hire a central Indigenous Research Officer and support staff to assist with funding opportunities, collaboration, application processes, navigating administration, and pre and post-award support that is specific to Indigenous faculty members.	This position should report to an Associate Vice President Indigeneity, a position also recommended.

3	York and VPRI must make a public statement entrenching support for Indigenous ways of knowing and being, research, and practices. This includes a commitment to improving processes on campus and within Indigenous communities.	
4	York must work to reconcile Indigenous ways of knowing and being and the ways in which Indigenous research is conducted with its own specific needs for accountability.	There are clear conflicts in how the university must address its need to abide by tax laws and granting agency rules while also respecting the need to pay communities and participants in a timely way, the amount allowed to be paid for honoraria, the requiring of SIN numbers from Elders, etc.
5	ORS must take a leadership role in assisting non-Indigenous faculty members to engage with Indigenous communities.	Currently, the support of non-Indigenous faculty members conducting Indigenous research falls on the shoulders of the few Indigenous faculty members at the university. ORS must step in and provide guidance with the following: approaching communities respectfully, understanding Indigenous methods and knowledge systems, best practices for working within communities, and OCAP and ethics considerations.
6	York must commit to hiring more Indigenous faculty members	Indigenous faculty believe there is a dire need to hire more Indigenous researchers at York University. This is in addition to the recent hires made by the university for 2019-2020, as the institution still remains far below representation targets
7	York must commit to recruiting and providing adequate funding and supports for Indigenous graduate and undergraduate students.	We cannot support our research without Indigenous graduate and undergraduate students. More and more Indigenous researchers are noting that their communities ask for Indigenous trainees and do not want to work with non-Indigenous students. Once recruited, Indigenous students must be properly supported and funded for their degree requirements and research projects.
8	The university must respond to the contents of this document with an action plan and/or response to the points noted. Indigenous faculty and students have again given their time to tell the institution and its leadership their concerns and needs. In concert with the Indigenous Council, the university must take time and effort to respond to them.	The university is asked to provide an update to the Indigenous Council in 6, 12, 18, 24, and 36 months, from the date of this report, in the form of a written and oral report on their response and action plan, including a timetable of action items which address the contents of this document. Additionally, all subsequent reports should address the status of any outstanding deliverables.

Workshop 5: Applying awareness to our practices.

Celia and David: The impacts of the fourth workshop and in particular, Sean's recommendations, are ongoing. One of the most important lessons that anti-racist and decolonizing education has shown is that one workshop or one course is never enough to address systemic racism. That being said, we see the outcomes of our project as one small contribution to that ongoing work. The presentations in the final session and the results of our assessment questionnaire serve as specific demonstrations of the possibility that lies even with this short voluntary set of educational and action-oriented workshops. During the fifth and final session, we heard from three attendees about the work they had been doing provoked by the earlier workshops including Sean's list of recommendations. The three presenters addressed ethics concerns, knowledge mobilization, and deepening their own learning.

Procedures related to human participants ethics review had been found to be particularly problematic. The earlier implementation of unique procedures including the involvement of Indigenous researchers on an Indigenous advisory sub-committee to REB had unintended consequences. The move has created perceptions of a two-step process, one that could delay approval processes for researchers working in Indigenous communities and that created an additional service burden for Indigenous researchers who served on the committee even as it was an effort to address respectful community research. In an immediate response to this feedback the Senior Manager & Policy Advisor, Research Ethics worked with Sean and Ruth to clarify the process and revise approaches to decolonizing research ethics procedures that consisted of five sequential steps: listen,

reflect, collaborate, innovate, implement. Since that time, York has begun the process of establishing an autonomous Indigenous REB.

While knowledge mobilization was not identified as problematic in the research, the non-Indigenous Manager of Knowledge Mobilization has a Master of Arts degree in Native & Canadian Studies and a previous career as an adult literacy practitioner focused on Indigenous adult learners. He reflected on the role of his earlier experiences in relation to the four workshops. He framed his thoughts through his understandings of an Indigenous lens as: purpose, knowing, action, understanding.

The third presenter, a pre-award administrator supporting large scale research grants went beyond the five workshops and deepened her own developing understandings by enrolling her whole family in a week-long program called the Manitoulin Island Summer Historical Institute (MISHI)[6]. From the program's website,

> "The goals of MISHI are: to teach participants about Anishinaabe history on Manitoulin Island, with a focus on site-specific experiential learning; support the historical and educational resources of the Ojibwe Cultural Foundation (OCF); and to build bridges and strengthen the relationships and cooperation between OCF and York University."

Finally, in the following selected comments from the workshop evaluations that participants completed at the end of the last session, shifting understandings and commitments become evident.

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6. https://robarts.info.yorku.ca/research-clusters/hip/manitoulin-island-summer-historical-institute-mishi/

Selections from the Workshop Evaluations

These optional evaluations (approved by the Human Participants Review Committee/ REB) were circulated to all participants at the end of the last workshop. Sixteen completed surveys were returned representing 42% of the attendees. While each of the five workshops were identified as at least one respondent's favourite, session #2 (Kairos Blanket) was identified as the favourite by the most respondents (n=8). The responses demonstrated that staff appreciated the learning opportunity and were ready to reflect on their own professional roles as they relate to decolonizing research administration policies and procedures.

For the question "What does decolonizing mean to you?" we received a number of responses showing how staff are moving their understandings of decolonizing into their research administration practices.

"Finding ways in which we can do our work in ways that the university can come together to better understand the cultures and ways of life of the Indigenous people to ensure that we work to respect them and their cultures when we perform our duties. Keep them and their cultures in our thoughts and respect their ways of life."

"It means a greater understanding, openness, and thoughtfulness. Decolonizing is a process, one where we continually need to consider different perspectives and think about our actions deliberately."

"The responsibility to critically assess my professional practices, values, beliefs for the purpose of delivering services more aligned to Indigenous people."

"Recognize the systems put in place that privilege settlers or traditional scholars and how these systems could be reviewed and improved to recognize different ways of knowing."

All sixteen respondents answered the question, "Do you feel a personal or professional commitment to decolonizing?" All responded positively.

"Both. I want to be better in both, a better Canadian."

"Absolutely! Is a key consideration in the development of policies and procedures."

"Yes, everyday (since these decolonizing workshops) I think about the land I walk on, use, and its history."

Respondents were asked to reflect on their professional roles and procedures that may create barriers to authentic engagement of Indigenous researchers. Many commented on the lack of flexibility offered by York's research policies and procedures.

"The VPRI is very process driven, it is regimented and has many rules that put stakeholders into a single category without consideration for things such as Indigeneity. There are reasons for these processes and practices, but I believe we really need to consider the idea of becoming more flexible and thoughtful."

"Our policies and rules are rigid."

"Processes and structure such as deadlines, needing written contracts are problematic sometimes for Indigenous research."

"Looking at our policies and practices is important, but we also need to meaningfully engage in broader system level changes."

"We are very policy driven—as a large institution this is common. However, we must be willing and able to alter our practices to be more accommodating of Indigenous persons and other communities."

These comments and the three specific examples above are illustrations of the journeys each research administrator is undertaking to learn more about Indigenous issues to help them critically assess their own administration practices. Each individual step—early as they are—supports the overarching program of decolonizing at York University informed by the eight recommendations from Sean's important research.

Continuing to apply awareness to our practices

In further developments out of the workshops and in direct response to Sean's report, the Office of Research Ethics, guided by the Indigenous Council has begun the process of establishing a fully autonomous Indigenous Research Ethics Board. Meetings with Indigenous faculty taking the lead and non-Indigenous researchers providing their input are in process. Sean is chairing this committee and Celia is one of the participants.

David has now worked with the Manager of York's Knowledge Mobilization Unit ("KMb York") to respond to recommendation 5,

"ORS (Office of Research Services) must take a leadership role in assisting non-Indigenous faculty members to engage with Indigenous communities". This recommendation is consistent with one call for action identified by the Council of Ontario Universities. "A review of policies and practices related to engagement with local Indigenous communities should be aimed at ensuring the development of mutually beneficial relationships; specific attention should be paid to engagement with Elders" (COU, 2020, p. 19)

Knowledge mobilization is an emerging research administration practice analogous to industry liaison which creates connections between researchers and communities/ organizations beyond the academy so that research can inform broader societal impacts (Phipps & Shapson, 2009). Writing in the Journal of Research Administration, Phipps and colleagues from KMb York published on their processes for supporting knowledge mobilization and research impact in grant applications (Phipps et al., 2017). A core element of knowledge mobilization is stakeholder engagement as illustrated in the co-produced pathway to impact that underpins knowledge mobilization at York (Phipps et al., 2016). Guided by, and with input from and ultimately approval of, the Indigenous Council at York University, KMb York took up the challenge presented in recommendation 5. Following an environmental scan of Canadian universities (summer 2020) and researching existing guides for Indigenous research, KMb York developed a Guide to help non-Indigenous researchers prepare to engage in a research project with an Indigenous community. The Guide will be launched as an interactive web tool and will be incorporated as part of a new service offered by KMb York, thus taking some of the burden off Indigenous faculty who are constantly asked about best approaches for work in Indigenous communities. As non-Indigenous research support staff we are

assuming at least some of the responsibility for teaching our colleagues some of what we are learning. While we have presented on this tool and the associated research services to support its use (Haig-Brown et al., 2021), it will be formally presented in a forthcoming publication.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

This research and its implementation were based on qualitative research methods where small N surveys, such as ours, administered in a specific context give insights into existing circumstances and demonstrate the potential and possible need for larger studies. This research was based in Toronto and grounded in the experiences of Indigenous researchers and researchers working in Indigenous contexts from within our university. The barriers reported herein serve to inform efforts at other universities and in other jurisdictions, recognizing that follow-up studies will need to be adapted to those new contexts. While some challenges might be shared between institutions (Council of Ontario Universities, 2020), the approaches to address these challenges should be developed to serve specific campus and community settings.

York leads Research Impact Canada[7], a network of 23 research performing organizations including the University of British Columbia and University of Calgary, both of which have dedicated units supporting Indigenous research (see below). Through Research Impact Canada, York University has convened a working group on equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) for research administration. This complements the EDI Special Interest Group of the Canadian Association for Research Administration.

Through these channels this research and its implications can be further shared and developed to facilitate decolonizing research administration across Canada.

Concluding Thoughts

Celia: These small steps are only the beginning of what it will mean to respond fully to Sean's presentation of his research in the fourth session. The report developed from Sean's research made it clear that much remains to be done. That work is ongoing with the development of a Decolonizing Action Plan and a Decolonizing Working Group guided in collaboration with the Indigenous Council and PVP.

While the five workshops for research administrators have concluded, the research has been taken up and the eight recommendations remain before PVP for implementation. We shall continue to monitor the results of all the recommendations, recognizing that institutional change too often moves at a sloth's pace, but where there is a will, the way becomes possible. Most important we keep in mind the challenge from Kirkness and Barnhardt (2001) with which we started the paper: a clear delineation of responsibility lying with each and every non-Indigenous administrator to learn, to come to know, and to act in as informed a way as possible in supporting research by and with Indigenous peoples and communities. It is no longer acceptable for non-Indigenous administrators, staff and faculty to turn to any Indigenous person who happens to be in close proximity and ask innocently, "What do you think we should do?" At York, we have clear direction from the Indigenous community. We will work in close concert with the Indigenous Council recognizing that in our enthusiasm we will make mistakes. We will recognize the authority of PVP to implement this work, with the oversight and

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7. www.researchimpact.ca

direction of the Indigenous Council. We also recognize the need to move to a better model where Indigenous Peoples and knowledges are truly leading the institution in ways that have not been possible under the current structures. We will learn and we will continue our own work to decolonize in order to create a future where Indigenizing such a colonial institution as the university becomes a real possibility. Never losing sight of the fact that decolonizing is not a metaphor (Tuck & Wang, 2012) and that the Land Back movement takes its own name seriously (Manuel & Klein, 2020), in some ways, we see our tiny steps within the context of research administration services as part of the efforts toward real reconciliation of people and land and the relationships we all have with one other. Keeping in mind York's Strategic Research Plan and the research opportunity articulated in Indigenous Futurities, we recognize that what we do today in our various roles almost always involves an imagined future. The imagined future in this case must never lose sight of the past, the creation of the Canadian Nation through the colonization and exploitation of Indigenous lands.

Implications for Research Administration

1. In Canada there are many efforts to decolonize research including dedicated offices such as the Indigenous Research Support Initiative at the University of British Columbia[8] and the Indigenous Research Support Team at the University of Calgary.[9] Research administrators are encouraged to engage Indigenous leadership on their campus and in local communities to begin to understand the barriers to authentic engagement of research in Indigenous contexts. Only through a commitment to engaging with Indigenous researchers, knowledges, methods, and communities will research

administrators move to any depth of understanding of the best ways to serve Indigenous researchers and their work.

2. Research administrators can use tools such as the Indigenous Engagement tool referenced above, plus others to see how universities are approaching decolonizing research.

3. After engaging local Indigenous leadership, research administrators may choose to adapt the workshop design for their own offices to begin their journeys of decolonizing research administration. It is important that these are delivered by staff for staff but guided by Indigenous leadership, especially the researchers most directly affected. As settlers/colonizers this is our work to do. Do not further burden Indigenous scholars by asking them to do it for us.

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8. https://research.ubc.ca/vpri-competitions-initiatives/indigenous-research-support-initiative
9. https://research.ucalgary.ca/engage-research/irst

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