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Editor

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The Journal of Australian Indigenous Issues aims to be a quality academic journal publishing refereed articles in all areas of Indigenous Australian Studies. It invites submission of papers for both the refereed section of the Journal and also for the non-refereed commentaries section.

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Editorial by Andrew Gunstone

This special issue contains the refereed papers from the 2008 *World Indigenous Peoples' Conference on Education* (WIPC: E). This conference was held from 7-11 December 2008 in Melbourne, Australia. It was organised by the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI).

WIPC: E is a triennial conference that has been held in a number of countries since 1990, including the United States, Canada and New Zealand. The conference brings together Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples from many countries to inform and learn about the breadth of Indigenous education throughout the world. "The purpose of WIPC: E is to provide a forum to come together, share and learn and promote best practice in Indigenous education policies, programs and practice" (<http://www.wipce2008.com>).

This year's conference in Melbourne had a central theme and three sub-themes:

The central theme for 2008 will be: 'Indigenous Education in the 21st Century – Respecting Tradition, Shaping the Future' ...

Respecting Tradition ... will centre around issues such as 'growing, connecting, celebrating and maintaining traditions through education', 'building history/histories', 'pathways to knowledge' and 'language and identity'.

Living with Competing Knowledge Systems ... will look at questions around 'defining education', 'the impact of culture and education', 'understanding the present culture of educational institutions' and 'exploring knowledge systems' ...

Beyond the Horizon ... aims to build on the themes of WIPC: E 2005. This will include looking at 'shaping our own futures', 'thriving in the education system', 'engaging community' and 'resilience' (http://www.wipce2008.com/conf_program/index.html).

This issue is a substantial collection. There are 32 papers in this issue from five continents and nine countries (New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, Canada, the United States of America, Norway, Sweden, Taiwan and Japan). All the papers are either written or co-written by Indigenous people. The issues explored in these papers clearly address the central theme and the three sub-themes of the conference. These papers are outstanding examples of the intellectual rigour and rich diversity of Indigenous education.

A word on terminology. In the regular issues of this journal, which predominantly focus on Australian Indigenous Studies, the words 'Indigenous' and 'Aboriginal' have the first letter capitalised. However, in this special issue, in articles written by non-Australian Indigenous people, the words 'Indigenous' and 'Aboriginal' have been left in the original form written by the author, in recognition that these words are not always capitalised in other countries.

Finally, I want to express my thanks to WIPC: E 2008 for allowing this journal to publish the refereed papers from this conference. In particular, I would like to thank Dr Mark Rose and Veronica Weisz from VAEAI for their assistance in getting this issue published.

Exploring an Institutional Leadership Paradigm for Indigenous Staff and Students

*by Lyn Fasoli, Robyn Ober, Joe Fraser, Jack Frawley, Nereda White, Tony D'Arbon, Ken Ralph, Jacqueline Ottmann, Tracey Bunda, Jillian Miller, Linda Jones Different Cloud and Alan Pence**

Abstract

Indigenous and non-Indigenous academics from eight universities have collaborated to explore institutional leadership from Indigenous perspectives through a project funded by Australian Teaching and Learning Council (ATLC) leadership grant (2006-2008). The project set out to strengthen institutional leadership capacity to enable participant institutions to develop and deliver culturally appropriate and relevant Indigenous teaching and learning programs. Project leaders Batchelor Institute and Australian Catholic University collaborated with University of South Australia, Flinders University and Griffith University from Australia and Sitting Bull Colleges, University of Victoria and University of Calgary from North America. In this paper, the authors share projects undertaken within their institutions based on a values-based tool for transforming institutional leadership practices, structures and conditions, generated by the project called the Institutional Leadership Paradigm (ILP).

Introduction

The Institutional Leadership Paradigm: Transforming practices, structures and conditions in Indigenous Higher Education project, funded by the Australian Learning and Teaching Council through the Leadership for Excellence in Learning and Teaching Program, aimed to strengthen institutional leadership capacity to develop and deliver culturally appropriate and relevant Indigenous teaching and learning programs within the participant institutes. This strengthened capacity has supported and encouraged academics, students and administrators to change and transform institutional leadership practices, structures and conditions to more effectively advance excellence in Indigenous teaching and learning, generate new knowledge, and serve the community. Project participants worked over a 2 year period to develop an innovative approach to institutional change. The key resource emanating from this project and available for use by others seeking to improve institutional leadership for Indigenous outcomes is the values based Institutional Leadership Paradigm (ILP).

Collaboration occurred through two Working Seminars, one held in Alice Springs, NT. in December 2006 and the second in December 2007 in Brisbane, teleconferences and a web based repository. The Working Seminars were critical to the success of the project in providing an opportunity for participants who usually work in isolation to work together to share and

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reflect on the institutional policies, practices and conditions. In the first Working Seminar, participants identified key values to support institutional change in the best interests of Indigenous students and staff. These values were used to guide and support them to undertake specific activities within their own institutions aimed to modify their institutions' practice, policy and conditions at different levels of impact depending on their spheres of influence.

Institutional Leadership

The ILP Project was informed by the research in the area of institutional leadership and the conditions and processes required for transforming practices, structures and conditions in Indigenous Higher Education. Institutional leadership has been described as "academic development involving an interplay of person, role, strategy and institution" (Taylor 2005: 31). To this could be added, a willingness of the institutions to engage in the change process, to avoid addictions and choose morally and wisely (Duignan 2004: 14), in the context in which the leadership engages in any particular activity.

In an institutional sense, Taylor and Schönwetter (2002) suggest that leadership is characterised by a reciprocal process of setting goals and creating ways to reach these goals. Bleikie (2005: 2) suggests that institutional leadership is more than making the organisation into an efficient tool. Leadership as a function based in organisations, means that the institutions are 'infused with value, have a defined mission and role, and have become the embodiment of that role'. Institutional leadership can also be discussed in terms of synergy amongst a number of variables - the academic role, development strategies and the institutional context - all of which determine successful practices and leadership in any given situation.

The building of institutional leadership through capacity strengthening (Lambert 1998) and the development of capabilities and capacities (Duignan and Marks 2003) is an important focus. In addition, building leadership capacity is linked with ethics and morality - deciding what is significant, what is right, and what is worthwhile (Starratt 2004; Duignan and Macpherson 1992). Such leadership elevates the actions of the leaders above mere pragmatics of expediency (Hodgkinson 1991). The focus of authentic leadership is on elevating leaders' moral reasoning which is central to Burns (1978) seminal distinction between leadership that is transactional and that which is transformational. It is also the type of value-added leadership that is most relevant to organisations involved in the teaching and learning of indigenous students.

In order for transformation to occur, certain conditions within an institution should be present to facilitate the process. There should be a shared perception of a need for transformation and this perception needs to be articulated and described through clear goals. In the planning for transformation, the culture of the institution needs to be considered and the transformation proposal needs to be clearly supported from the 'top'. This calls for effective leaders who understand the institution's culture and can position themselves to work in establishing these conditions.

The literature suggests that transformation takes place incrementally and that when differences in perspective and priorities emerge, that these differences are understood as critical perspectives rather than being viewed as resistant barriers. Mentkowski *et al* (2000: 366) state that transformation, "does not occur by fiat or drift" but rather it is "constructed out of processes that engage and depends on a high level of participation by faculty and staff" and that it is a kind of "campus conversation ... that integrates taking an institutional perspective - an awareness of the institution's dynamic nature - with a focus on learning".

Research suggests that building a transformative process involves the stages of:

1. identifying shared philosophy and values,
2. establishing conditions,
3. planning for change,
4. implementing the change process; and,
5. assessing and evaluating change.

These five stages were replicated in the ILP Project, in a broad sense, with each PI undertaking a range of activities that were informed by the ILP. The contribution that the ILP Project makes to the literature is in relation to the emphasis on values within an institution that should be present to facilitate transformative institutional leadership.

The ILP Working Group identified these values as follows:

- *openness*, through a demonstrated belief that Indigenous education is everybody's business, not just Indigenous student services,
- *enduring leadership*, through a long-term commitment to an Indigenous employment strategy,
- *transformation*, by extending the learning of the individual into their respective communities,
- *cultural integrity*, through approaches to learning and teaching imbued with Indigenous traditions,
- *empowerment*, including and involving the students' families, as well as the students themselves,
- *partnerships*, bringing communities into the university,
- *inclusion*, providing higher education in communities (ILP Working Group December 2007).

Influential leadership (Duignan 2007) at an institutional level requires organisations to model leadership by living their values. The ILP values statement assists Indigenous Higher Education institutions to do this in that it delineates a set of values that it sees as being central for transforming practices, structures and conditions.

ILP in action

Examples of the ways involvement in the ILP project has impacted on participant institutions to improve the situation of Indigenous students and

strengthen their capacity to provide culturally relevant teaching and learning programs are described in the next section. Project participants have written a short summary of their ILP activities and outcomes within their institutional spheres of influence.

Batchelor Institute

Exploring an institutional leadership paradigm for Indigenous staff and students has provided me with access to Indigenous staff from other Institutions operating in similar positions and confronting similar challenges. The networking and sharing of challenges, and solutions to issues in leadership and management, was the key benefit from my point of view.

This project was guided by the ILP values embodied in the 'Partnerships and Transformation' key words. It prompted the investigation of what would be required for a structured Higher Education staff network. Currently staff have very few opportunities to network, outside of the National Indigenous Higher Education Network (NIHEN) and a few relevant conferences. The obvious impact of improved networking on the organisation is an ability to recruit new staff and support existing staff more effectively. Some persistent difficulties in achieving this include the geographic isolation of staff across different campuses of the Institute and the Institute itself from other institutions, the high (and increasing) cost of travel and a need for more online access.

Early in the project I identified barriers to the success of the project and these proved to be accurate. They were: (1) no capacity to undertake additional work at present, due to workload; (2) the organisational structure being a barren management terrain which does not support leadership, and; (3) a proposed new school structure required to assist this process.

The first 2 points have been addressed over the course of the project and the new organisational structure is planned but yet to be implemented, all of which has delayed implementation of the ILP project. The need for the project is still evident with significant staff turnover and support remaining high priorities. The organisation is looking to change the school structure in the future, a situation which will better support the staff within the school and improve the organisation's ability to develop and undertake projects of this nature.

Specifically, the ILP action plan was to investigate the need for a staff support network and the options for web based support through an online learning system as a means of controlling the cost of this type of activity. This is still a viable plan for staff support. However, follow through with the process when time and staff are available to support the project are still needed.

Personally the project reinvigorated my interest in issues outside of the organisation and reinforced the need for contact and professional support from colleagues as a part of our participation in Higher education. With the large numbers of national reviews for programs, issues for Indigenous communities and Indigenous staff and students, political impacts through poor social policy and general negativity in Indigenous education, the need to support staff networking is all the more important. Being a part of this project has offered the type of support I am hoping to provide through the ongoing

development of the institutional leadership paradigm for Indigenous staff and students.

University of Calgary

At the University of Calgary, the ILP initiative has provided practical and conceptual ideas and support on many levels, particularly in the area of motivating positive change for Aboriginal faculty and Aboriginal students. It has occurred at a time when changes for Aboriginal education were being encouraged across the institution, and within the Faculty of Education. For the institution as a whole, a key motivation for change came with the recognition by the Province of Alberta of the need to support all students, particularly Aboriginal students, by strengthening and providing important resources to its First Nations, Métis, Inuit (FNMI) branch. In turn, the FNMI branch developed FNMI curriculum materials that celebrated Aboriginal culture, language, knowledge, and history. Post-secondary institutions, specifically, teacher preparation programs were encouraged to support the initiatives of Alberta Education to respond in creative, constructive and positive ways in respect to supporting Aboriginal students.

My ILP action plan involved the development of a Aboriginal Advisory Committee, to provide local advice and information to the Faculty of Education. The Faculty has begun to make a significant shift in supporting both recruitment of Aboriginal faculty and Aboriginal students. It has acknowledged that making second-order, deeper changes, will benefit not only Aboriginal peoples within the faculty but all students and faculty. Over the period of the ILP project, the Faculty of Education has established an Aboriginal Advisory Committee, begun to critically examine and make changes to the content of lectures devoted to Aboriginal education, welcomed a Siksika Elder to teach Indigenous knowledge, hosted a 'Leading on the Edge' conference that focused on Aboriginal leadership and education, and is in the process of planning a summer institute for faculty on Aboriginal perspectives.

Changes are beginning to be made at system level as well. The guidance of the Aboriginal Advisory Council and prominent Aboriginal scholars and professionals, policies, curriculum, and, more importantly, attitudes and beliefs related to Aboriginal peoples are being examined, and perhaps challenged.

Change at an institutional level is complex, multi-level, and a long-term process. However, it is encouraging to witness the initial changes that are occurring. At the faculty level the change is also evident. The Aboriginal Advisory Council (AA Council) has been excited by the opportunity to help in a systematic change process, and, in spite of their busy schedules, attendance at meetings has been favourable. The AA Council has provided vital support to me as the sole Aboriginal faculty member and contributed important ideas and knowledge for faculty administrators. The conference that the faculty has hosted in July was also a success. We were fortunate to have Dr. Marie Battiste, Dr. Gregory Cajete, along with emerging Aboriginal scholars and leaders, to present at this conference. Participants came from four provinces, and we also had faculty members attend. Some of the faculty members reported being impressed with the new learning and excited by the

possibilities for change in our institution. The comment that 'there is so much to learn' about Aboriginal history, knowledge and perspectives was expressed by some participants. For the faculty members that did attend the conference, they are now anticipating the summer institute at the end of August. Many in our faculty are now authentically energized by these opportunities to learn from Aboriginal scholars about Aboriginal perspectives, thus enriching their knowledge for the benefit of all students.

As the only Aboriginal faculty member, I am, as are many Aboriginal students, encouraged by these changes. By meaningfully including Aboriginal voices, by providing support and resources for systematic sustained change, the chances for Indigenous student success increases. Currently, since there is a small Indigenous student and faculty population, feelings of isolation and of being misunderstood or misrepresented persist. For these reasons, collaboration, partnership, research, and support at the faculty, university, provincial, national and international level are critical. I believe that the presence of diversity, and the push for fundamental change by both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in an institution are essential for sustained, positive reform for an institution. In the end, it is the desire and the heart of individuals within an organization that will ultimately make a positive difference and systematic change that acknowledges the contributions of Aboriginal peoples, change that will contribute to the success of Indigenous students in higher education. Over time, change this deep requires the commitment of individuals and leadership within our institution. The question remains, 'How far and how deep are we willing to go to become more inclusive?'

University of South Australia

The ILP project at UniSA was two-fold; firstly it aimed to increase the profile and potential leadership roles of Indigenous staff in Indigenous Academic Advisor (IAAs) positions working within Indigenous Student Services at the university, and secondly it aimed to raise awareness of Indigenous Leadership and how this could be best nurtured within the higher education sector. As the ILP project leader within UniSA and as the supervisor of the team of eight IAAs, I had won two national research grants from the Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR). The first; Establishing Good Practice Models Of Leadership Which Focus On Building And Sustaining Indigenous Participation, Retention And Success In Higher Education, related directly to the ILP project and the second a; Study of First Year Experience of Indigenous Students at Australian Universities related directly to Academic Advisors core business. These projects also linked directly to two goals in UniSA's Indigenous Student Services Strategic Plan:

- Ensure Indigenous Academic Advisers are supported and developed in their role by providing support for the development of research and teaching roles.
- Strengthening the role of Academic Advisers to work with staff across the university on Indigenous student learning issues so that Divisions are better equipped to increase the success and completion rates of Indigenous students.

IAAs had earlier revealed a lack of confidence and resentment in pursuing the university's new research direction and also did not see how it could relate to their core business. By their involvement in the two DEEWR projects and discussions on how this related to the goals of this ILP project the IAAs:

- Participated in training to conduct field research for the projects.
- Visited other institutions and networked and familiarized themselves with other Indigenous Education Centres, and centre staff.
- Conducted interviews and focus group discussions with staff and Indigenous students and recorded data.
- Debriefed with project Leader, Key advisors and other field researchers, prioritised findings and contributed to draft report.

Evidence of achieving our goals for this project at UniSA were IAAs reporting better team spirit and confidence in their roles. Increased profile of IAAs with other academic staff, evidenced by five members of the team being invited by lecturing staff to join teaching teams. Members of the IAA team presented research findings at college seminars and all expressed interest in participating in future research. One team member won a research grant as a project leader and three members participated in other projects as field researchers. Six members of the team are involved in post graduate work at Masters Level and are some are expressing interest in pursuing further study at Doctoral Level. All members increased their national networks with staff from other institutions. Grant funds were paid into PD accounts to support future research or conference attendance and research points and income from grants were recorded by the university.

University of Victoria

The ILP project within University of Victoria provided the opportunity to capture and reflect on lessons learned over a 17 year history of innovation to improve Indigenous higher education for remote Indigenous communities. The First Nations Partnerships Program (FNPP) arose through a request from a large Tribal Council in north-central Canada. The Council had articulated a vision of healthy community development that addressed child care service needs in their community, but for those services to be of optimal benefit for children and families the care-providers must be conversant not only with Western theory and practice, but also the roots of their own cultural understandings of care and development.

As the co-constructed, co-instructed 'generative curriculum' emerged from this communities-university partnership, we found it prudent to develop this post-colonial approach on the 'borderlands' of the university, in a place that could respond quickly and effectively to community requests, and at the same time benefit from the presence of the institution but not be overwhelmed by it. The program proved successful and another faculty on campus (Law) has used many of the principles of the program in mounting its own off-campus program in the far north.

The FNPP program has been operating over a period of seventeen years, working with ten different tribal councils and also partnering with colleges in two different provinces facilitating program transfer to each of them

for their own subsequent deliveries. During the period of FNPP deliveries the University became increasingly responsive to Aboriginal tertiary education, increasing many-fold its Aboriginal program offerings and Aboriginal faculty numbers.

The ILP project provided the opportunity to document the unique institutional history of the FNPP and for the FNPP Founder, a Senior University Administrator, and the current University Aboriginal Advisor, to revisit the history of the FNPP program and to reflect on the degree to which a 'borderlands' approach may still be useful, both conceptually and structurally, in addressing the formation and incubation needs of new Aboriginal programs. Recent calls by the provincial government to address Aboriginal populations' local community development needs through on-site, community-involving and culturally respectful means echo the principles and procedures of the FNPP, and encourage the sort of reflective exercises promoted by the ILP project. As is the case with many aboriginal communities, the 'way forward' for this tertiary institution may lie in examining 'what has come before'.

Conclusions

The Institutional Leadership Paradigm project provided participants with the opportunity to articulate the key values they believed could motivate and sustain change within their higher education institutions. As can be seen by the examples provided, it proved to be a flexible tool, capable of supporting institutional change through bolstering existing initiatives as well as prompting new ones. However modest the impact, in each case the ILP activities strengthened the capacity of institutions to provide culturally relevant teaching and learning programs for Indigenous staff and students. To sustain these changes, an ongoing program of critical reflection and refinement of the ILP value statements is recommended. The ILP approach offers a way for Indigenous input and control to impact on institutions that have been persistently impervious to change. Implementation of the ILP into other Australian Higher Education institutions would be beneficial.

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