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Bargaining for a Transformative Vision of Decolonial Indigenization: The Critical Role of University Faculty Associations

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Abstract

The diversification of the academic workforce is primarily the responsibility of management in most Canadian universities. However, the University of Victoria Faculty Association played a critical role in the last two bargaining rounds, successfully negotiating meaningful advancements concerning equity, indigenization and decolonization. In the 2019–2022 collective bargaining round, for example, an Indigenous hiring fund was negotiated. Empowered with a strong mandate from the membership, the faculty association sought in the next bargaining round to move beyond an "Indigenous inclusion" framework, which simply added more Indigenous people to the academy, towards bargaining for a more decolonized space in which, for example, Indigenous members faced fewer barriers in tenure and promotion processes, and were recognized for the additional decolonial work they do in and for the institution, and beyond. We discuss the challenges and successes for Indigenous members in this bargaining round and the crucial role of faculty association Indigenous members in shaping these bargaining successes.

Keywords indigenization, decolonization, equity, collective bargaining, transformative change

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Négocier pour une vision transformationnelle de l’autochtonisation orientée vers la décolonisation : le rôle essentiel des associations de professeures et professeurs d’université

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Résumé

La diversification du personnel académique est principalement la responsabilité des membres de la direction dans la plupart des universités canadiennes. Toutefois, la University of Victoria Faculty Association a joué un rôle crucial au cours des deux dernières rondes de négociation en obtenant d’importantes avancées relativement à l’équité, l’autochtonisation et la décolonisation. Par exemple, lors de la ronde de négociations collectives de 2019–2022, un fonds réservé à l’embauche d’Autochtones a été négocié. Forte d’un solide mandat de la part des membres, l’association du personnel académique a cherché à obtenir, au cours de la ronde de négociation suivante, d’aller au-delà du cadre de l’inclusion autochtone qui consistait à accroître simplement le nombre de membres du personnel autochtone de l’université. Il fallait orienter les négociations vers un espace plus décolonisé dans lequel, par exemple, les membres autochtones rencontreraient moins d’obstacles en matière d’emploi permanent et de processus de promotion, et seraient reconnus pour le travail supplémentaire relativement à la décolonisation qu’elles et ils effectuent dans l’établissement, pour celui-ci et même au-delà. Nous discutons des défis et des succès liés aux membres autochtones dans cette ronde de négociation et du rôle déterminant des membres autochtones de l’association du personnel académique dans l’obtention de ces succès lors des négociations.

Mots-clés autochtonisation, décolonisation, équité, négociations collectives, changement transformationnel

Introduction

The unjust murders of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd — all Black Americans — in 2020 (Altman, 2020), followed by the 2021 confirmation of the remains of 215 Indigenous children who attended the Kamloops Indian Residential School in the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc community, sparked significant civil unrest across Turtle Island (North America) (Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc, 2021). Political disorder spilled over to university campuses across Canada, prompting administrators, faculty, staff, and students to address the immediate political distress while also envisioning a new path forward — one where Indigenous, Black, and those from other marginalized groups could feel safe, welcomed, and even valued on university campuses. Almost at once, it became clear to many that post-secondary equity initiatives alone were insufficient in dismantling the colonial underpinnings of our institutions and tackling systematic racism and structural discrimination embedded in institutional policy, process, and practice. As we argue in this paper, the transformation of our institutions will require a foundational and structural overhaul whereby the voices, perspectives, and experiences of the diverse members of our university communities are respected and accepted as truth. Post-secondary faculty associations can serve an important role in leading this transformation.

In this essay, we share lessons learned from our experiences at the University of Victoria (UVic), located on the unceded territories of the Lək^{w}əŋən and W̱SÁNEĆ peoples, particularly in our equity, decolonization, and indigenization leadership work with the University of Victoria Faculty Association (UVic FA). We focused particularly on our experiences in the 2022 bargaining round between the UVic FA and the employer. In this round, we aimed to increase the number of Indigenous faculty hired at UVic, while also recognizing the importance and limitations of a focus purely on Indigenous hiring initiatives. Our experiences at UVic made us recognize the need for significant changes to collective agreement language if we were to make meaningful progress in reducing barriers faced by Indigenous members. This is essential for moving closer to real and meaningful decolonization and indigenization of the university. Our experiences in this round also demonstrated that faculty associations can play a vital leadership role in moving universities in a transformative direction. We firmly believe that our academic staff unions can and must serve this critical role.

This paper is co-authored equally by two 2022 UVic FA negotiating team members. Lynne Marks is Jewish and a professor in the Department of History at UVic. Since joining the university in 1992, she has taught courses in Canadian

history, gender and sexuality, and religious history and has served in numerous leadership roles, including as chair of the Academic Women's Caucus, chair of the Department of History, and chief negotiator of the 2022 UVic FA negotiating team. She currently serves as the president of the UVic FA. Christine O'Bonsawin is Abenaki (Odanak First Nation) and an associate professor in the Department of History at UVic. She started at the university in 2007 and served as the director of the Indigenous Studies program for the next 11 years. Christine has taught courses in Indigenous studies, Indigenous history, and sport history, served on the 2022 UVic FA negotiating team, and currently serves on the UVic FA executive committee in the Indigenous portfolio role.

As historians, we are not only curious about learning about the past but appreciate that in acquiring such knowledge about our history, we also gain the necessary tools to imagine where we might go — as individuals, a university, and a society. As such, in the first discussion area, we offer a historical overview of the post-secondary landscape throughout Canada while paying specific attention to the UVic experience. The subsequent discussion areas draw heavily from Adam Gaudry and Danielle Lorenz's convincing article focusing on visions for indigenizing the Canadian academy, once again paying specific attention to experiences at UVic. Accordingly, in our second discussion area, we consider the national trend to "indigenize" Canadian post-secondary institutions in the first two decades of the 21st century, assessing the limitations of an 'Indigenous inclusion' framework. Third, we consider the shift to 'reconciliation indigenization' in the post-Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) era, which functions similarly to 'Indigenous inclusion' frameworks yet places Indigenous and settler ideals on common ground in highly problematic ways. Finally, we consider what decolonial indigenization requires of us, individually and collectively, in the hope we can work towards transforming the academy in profound ways. As noted above, here we share lessons learned from our experiences representing the UVic FA in the 2022 collective bargaining round. Although we are proud of some of the advancements we achieved in our last round of bargaining, we understand that, as a university community, we have only begun to lay the foundation toward meaningful decolonial indigenization.

The Struggle for Inclusion and Equity on Canadian Post-Secondary Campuses

For many decades over the 20th century, Canadian university faculty members were almost exclusively male, white and Christian, reflecting the nature of the universities at which they taught (Wright, 2015; Tulchinsky, 2008). Starting in the late 1950s, universities began to see some diversification among faculty, primarily with the hiring of Jews, and increasingly of women — almost exclusively white women. By the 1980s and early 1990s, female faculty were a significant enough minority on most university campuses that they began to demand greater equality with their male counterparts. They argued that it was not enough to hire more women as the path to greater equity on campus — if universities wanted actual gender equity, they had to provide the conditions — including family friendly policies, sexual harassment and anti-discrimination policies, and a recognition of the value of a broader range of scholarship and career patterns — if women were to thrive in what had been very male environments. On some campuses, academic staff unions played a major role in pushing for greater equality for female faculty (Axworthy, 1981; Briskin, 2006).[1] In other contexts, faculty associations remained bastions of white male privilege, and any improvements in gender equality came through female faculty pressure on their senior administration.[2]

By the turn of the 21st century, bargaining for equity was becoming a more accepted part of the mandates of academic staff associations. But at this time, equity still largely meant equity for female faculty members, as reflected in the literature on this subject, which largely associated bargaining for equity as bargaining for gender equity (Axworthy, 1981; Creese, 1996).

The University of Victora followed this common pattern. In the early 2000s, the UVic FA Equity Committee (having just recently changed its name from the Status of Women Committee, but still largely focused on gender equity issues), advocated with the UVic FA's bargaining committee for improvements to maternity and parental leave top ups, an issue of major significance for many women faculty. The UVic FA was then largely successful in bargaining improvements in this regard. In 2012, the UVic FA, although still a non-union association, was also successful in bargaining with the university to strike a joint committee to investigate gender-based inequities in salary. The result of the report of this committee, released in 2014, was a recognition of significant inequities in pay by gender, and substantial pay increases for some female faculty, particularly those female faculty who had been at UVic the longest (Adjin-Tetty et al., 2014).

In 2014 the UVic FA unionized. In the first collective agreement (CA) in 2015 following certification, the primary focus was on maintaining the gains achieved in the pre-certification framework agreement. In the subsequent bargaining round in 2019, there began to be some recognition of the importance of bargaining related to equity issues beyond gender issues. This recognition was based in part on changes at the level of the senior administration, as well as increased advocacy among Indigenous faculty members.

The Limitations of an Indigenous Inclusion Framework

With the publication of *Indigenizing the Academy: Transforming Scholarship and Empowering Communities*, co-edited by Devon A. Mihesuah and Angela Cavender Wilson (2004), the experiences of Indigenous academics working in post-secondary institutions, many of whom were experiencing hostility and discrimination from non-Indigenous faculty and administrators, was put forth into scholarly realms. Around the same time, with the growing presence of Indigenous people — students, staff, and faculty — in university spheres, Marie Battiste et al. (2002) signalled to the harms of simplistic "add-on" institutional solutions involving Indigenous people, likening such initiatives to the "addenda to a preexisting treaty enforced to the advantage of the colonizer" (p. 83). Since the turn of the century, the post-secondary response to "indigenization" has mainly been surface-level, all too frequently relying on addenda-type initiatives.

In their 2018 article titled "Indigenization as Inclusion, Reconciliation, and Decolonization: Navigating the Different Visions for Indigenizing the Canadian Academy," Adam Gaudry and Danielle Lorenz (2018) refer to the addenda-type form of indigenization as the "Indigenous inclusion" framework, which accepts that "by merely including more Indigenous peoples, it is believed that universities can indigenize without substantial change" (p. 219). Under this framework, the emphasis is on increasing the number of Indigenous bodies in university spaces, with little to no attention paid to modifying the structures and policies that have made post-secondary spaces unwelcoming and hostile for Indigenous people. As Gaudry and Lorenz (2018) suggest, Indigenous inclusion "is ultimately the low-hanging fruit of Indigenization: it's the minimum level of commitment…not the end goal" (p. 220).

In the early years of the 21st century, the experiences throughout the country largely followed this pattern, whereby universities actively recruited Indigenous faculty. The increase in Indigenous faculty in universities throughout Canada undoubtedly brought positive benefits, including increased Indigenous student

enrolments and a wider range of Indigenous-focused programs and course offerings. Nonetheless, this increase in Indigenous faculty complement was simply insufficient as there were still too few Indigenous scholars to support such rapid growth. Further, most Indigenous faculty members hired at this time were early career and pre-tenure, yet tasked with heavy service burdens and community responsibilities. The most significant oversight in establishing such hiring priorities was perhaps that such initiatives failed to invoke structural change that would not only provide a necessary foundation for Indigenous faculty to succeed but that is required for genuine indigenization.

In universities across Canada that had begun hiring Indigenous faculty, a lack of knowledge and understanding of the diverse and valuable nature of Indigenous community-centred research and other research conducted by Indigenous scholars has at times led to difficulties in tenure and promotion, regrettably resulting in partial or complete disengagement from academic life for some Indigenous members. Not surprisingly, it is at the point of reappointment, promotion, and tenure (RPT) where many Indigenous scholars experience systemic bias, largely because departmental written RPT standards fail to acknowledge and value Indigenous knowledge and ways. As such, RPT standards typically assume a level playing field and "one right way" of succeeding in academia, often regarding a specific number of peer-reviewed journal articles (e.g., six, ten, etc.) or a refereed book to be the gold standard for tenure and promotion. Furthermore, it is not uncommon to find no Indigenous faculty members on RPT committees to guide and advise on applications from Indigenous members, mainly stemming from the fact that many Indigenous scholars work in isolation, often as one or very few members of their department. As was true for women in academia in earlier decades, this might lead to isolation and a sense of marginalization. In some cases, it could also mean that their colleagues lacked an understanding and respect for the importance of their work and the criteria by which it should be assessed. In addition to these problems, universities have continued to develop visible signs of their indigenization efforts, particularly in the post-Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) era (discussed below), such as introducing Indigenous-focused courses and programs. While some of these developments are useful for Indigenous students, they have also resulted in a considerable increase in workload for Indigenous faculty, which often goes unrecognized.

The Rhetoric of Reconciliation Indigenization

As Gaudry and Lorenz note, following the release of the TRC *Calls to Action* in 2015, university administrators have felt even greater pressure to "indigenize" their institutions and engage with Indigenous peoples and knowledge systems ethically. Nonetheless, in the post-TRC era, the question of actual indigenization has become too destabilizing for most university administrators to accept, largely because post-secondary institutions remain invested in Indigenous erasure and marginalization. As such, the post-secondary response to indigenization has remained largely surface-level and mainly in line with the Indigenous inclusion framework of previous decades. In this context, as R. Kokkanen (2008) avows, the university operates as a "guest master" who is not necessarily hostile to the presence of Indigenous bodies and reconciliatory policies but actively works to contain both within an existing Western academic framework.

While the TRC helped expand discussions of indigenization from scholarly debate to administrative dialogue, scholars, students, and community members alike have persistently expressed their concern that post-TRC indigenization policies are merely a shift in rhetoric that places greater emphasis on educating non-Indigenous students, faculty, and staff on Indigenous history and lived experience. As highlighted by Gaudry and Lorenz (2018), "indigenization 'should not be about ensuring settler access to Indigenous nations' resources. If this is the goal, then indigenization is just a euphemism for colonization'" (p. 222). In this context, "Indigenous resources" refers to Indigenous knowledges, expertise, and labour procured in university spheres, which continue to be demanded without concrete structural change, as required by genuine indigenization.

Like universities across Canada, UVic acted in response to the *Calls to Action* by continuing to actively recruit Indigenous faculty. UVic launched its first Indigenous Plan in 2017, which aimed to increase the number of Indigenous students. The plan also recognized that a significant increase in Indigenous student enrolment required a more substantial effort to recruit and retain Indigenous faculty and support and acknowledge their research and scholarship (University of Victoria, 2017). The objectives outlined in this plan sparked conversations across campus about implementing structural changes to better support and acknowledge the significant research and scholarship produced by Indigenous faculty at UVic.

In 2019, the employer and the UVic FA returned to the table to negotiate the next CA. The university's interest in increasing the number of Indigenous faculty at UVic, as per the Indigenous Plan (2017–2022), the fact that the UVic FA bargaining mandate included a clause in its equity section to "improve supports for Indigenous

faculty who bear an excessive service burden which includes additional service to support the University's Indigenous Plan," and the advocacy efforts of Indigenous faculty members led to the inclusion of some added language to the CA addressing Indigenous member rights and in support of indigenization. Consequently, the 2019 CA outlines enhancements for Indigenous members and efforts towards indigenization in three key instances. The first two items were incorporated into the main body of the CA and centred on special leave and intellectual property (IP). Regarding special leave, new language was included to extend the right to Indigenous members take up to two weeks of paid leave "to attend an Indigenous cultural gathering or cultural activity in fulfillment of cultural obligations" (p. 117). Second, in the appendix outlining protections to intellectual property, new language was added to protect the *sui generis* nature of Indigenous rights, recognizing "that the IP of indigenous communities can include cultural knowledge, expressions, traditions, artefacts and sites that may not always be included or protected within general definitions of IP" (p. 179).

The third item related to indigenization was addressed through a Letter of Understanding (LOU). During this round of negotiations, the employer and the UVic FA negotiated a one-time Indigenous recruitment initiative. As stated in the LOU, the objective of the fund was to increase "the number and success of Indigenous faculty and students at UVic by developing priority recruitment strategies and programs to support their success" (Collective Agreement, 2019, p. 207). Further, the fund sought to create opportunities for "qualified Indigenous graduates from UVic PhD programs to enter academic roles" (Collective Agreement, 2019, p. 207). The employer and UVic FA negotiating team ultimately agreed to improve the terms of the recruitment hires so that these positions were advertised as tenure-track.

Creating opportunities for Indigenous doctoral students was initially viewed as a positive development and contributed to a significant increase in the number of Indigenous faculty. By 2022, the number of Indigenous faculty members at UVic had significantly increased, representing an approximate 100% growth since 2015. However, it quickly became apparent that, without significant structural and institutional changes, many early-career scholars found themselves navigating challenging circumstances, as noted above. Their experiences might be understood within the broader trend of supposed indigenization in Canadian academia and society more generally, where few policies have sought to question the epistemological privilege of the Western tradition, which has resulted in a "reconciliation turn [that] has been more discursive than substantive" (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018, p. 222).

By 2022, the pre-tenure to tenured Indigenous faculty ratio at UVic was approximately 65% to 35%. This meant that the limited number of senior Indigenous faculty members faced increased service burdens (to their already high service demands), as they were routinely called on to mentor, support, and serve on committees for their junior colleagues, many of whom were experiencing challenging encounters at UVic and in academia more generally. In addition, following the dramatic increase in Indigenous faculty in the post-TRC era, particularly after the establishment of the Indigenous Recruitment Support Fund in 2019 and the increase in Indigenous faculty, the UVic FA was called on to support several Indigenous faculty. Due to concerns raised with the UVic FA in these years, the association recognized the importance of focusing significantly on Indigenous members in the upcoming bargaining round. The goal was to introduce new language and create an innovative framework for the CA. This would facilitate meaningful structural changes aimed at better supporting Indigenous members and thus advancing the university's journey towards decolonial indigenization.

Decolonial Indigenization and Indigenous Members

The final approach to indigenization, as discussed by Gaudry and Lorenz (2018), is decolonial indigenization, which "envisions the wholesale overhaul of the academy to fundamentally reorient knowledge production based on balanced power relations between Indigenous peoples and Canadians, transforming the academy into something dynamic and new" (p. 226). The reality is that a monumental reorientation of university ways must occur before we are genuinely on a path toward decolonial indigenization in our respective institutions. Despite this, one can imagine how decolonial indigenization might look and what steps must be taken to bring us closer to such a realization.

In her article, entitled "100 Ways: Indigenizing and Decolonizing Academic Programs," Shauneen Pete affirms that "institutional reform must be undertaken on multiple levels, by all peoples in the academic community, and result in a dramatically different structure, relationships, goals, and outcomes" (p. 81). At the same time, as Gaudry and Lorenz (2018) remind us, "the leaders of this transformative change are rarely already in the senior leadership positions and this change will be bottom-up, not top-down...Indigenous faculty and allies tend to already be ahead of administration and invested in new transformative approaches to a decolonial academy" (p. 226). We agree wholeheartedly with both positions. Institutional reform needs to occur at multiple levels and should lead to a fundamentally different structure. This change must be Indigenous-led and

supported by allies who are knowledgeable about and committed to a decolonial academy.

We preface the following discussion by fully recognizing that faculty associations, like universities, are steeped in colonial history and tradition. Like the university, faculty associations must consider how to respectfully engage with decolonizing and indigenizing efforts. At the same time, the University of Victoria's earlier indigenization efforts meant that the UVic FA had more experience with Indigenous issues than some Canadian universities. The UVic FA had supported and strengthened the Indigenous Recruitment Fund of 2019, and actively supported several Indigenous members, particularly with the significant increase of Indigenous faculty in the post-TRC era. After the ratification of the 2019 agreement, the association began to proactively work to bring in Indigenous members formally through committee membership as well as by establishing the Ad-Hoc Indigenous Faculty Caucus. This marked the start of a significant transformation within the UVic FA, acknowledging that indigenization must be an Indigenous-led process. Decolonial indigenization necessitates structural changes across multiple levels, led by Indigenous faculty who are both knowledgeable and committed to fostering a decolonial academy. In this context, faculty associations play a crucial role, as the Indigenous knowledge, expertise, and lived experiences required for decolonial indigenization reside within the membership of university faculty associations.

In preparation for the 2022 round of negotiations, the UVic FA recognized the importance of issues related to Indigenous faculty and indigenization. As such, a proactive decision was made at the outset to include an Indigenous member on the bargaining team (for the first time in UVic's history). This was just the first step in a series of actions aimed at involving Indigenous faculty in the bargaining process. The Indigenous Advisory to the Negotiating Team was formed early on, consisting of six Indigenous faculty members from various disciplines, faculties, and ranks. This advisory guided the negotiating team during the planning stages of bargaining on issues related to indigenization and the needs of Indigenous members. One of the primary responsibilities of the advisory was to create a survey for all UVic Indigenous members. The information gathered from this survey, along with other surveys, served a crucial role in shaping the bargaining mandate. The bargaining mandate consisted of five key pillars, including (1) fair compensation, (2) sustainable and equitable workload language, (3) enhancements to policies related to equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism, (4) full recognition of Indigenous members, and (5) targeted improvements to benefits. With a strong ratification vote in favour of the bargaining mandate (97%), the negotiating team was well-

positioned to advocate for Indigenous members' rights and to advance indigenization efforts at UVic through the collective bargaining process.

Formal negotiations commenced in accordance with Lək^{w}əŋən protocol. A Lək^{w}əŋən Elder extended an official welcome to the territory, emphasizing the importance of respecting local lands and their laws. The proceedings adhered to Indigenous practices of witnessing. On the opening day, two members of the Indigenous Advisory to the Negotiating Team were invited to serve as witnesses to the events. If the promises and intentions made on that day were later forgotten, the witnesses could be called upon at a later date to recall those commitments. Additionally, in the opening proceedings, UVic's Vice-President Indigenous and a UVic Indigenous faculty member were invited to share with both negotiating teams their experiences as Indigenous scholars in the academy. Their statements served as a powerful form of storytelling and an important learning opportunity for those at the table unaware of the real challenges experienced by Indigenous scholars in the academy. Moreover, it was mutually agreed upon in these early stages that each negotiating session moving forward would begin with a territorial acknowledgement.

Unfortunately, formal negotiations quickly reverted to the Western ways of traditional labour negotiations. The UVic FA arrived at the table with proposals supporting Indigenous member rights and indigenization. While the employer recognized the need to improve the situation facing Indigenous members, there was limited agreement regarding our specific proposals. As can sometimes be the case at the table when the union brings forward proposals based on evidence from member bargaining surveys, the employer did not appear to be convinced by the Indigenous-centred proposals brought forward by UVic FA negotiators (based on surveys and other extensive consultations with Indigenous members). The employer therefore requested, two months into negotiations, a new Indigenous Advisory be struck to include an equal representation of UVic FA Indigenous members and Indigenous senior leaders (i.e. faculty-excluded, who were presumed to be more representative of the employer's interests). While a level of distrust had seemingly entered the negotiating room, in the end, the reformed Indigenous Advisory proved to be a highly productive space. In this space, Indigenous faculty members and Indigenous senior leaders alike prioritized the interests of Indigenous peoples and communities. Ultimately, this Indigenous Advisory provided direction to *both* negotiating teams, resulting in agreement at the table supporting Indigenous member rights and advancing indigenization at UVic. This approach required both parties to move away from traditional colonial divisions of "us vs. them" that are the norm in collective bargaining. The new Indigenous Advisory did not transform

the entire bargaining process, but there were longstanding relationships and trust amongst members of the Indigenous Advisory that all members of the reformed advisory could (and did) work together in this safe and productive space.

In this last round of negotiations, we were able to make meaningful changes, which, we hope, begin to lead us on a path towards decolonial indigenization. Whereas the 2019 CA paid some attention to Indigenous members and indigenization, the 2022 CA pays significant attention to these matters. In fact, in the 2022 CA, there are 131 mentions of the word Indigenous (compared to 14 in the 2019 CA and zero in the 2015 agreement). Below, we highlight a handful of the advancements the parties achieved in this last round of collective bargaining concerning Indigenous members and indigenization. Notably, in this round, we successfully negotiated for broadened appointment, reappointment, promotion, and tenure language in recognition of the work of Indigenous members. The work of Indigenous members in community must be recognized as part of their academic responsibilities, and additional language requires RPT and salary committees to recognize the broad range of research, scholarly activity, teaching, and service work done by Indigenous members. As it pertains to RPT, Indigenous members now have the option to attend meetings and be supported by an Indigenous academic colleague, Elder, or Knowledge Keeper/Holder, who may speak on their behalf, and to request that a senior Indigenous member co-chair their RPT committee. Indigenous members also have the option to be accompanied by an Indigenous academic colleague, Elder, or Knowledge Keeper/Holder if facing disciplinary action.

Additionally, through a letter of understanding, we successfully renegotiated the Indigenous Recruitment Support Fund with a priority to recruit senior Indigenous scholars and those from local territories, including Lək^{w}əŋən and W̱SÁNEĆ, other Coast Salish, Kwakwa̱ka̱'wakw, and Nuu-chah-nulth scholars. In other letters of understanding, we negotiated the Indigenous Community Engagement Fund to recognize the importance of community work carried out by Indigenous faculty and librarians. The Indigenous and BPoC Knowledge Connection Fund provides an opportunity for Indigenous and Black and People of Colour members to apply for a course release or research funds to support their work related to equity, diversity, inclusion, decolonization, indigenization, or anti-oppression, recognizing the additional workload that such work has long imposed on Indigenous and BPoC members. The Associate Dean Indigenous positions were established to support much of the important work listed above.

Conclusion

These struggles are not easy. However, we argue that addressing them is essential for academic staff associations. While employers may express commitments to equity, decolonization, indigenization, and anti-racism, as we have observed, they are often satisfied to add diverse bodies to our universities without implementing significant changes to academic structures. In the 1950s, for example, universities began to diversify, beginning with predominantly Jewish and female members. By the 1980s and 1990s, female faculty had established themselves as a considerable minority in post-secondary institutions and began making greater demands on their predominantly white male colleagues. Since the 1980s, feminist academics have made it clear that much more change in the academy is needed to move women towards actual full inclusion. In this slowly changing climate, some faculty associations pressured senior administration on equity matters. In the case of UVic, the UVic FA began to focus on equity matters, resulting in some gender equity advancements in the early 2000s, eventually leading to a joint committee to investigate gender-based inequities in salary in 2012. Around the same time, UVic initiated efforts to hire Indigenous faculty members. Following the TRC report, like other universities nationwide, UVic proactively recruited Indigenous faculty; however, such hiring initiatives, generally speaking, often fail to invoke the structural change that would provide a necessary foundation for Indigenous faculty to succeed.

In the years leading to the 2022 round of collective bargaining, recognizing undue pressures placed on Indigenous faculty, the UVic FA began to organize by taking necessary steps to move the association and, thus, support university objectives related to decolonial indigenization. Through this process, our association learned several important lessons regarding decolonial indigenization:

- It envisions the wholesale transformation of the academy.
- It aims to create a fundamentally different structure.
- It must be led by Indigenous people.
- It depends on Indigenous knowledge, expertise, and lived experiences, which exist in the membership of faculty associations.
- It requires university faculty associations to take proactive rather than reactive approaches.
- It necessitates long-term commitments from Indigenous and non-Indigenous faculty association leaders and members as well as university administrators.

In accordance with decolonial indigenization principles, the UVic FA began to reorganize its structures and decision-making processes prior to collective bargaining. This involved incorporating Indigenous members into leadership roles within the UVic FA and establishing Indigenous-only committee structures and spaces. In the months leading up to collective bargaining, the UVic FA actively worked to include Indigenous people, voices, and perspectives in both the preparatory and formal bargaining processes. Ultimately, we successfully negotiated new language and rights for Indigenous members in our collective agreement, which we take pride in.

We also fully acknowledge the important role of Indigenous leaders within the administration in the development of this collective agreement. The employer also has reason to take pride in negotiating this agreement, which moves UVic closer to a form of decolonial indigenization, which includes positive support for the Indigenous members who make it possible.

Nonetheless, it is both useful and sobering to note that while there were real challenges in the 2022 round in bargaining Indigenous member rights and in support of indigenization, and we have much further to go, the challenges we faced in this round of collective bargaining in addressing BPoC matters were significantly more difficult. They point to a broader pattern that we referenced earlier in this paper. Universities have for several decades sought to view adding new bodies to the academy — whether female bodies, Indigenous bodies, or Black bodies — as enough to demonstrate commitment to equity, diversity, indigenization, and anti-racism. We have seen in the last few months the emergence of an organized group of Black faculty and librarian members who have sought UVic FA support to advocate with UVic management for many changes to reduce the isolation and racism faced by Black members. We are committed to working with them in seeking needed structural change and true inclusion.

A theme of this special issue is the possible disconnect between labour rights and equity. We assert that true equity is essential for upholding labour rights. We cannot depend solely on employers to create meaningful pathways for equity, decolonization, indigenization, and anti-racism initiatives. And it is not something that can happen quickly. Some of what we propose here in changing how negotiations on these and other matters should occur may not be easy for academic staff unions, any more than including women in union leadership positions and feminist demands in bargaining mandates was 40 years ago. Indigenous and BPoC members must be active leaders and members of our associations and negotiating teams and involved in all stages of decision-making and bargaining. The additional work this requires of Indigenous and BPoC members must also be recognized. The

aspirations of decolonial indigenization call for a fundamental transformation of the academic landscape, which includes academic staff associations. Faculty associations are uniquely positioned to facilitate this structural change, as our mandates are driven by the interests of our members, including those of Indigenous and BPoC scholars within our memberships.

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Endnotes

[1] York University Faculty Association (YUFA) was an early advocate of bargaining for gender equity, as was CUEW, the union of teaching assistants and contract academic staff at York and a number of other Ontario universities (replaced by CUPE).

[2] That was certainly Lynne Marks' experience, serving on the executive of the UVic FA in the mid-1990s. Most improvements in gender equity for female faculty at UVic in the 1980s and early 1990s came from the advocacy of the few feminist faculty members on campus. Faculty Women's Caucus Oral History Project Fonds, Fonds AR145, UVic Archives.