

CI Newsletter: April 8-12, 2024

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Hello everyone!

Check out some exciting resources, developments and events below.

Curriculum Integration Project



Caption: Curriculum Integration logo. Source: Teaching & Learning Centre.

Winter 2024 Giveaway Day

Time flies! The Winter 2024 Curriculum Integration Project is nearing its end, and to celebrate the work of the faculty champions in this cohort, the CI planning team will host the Giveaway Day on Tuesday April 16, 12:00 pm – 4:00 pm. Faculty champions are invited to gather and reflect on their journey with the Curriculum Integration process. Come join us for a final in-person celebration at Newnham Campus in K5100, complete with a delicious lunch! [Register for the Winter 2024 Giveaway Day!](#)

**WINTER 2024
GIVE AWAY DAY
CELEBRATION**

**CURRICULUM INTEGRATION
PROJECT**

Join us to **celebrate** the Winter 2024 Curriculum Integration faculty champions! Don't miss your chance to share and connect with your fellow faculty members. Lunch will be served for all attendees.

Tuesday, April 16
12 – 4 p.m.
K5100, Newnham

SIGN UP TODAY!

MyPD link:
billy.wa/shhs

Seneca
POLYTECHNIC The Teaching & Learning Centre

W2024 CI Deliverable Deadline

For all Winter 2024 CI faculty champions, note that you still have some time to work on your deliverables but be aware that the deadline is on Friday April 26. Check out the resources on Blackboard for more information. If you have any questions and/or roadblocks, come join our Curriculum Café this week (see below for more details) to share your thoughts with your fellow faculty members.

Curriculum Café

To support W2024 CI faculty champions and their deliverables, the virtual Curriculum Café this week will be held on Friday April 12, 1:30 pm – 3:00 pm, and will be focused on Curriculum Integration plans. Note: All sessions are open to all who are interested. [Register for Curriculum Café in MyPD today!](#)

Seneca's Curriculum Café is a bi-weekly informal get-together where faculty share and learn about curriculum integration in Truth & Reconciliation (TRC), Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI), and Sustainability (SUS).



Caption: Curriculum Café logo. Source: Teaching & Learning Centre.

Team Spotlight

A Letter to Faculty Champions from Mark Solomon

This week, we are so happy to present [an open letter to all faculty champions and staff](#) from Mark Solomon, Associate Vice-President in the Office of Reconciliation and Inclusion. Read Mark's letter to learn about his experience when he started off as Seneca's first Indigenous employee back in 2006, witnessing the growth of Seneca over time to where we are now. Though there are always challenging questions as we seek truth, reconciliation, equity and sustainability in our communities, Mark holds a positive outlook on the future of Seneca.

Miigwech, Mark.

I will start with a story.

In 2006, I was hired as Seneca's first Indigenous employee; my title was Manager, Aboriginal Student Services (thankfully we didn't use an acronym).

The start was rough and hard. Seneca was figuring me out and I was figuring out Seneca. I suspect all of you had similar feelings when you started. I did feel an added burden of being the "first", and that burden was to ensure I was not the last.

In those early days, people would drop by my office to welcome me and what I presumed was to check me out (you know being the first). What they found I suspect didn't live up to expectations: a white passing guy, strange last name, no braids, no beads and well, not very Aboriginal looking. Interestingly, some came with strange gifts. Over my first six months, about four headdresses appeared from various areas at Seneca including the President's office and the Athletics department. I also found a box of another two or three in the Aboriginal Student area.

As a new employee, I worked up the courage to ask what these were and why there were so many of them. I was told that they were the Seneca Peoples' headdresses and Seneca had commissioned a hundred of them. I emphatically said that it was not what the Seneca People wore.

The headdresses are exactly what you picture when you think of headdresses. They were beautiful, there was significant artisnry in their making; they were, however, fake both in the "not a Seneca headdress" but also in the "not an authentic headdress" way.

The Seneca people wore a Gustoweh pictured [here](#). The eagle feathers on the fake ones were dyed goose feathers, the bead work was plastic beads and so many other signs to the trained eye.

The second part to the story was that the headdresses were given to dignitaries and people of note who visited Seneca. That practice ceased when Seneca's Athletics team changed their name from the "Braves" and "Scouts" to the "Sting", but there were still these "leftovers" lingering around.

I carried these headdresses from office to office as I was fortunate to serve Seneca in different capacities. They were valuable, they were made by an Indigenous artisan but for a non-Indigenous audience or customer, it was like an albatross hanging on my neck as a burden I carried.

I talked to several elders over the years about what to do with them. They didn't have an opinion. Finally, I realized the solution was metaphoric. We buried them under the foundation of Odeyto. We built a place of reconciliation on top of these symbols of racism, misinformation, and ignorance.

My work at Seneca occurred during a fortunate time of change. I look back and see how far we have come, yet I know there is much more work to be done and we have just started. I honestly lose sleep over the work that remains, the mountain that we must climb to make us brave.

Curriculum Integration is one of those changes towards bravery. It is a way to make lasting meaningful changes informed by the past for the future. We must hope for the upcoming generations to do better by setting examples and modelling behaviours. This is what I have always known our faculty to do.

Our students and communities expect us to keep up, to build up and not fall behind. Curriculum Integration is a retro fit, a way for us to update and represent all voices at the table, ones that were absent or omitted. It is a way for our students to see themselves within our lessons and programs.

There will be a time when there is push back in this work. We will face questions. Why is this important? When is “Straight” month? Were Residential Schools that bad? And any number of other challenging questions.

Know that our Equity denied colleagues face those questions daily or weekly. I have a simple answer that may be too simple. Those questions are unoriginal, they have been asked and answered hundreds of times. They lack courage and a willingness to try to change. They simply lack love and empathy. Those questions are safe, not brave and not Seneca.

Letters like mine often go unanswered, yet seeing the work, meeting the faculty and knowing Seneca, I believe we are up for the challenge.

Looking for support? Feel free to reach out to the CI team at any time by emailing teaching@senecapolytechnic.ca.



Caption: Artwork by Isaac Murdoch, "The Petition to the Water Spirits", located at Seneca@York Courtyard. Source: Seneca Polytechnic, 2023.



tags : curriculum, edi, integration, learning, sustainability, teaching, trc