THE INDIGENIZATION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS AND SERVICES IN CANADIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

by

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Abstract

Many Canadian higher education institutions are actively Indigenizing their college and university campuses, including the delivery of services and programming are for all students, Indigenous and non-Indigenous. Significant milestones such as the findings and calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada have renewed focus on the Indigenization in higher education. This focus may require Student Affairs and Services (SAS) professionals to change how they think about and execute their work with students for student services professionals. Through 12 semi-structured interviews with student services employees, this research study aimed to understand how they made sense of Indigenization. Indigenization requires an intentional commitment to change on both a personal and institutional level. It also involves localization and connection with Indigenous peoples and communities. Participants identified ways they had made sense of Indigenization, including affirming Indigenous knowledge and forming meaning about Indigenization. Secondly, participants provided examples of Indigenization activities within individual university departments, through connections outside the university, and university-wide initiatives. Finally, the study summarized ways participants were learning (unlearning and re-learning) about Indigeneity in Canada. Examples of learning sources included: directly from the department of Indigenous student services, independent learning outside of the university, campus-based activities and events, and learning from Indigenous peoples. The concepts of sensemaking and sense-giving, as well as unlearning, were used to examine the data. The study found that Indigenization at this university campus is an ongoing process, and those interviewed were still making sense of Indigenization. This study captures a specific moment at a post-secondary education institution in British Columbia for Indigenous students and Student Affairs and Services professionals.
Lay Summary

Post-secondary education in British Columbia and Canada has seen rapid expansion, including increased participation of Indigenous peoples. The study was composed of twelve interviews of university student services professionals to explore their understanding of the Indigenization of higher education. The research explored how they understood Indigenization, Indigenizing activities that were actively happening, and how they were learning more about Indigenous peoples in Canada. The study's overall findings indicated that the Indigenization of student support services at this university in British Columbia was an on-going and active process. The findings capture specific experiences that may be useful for others involved in post-secondary education to consider their institutions' Indigenization initiatives.
Preface

I conducted the research and wrote the manuscript under the guidance of the supervisory committee. The information in this thesis has not been published.

In April 2018, the thesis research proposal was presented at Educational Studies Research Day at the University of British Columbia. In 2019, the research project and preliminary results (while data analysis was on-going) were presented at four scholarly and professional conferences: the 17th Annual Indigenous Graduate Student Symposium, March 2019; the Educational Studies Research Day, University of British Columbia, April 2019; the Canadian Association of College and University Student Services (CACUSS) Conference, June 2019; and, the Canadian Society for the Study of Higher Education (CSSHE) Conference, June 2019. In February 2020, an update on the research project was presented at the Research in Focus seminar series at the University of British Columbia.

This study, “Indigenization of Canadian Student Affairs and Services,” was approved by the University of British Columbia’s Behavioural Research Ethics Board on February 19, 2019. Subject #H18-02983.
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Furthermore, I am grateful for many colleagues, graduate students, faculty members, and friends that have shaped this study through numerous walks, phone calls, cups of coffee, and meaningful conversations. These conversations have occurred in university classes, conferences, parks, homes, and coffee shops. Finally, I wish to give thanks to my family and friends, especially my parents, who might not always understand what I am doing but have always provided endless support.
Dedication

This work is dedicated to Indigenous Peoples that continue to resist colonization in everyday life, including in their pursuit of post-secondary education. I dedicate this work to the many individuals, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, working in Student Affairs and Services (SAS), actively transforming the post-secondary experience with and for Indigenous peoples. I am hopeful this study can contribute to changes in how we think about student learning and development in Canadian post-secondary education.
Chapter 1: Introduction

Participation in and completing post-secondary education has become a common experience for many individuals today. Efforts have been made to ensure there is access to post-secondary education for individuals who may not have participated in the past. These efforts, usually manifested through specialized admissions channels and later support programs, are meant to equalize students’ experience. Indigenous peoples in Canada have faced many barriers and roadblocks to participating in all education levels, including post-secondary education. Indigenous peoples “could not easily enter post-secondary institutions until they had acquired a suitable mainstream educational background” (Crum, 2015, p. 39). Before 1920, an older version of the Indian Act stipulated that Indigenous peoples who “attained any university degree and met the ‘fit’ or ‘civilized’ enfranchisement requirements” lost their Indian status and its associated benefits (Canada, Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, n.d., “Enfranchisement”). Over time, these conditions have made pursuing post-secondary education in Canada challenging for Indigenous peoples.

Higher education in Canada has expanded and diversified, both in terms of the institutions themselves and the students that are accessing them (Andres, 2016). Since the 1960s, both the total number of students enrolled in post-secondary education and the students' directly transition rates of students directly entering post-secondary education from high school have increased (Andres, 2016). Andres (2016) noted that “the economically or socially disadvantaged, First Nations, the disabled, women, Francophones, and those from rural regions” (p. 18) continue to be underrepresented in post-secondary education in Canada. Post-secondary education, in its many forms, could play a significant role in providing relevant education to the fast-growing and young (compared to the total population) Indigenous population in Canada. Individuals in
Canada with “Aboriginal identity” are almost twice as likely to not complete high school compared to non-Aboriginal individuals (Statistics Canada, 2018). Individuals with “Aboriginal identity” are also 2.5 times less likely to complete university credentials than non-Aboriginal individuals (Statistics Canada, 2018).

Starting in the 1960s, the post-secondary education system in British Columbia diversified in both “the kinds and the geographic locations of available education opportunities” (Andres & Pullman, 2018, p. 27, emphasis in original). The system had a “vertically segregated structure” (Andres & Pullman, 2018, p. 28) grounded through articulation or transfer components between institutions. The system was also defined through the distribution of educational opportunities across the province and programs that would be “parallel rather than identical” (Andres & Pullman, 2018, p. 28). Andres and Pullman (2018) indicated that more recently, in the last 15 years at the time of writing, the system had changed to be “vertically differentiated” (p. 28) with the addition of two new universities and 14 community colleges. These created more opportunities for students to choose different pathways in the province, as opposed to previously the University of British Columbia being the only university in the province. This has increased the amount of transfer that can occur between institutions, including from universities to non-universities. Andres and Pullman (2018) noted that “nowadays, it is common to consider all public postsecondary institutions within the British Columbia constellation as both sending and receiving institutions” (p. 45).

More Indigenous students complete Kindergarten to Grade 12 and are entering post-secondary education (Ministry of Education, 2017). An early example of this was the creation of specialized student support services for Indigenous students. These services were and continue to be seen as supports that help Indigenous students adjust to the environment and structures of
postsecondary education (Pidgeon, 2016). These services required Indigenous peoples to change or adapt their ways of knowing to be successful within post-secondary education systems based on Western knowledge.

Another approach has emerged where Indigenous knowledge is incorporated into various post-secondary institutions; this is known as Indigenization (Arrows, 2019; Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018; Pidgeon, 2016). In contrast to the early practice of requiring Indigenous people to change, this concept requires post-secondary education to change to integrate Indigenous ways of knowing. These changes are being encouraged and felt across the institution, from senior leadership to academic affairs to student affairs. These changes have been heavily influenced by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015).

Universities Canada (2015) has created thirteen (13) principles of Indigenous education to increase the participation and completion of university education by Indigenous peoples. These principles align and connect with Indigenization principles through connecting with Indigenous communities, centering Indigenous knowledge, and investing in Indigenous education. Similarly, Colleges and Institutes Canada (2014) developed the Indigenous Education Protocol, which comprises seven principles to guide Indigenous education by supporting Indigenous peoples and communities. In British Columbia, there has also been the development and publication of the Pulling Together: A Guide for Front-Line Staff, Student Services, and Advisors (Cull, Hancock, McKeown, Pidgeon, & Vedan, 2018), which supports the Indigenization of many different areas of post-secondary education.

In addition to students and faculty members, a group of professionals in post-secondary education support student learning outside of the classroom are known as Student Affairs and Services (SAS) professionals. They represent many different functional areas, and the way they
are organized varies widely across institutions. Support services designed for Indigenous students are included in the field of Student Affairs and Services (SAS).

1.1 Student Affairs and Services in Canada

The profession of Student Affairs and Services (SAS) in Canada is a group of higher education professionals focused on supporting student learning and growth outside of the classroom (CACUSS/ASEUCS, n.d.). These professionals deliver a wide variety of student services. In 2015, CACUSS/ASEUCC articulated a series of eleven professional competencies of the Student Affairs and Services profession in Canada. One of these eleven competencies is “Indigenous Cultural Awareness,” which “refers to knowledge, enhanced self-awareness, and skills that enable Student Affairs professionals to work respectfully and effectively with Indigenous students” (CACUSS/ASEUCC, 2015, p. 15). In their most recent Strategic Long-Range Plan 2017-2021, the Board of Directors of CACUSS/ASEUCC (2017) committed to:

> Ensuring that our association activities appropriately include, reflect, and represent Indigenous perspectives with participation and input from Indigenous members.

> CACUSS is committed to understanding how our practices both as an association and on our member campuses can contribute to reconciliation and decolonization. (“Our Commitments,” para. 2)

This organizational commitment to Indigenization is one of the motivations I had for exploring the topic. As an active member of CACUSS/ASEUCC, I was interested in understanding and experiencing how statements can be moved into action. I see myself as an active participant that can help shape the future of Student Affairs and Services (SAS) in Canada.
1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this interview-based study was to explore the ways the Indigenization of higher education in Canada is changing the profession of Student Affairs and Services (SAS). The study sought to identify some new ways of delivering student experiences as a result of Indigenization and tell some stories of how individual professionals are processing this higher education phenomenon. This study intended to capture this unique moment of Indigenization in the professional lives of some Student Affairs and Services (SAS) practitioners. Semi-structured interviews created data collection conditions conducive to sharing their experiences with Indigenization, including their successes and challenges.

1.3 Significance of the Study

This study is significant for several reasons. First, it provides insights regarding how Student Affairs and Services (SAS) professionals are making sense of Indigenization and how they are applying these ideas in their work with students. It also documents some examples of how Student Affairs and Services (SAS) professionals are Indigenizing the work they do with students. With (often) direct and intimate access and contact with students, Student Affairs and Services (SAS) professionals have a significant impact on their development from students to working professionals.

Student Affairs and Services (SAS) professionals represent one group of higher education professionals amongst faculty members, senior leadership teams, and others. These other groups are also being asked to Indigenize their work by their institutions (e.g., through Indigenous strategic plans) and their professional organizations (e.g., CACUSS) and are actively working through their processes and changes. Change across the institution requires support from many groups and individuals; with Indigenization, the more different people and groups support it, the
more likely it will make the changes desired. Student Affairs and Services can be one site of change that can support changes in other parts of the system or organization.

Third, this research study adds to the growing body of research about the profession of Student Affairs and Services (SAS) in Canadian post-secondary education. In their Research Agenda, CACUSS/ASEUCC (2018) outlined its intention to “rethink and reimagine how we support and enhance knowledge generation and dissemination in Canadian Student Affairs” (“Introduction,” para. 1). One of three themes of the Research Agenda was related to understanding the Student Affairs and Services profession in Canada with a focus to “to better understand the profession of student affairs, the people working in this area of practice, the impact of institutional structure/type on the people and the profession, issues of concern to the profession and professional development” (CACUSS/ASEUCC, 2018, “Themes – 2. The Student Affairs & Services Profession in Canada”). This study adds unique perspectives on how Indigenization is experienced by Student Affairs and Services (SAS) professionals in Canada. The research findings will be disseminated in ways that are accessible to both scholars and practitioners.

Finally, at the societal level, this study is significant because it represents one small, gradual step to bringing change to one institution of society, post-secondary education. Post-secondary education is a place where change, using decolonizing and Indigenizing practices, is being sought and implemented. Indigenization represents a shift in how post-secondary education is organized, delivered, and experienced. Documenting a snapshot of this time in the careers of a set of Student Affairs and Services professionals is a useful record of how some people perceived Indigenization in the present moment. As will be discussed in greater detail, Indigenization requires intentional and gradual change over time. At the time of the study,
Student Affairs and Services (SAS) professionals were already engaging with Indigenization. This study comes at a time when Student Affairs and Services (SAS) professionals have had varied interactions with and understandings of Indigenization. For Indigenous peoples, Indigenization could mean Indigenous students have better experiences with and outcomes from post-secondary education. Indigenization could also mean that non-Indigenous students have a better understanding of Indigenous knowledge. There is also an opportunity for Student Affairs and Services (SAS) to create more extensive disruptions in post-secondary education or collaborate with other post-secondary education areas. Student Affairs and Services (SAS) professionals as a collective are very in touch with the student experience. They (or we) can and should play a role in more extensive disruptions in post-secondary education and society.

1.4 Background of the Researcher

I have been working in post-secondary education as a Student Affairs and Services (SAS) professional for seven years. My role has recently focused on supporting the career development of international students at a small, private college in Vancouver, British Columbia. I also have experience in new student orientation, student life, and study abroad programming and events.

Most of these experiences have been within the lens of international education and international students; this has made Indigenization challenging for me to think about in my work. This study has forced me to think critically about my own identity as an individual and as a Student Affairs and Services (SAS) professional. I have experienced and continue to experience many privileges as an educated, White, cisgender man. I am not able to fully understand the experiences of Indigenous people in post-secondary education. However, I think I should try my best to understand and do what I can to make post-secondary education a better place for all students, including Indigenous students.
As I have conducted this research, many of my attitudes and beliefs about post-secondary education have been disrupted in various ways. During the research, I have also undergone my sensemaking journey about this research topic and my professional identity. I have done my best to embrace moments of uncertainty and provide the necessary time to work through them.
Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

2.1 Introduction

This chapter describes in detail the relevant literature related to this master’s thesis and its research questions. I begin the chapter with a description of how I located the literature. The literature will be reviewed in this order: (1) Indigenization of the academy, (2) Indigenous knowledge and Western knowledge in post-secondary education, and (3) critiques of the Indigenization of post-secondary education, and (4) accepting truths and moving forward, and (5) the theoretical frameworks applied in this study.

2.2 Search Description

Following Creswell (2014), I structured my literature search to “proceed in a systematic fashion to capture, evaluate, and summarize the literature” (p. 31). Early in my literature search process, I focussed on three topics: Indigenization of the Academy; Canadian Student Affairs and Services; and sensemaking/sense-giving. Starting with these broad search terms, I generated additional related search terms. For example, in addition to searching “Canadian Student Affairs and Services,” I also made different combinations of search terms such as Canadian higher education, Canadian post-secondary education, student services and student affairs. I also realized that aspects of learning, such as “unlearning” would complement my theoretical literature on sense-making.

Once I started to locate the types of literature described above, I used the “Related Articles” function in the library catalogue and Google Scholar to locate additional literature. I also reviewed the references from core literature. Academic articles represented most of the literature I found and that I have cited in this study. I retrieved most of the literature through the library catalogue at the University of British Columbia. I also came to know some of the
literature through my academic courses and recommendations by my research committee, colleagues, and peers. In the next section, I present some of the critical literature on the topic of academic Indigenization.

2.3 Indigenization of the Academy

Kirkness and Barnhardt (1991) published one of the first articles that described Indigenous engagement to improve the experience and retention of Indigenous students in post-secondary education. They argued that this could be achieved by embedding Indigenous knowledge into Western post-secondary education systems. They developed a theoretical framework known as the Four Rs: Respect, Relevance, Reciprocity, and Responsibility. When the article was published, post-secondary education had primarily focused on integrating or assimilating Indigenous students into the current post-secondary education systems. These were (and to a large extent continue to be) entrenched with Western knowledge systems with little regard for Indigenous ways of knowing. Indigenous student success in post-secondary education had mainly been measured by their ability to adopt Western knowledge and forget previous Indigenous knowledge. Kirkness and Barnhardt (1991) offered alternative approaches to support Indigenous students during their post-secondary education participation. In their view, Respect describes the need for post-secondary education to respect Indigenous knowledge, worldviews, consciousness, and cultural values and traditions. Relevance asks post-secondary education institutions to create programming that is relevant to Indigenous students and their experiences. Reciprocity speaks to changing the rigidity of faculty members of producers of knowledge and students as consumers of that knowledge to a more reciprocal learning relationship. Responsibility requires post-secondary education to develop and provide culturally relevant services for Indigenous students. The Four Rs provide ways to think critically about the design of
post-secondary education and how it is experienced both by Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. Kirkness and Barnhardt (1991) indicated that what Indigenous people seek is an education “that respects them for who they are, that is relevant to their view of the world, that offers reciprocity in their relationships with others, and that helps them exercise responsibility over their own lives” (p. 14). The applicability of the Four Rs in post-secondary education continues to today, including in the profession of Student Affairs and Services (SAS).

In a more recent article, Pidgeon (2016) described the need and urgency for post-secondary education to better support Indigenous students and make space for Indigenous knowledge. Pidgeon (2016) defined Indigenization of the academy as “the meaningful inclusion of Indigenous knowledge(s), in the everyday fabric of the institution from policies to practices across all levels, not just in curriculum” (p. 79). Pidgeon indicated that both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people have a responsibility for changing post-secondary education. Student Affairs and Services (SAS) are one of the areas in post-secondary education that were identified. Pidgeon (2016) stated that the development of Indigenous-specific support service departments had been the primary way post-secondary education institutions have been and are supporting Indigenous students. Pidgeon (2016) emphasized the need for post-secondary education to focus on “the lived experiences of Indigenous students, staff, and faculty” (p. 87). For Student Affairs and Services (SAS) professionals, this can be useful as we think about how we work with students that are both Indigenous and non-Indigenous. The programming and services offered should support the learning of all students. Pidgeon (2016) ended the article with some questions that may be useful when thinking about the “success” of Indigenization:

What changes can we see in the lived experiences of Indigenous students? Are there changes in recruitment and retention of Indigenous students, faculty, and
staff? How do Aboriginal communities experience these institutions and the students who return home from these places? Even more broadly, to ask Indigenous peoples what their expectations are of such institutions and what societal and systemic changes will need to be witnessed and more importantly experienced by Indigenous peoples. (Pidgeon, 2016, p. 89)

The first two questions posed can be, at least partially, addressed by Student Affairs and Services (SAS) within and across institutions. The latter two questions could involve the Student Affairs and Services (SAS) departments of an institution, but, most likely, would require additional institutional support and leadership. However, these are all questions that Student Affairs and Services (SAS) professionals should be seeking to understand the answers to.

One of the ways that Indigenous students have been supported in post-secondary education in Canada is through specific departments that provide services for Indigenous students. Smith and Varghese (2016) completed a case study on the Aboriginal Resource Centre (ARC) at the University of Guelph to “identify the role that dedicated spaces have in the lives of Aboriginal students” (p. 458). The study relied on interview data collected from Indigenous students and an interview with an advisor from the ARC. The first finding identified by Smith and Varghese was that the ARC built a sense of community on campus for the participants. The participants “spoke to the importance of being involved in their communities” (Smith & Varghese, 2016, p. 463). The second finding was the ARC fostered their understanding of their identity. Smith and Varghese commented that for those interviewed, “going to the ARC and participating in the cultural programming available there was their first opportunity to really explore their
Aboriginality” (p. 464). The third and final finding by the authors was that the ARC was a safe space for Aboriginal students. The type of safety participants found from the ARC was from racism and stereotypes they encountered outside of the space, and how it was or was not addressed in whatever contexts it appeared. It was also identified as safety in the sense of being “a space where students did not have to be a sounding board for all things Aboriginal” (Smith & Varghese, 2016, p. 464). Smith and Varghese (2016) identified four recommendations for Student Affairs and Services (SAS) with regards to a dedicated space for Indigenous students. Firstly, they recommended “establishing a dedicated physical space for exploring student identity” (Smith and Varghese, 2016, p. 466), including the physical layout of the space, its appearance, and flexibility in its use. Secondly, Smith and Varghese (2016) recommended that there is “culturally appropriate programming and staff to support marginalized or minoritized students” (p. 467). For example, they could deliver counselling services in a culturally appropriate way and also host campus events that encourage cross-cultural sharing. Finally, they identified that Student Affairs and Services (SAS) professionals need “to be aware that simply having the physical space is not enough” (Smith & Varghese, 2016, p. 467). Finally, they recommend that although the ARC is mandated to support Aboriginal students, this type of space should also be actively building community with the rest of the institution. For Student Affairs and Services (SAS), this article is excellent in that it provides a clear picture of an Indigenous student services department at one institution. Many post-secondary education institutions have services that support Indigenous students, and, at many of these campuses, Student Affairs and Services (SAS) professionals may not have connections with this specific department.
2.4 Indigenous Knowledge and Western Knowledge in Post-Secondary Education

Education, including at the post-secondary level, in Canada (and in other places), has been mainly developed through the application of Western knowledge systems. One of the components of Indigenization is the inclusion of Indigenous knowledge in post-secondary education. Western knowledge often “manifests itself in common forms and the common assumptions that support it” (Battiste, 2005, p. 123). In contrast, Indigenous knowledge is “a diverse array of knowledges that are distinctive to different peoples and to their varied environments” (Battiste, 2005, p. 122). Indigenous knowledge may also be seen “as the web of relationships between Indigenous peoples and the ecological world at a specific location” (Battiste, 2005, p. 132). It is also essential to recognize its social and cultural features, including language, ceremonies, and traditions (Battiste, 2005). With these ideas in mind, it is clear that there is no one way to define Indigenous knowledge; there is no pan-Indigenous knowledge. Indigenous knowledge is specific to communities, geographies, and nations. It is somewhat ironic that here I am attempting to define, but also not define Indigenous knowledge. I am attempting to handle Indigenous knowledge “with great sensitivity because of the history of Western appropriation” (Battiste, 2005, 132). These defining characteristics of Indigenous knowledge are useful when thinking about Indigenization as it should be connected with local Indigenous communities and, therefore, local Indigenous knowledge. This context is one reason why Indigenization will look different in different places.

Pidgeon (2008) indicated that “student affairs staff can support Aboriginal students by modifying practice to be respectful and inclusive of [Indigenous Knowledge]” (p. 248). This makes it clear that Student Affairs and Services (SAS) professionals should have an understanding of Indigenous knowledge as a means of Indigenizing their practices and
supporting Indigenous students. Pidgeon (2008) encouraged staff to look closely at and make change to their own identities in addition to “actively implementing policy into practice” (p. 248). Pidgeon (2008) encouraged non-Indigenous staff to become allies in their institutions for Indigenous peoples. As I will present in the following two sources, the weaving of Indigenous knowledge and Western knowledge is possible and may be helpful Student Affairs and Services (SAS) professionals, especially, those who are non-Indigenous.

Marker (2017) explored some ways that Indigenous knowledge and Western knowledge are mixing in post-secondary education in British Columbia. They explore this mixing through ways that Indigenous scholars and graduate students are finding ways to pushback and force change in post-secondary education while still bound by the colonial structures of the institution. To define these tensions, Marker (2017) described an alluvial academic third space where Indigenous knowledge and Western knowledge can meet and mix like particles in a river delta. While mixing may change the overall appearance and characteristics of the river delta, the individual parts may still be seen with a closer look. Marker presents several examples of how Indigenous graduate students have started to make changes that, in some ways, follow and obey the systems of the university, and in others, create space for new systems to be developed. These are moments of exception where Indigenous Knowledge is allowed in, creating openings for future changes of the university. The metaphor of the alluvial zone demonstrates how academia can be changed when other ways of knowing are accepted and respected within the university. Mixing of Indigenous knowledge and Western knowledge shows that, together, both can create new formulations of knowledge while maintaining aspects of their original integrity. In a cautious, final comment, Marker (2014) states that “universities, willing to acknowledge and engage the history of settler state colonialism while supporting Indigenous intellectual priorities
could become the sites for a new/old relationship to the natural world (p. 12, emphasis added). This alluvial third space presents an opportunity within the profession of Student Affairs and Services (SAS) to better engage with Indigenous knowledge in their programming and services, if individuals and departments are willing to do the work, the deep work. For Student Affairs and Services (SAS) and institutions, much of the “work” hinges are the willingness of individuals to engage deeply with decolonization and Indigenization.

Like the idea of the alluvial zone, Donald (2009) proposed the concept of Indigenous Métissage. Indigenous Métissage can be defined as “interpreting and reframing the historical and contemporary interactions of Aboriginal peoples and Canadians” (p. 10). Donald (2009) outlines how specific (Indigenous) artifacts connected to specific (Indigenous) places can have very different meanings for Indigenous peoples and Canadians (i.e., non-Indigenous people or settlers). Narratives and histories can be revised and relearned when Canadians take the time to understand the meaning of particular places and artifacts that are significant to Indigenous peoples. Donald (2009) further outlined the idea of textual braiding, whereby “personal and family stories can be braided with larger narratives of nation and nationality” (Donald, 2009, p. 8). In the article, Donald (2009) applied textual braiding to a specific artifact, a rock known as papamihaw asiniy, that is significant to Indigenous peoples from the Prairies. Like braiding, Donald (2009) weaved together the stories, histories, and meanings of papamihaw asiniy known by Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. For Canadians, new and different (Indigenous) understandings of artifacts and places can change their previously learned colonial and Eurocentric perspectives on these same artifacts and places. Donald (2009) puts it simply when he says, “through the reciprocal process of teaching and learning, we move closer together” (p. 19). For Student Affairs and Services (SAS) professionals, especially non-Indigenous
individuals, Indigenous Métissage could help them integrate new information, such as Indigenous knowledge, into their existing understandings of where they live and work. In this way, Student Affairs and Services (SAS) professionals could continually update their programming and services to reflect new understandings, including Indigenous knowledge they learn.

Ottmann (2013) has posited that teachers, instructors, and professors hold power and that “their interpretations and perceptions of the past and current landscape matter as these interpretations and perceptions determine the quality of relationships and help determine our future” (p. 15). Student Affairs and Services (SAS) professionals are also considered educators and therefore their interpretations and perceptions also matter to the students that they serve. Ottmann (2013) recommended that educators should have good awareness of their own identity to meaningful engage with Indigenization and this might be achieved through the use of a counter story. Ottmann (2013) also encouraged the use of place-based education as an approach to embed changes related to Indigenization. She states that, “it supports decolonization because it brings awareness and promotes critical dialogue about the impact of colonization and the relationships within humanity” (Ottmann, 2013, p. 16). Ottmann (2013) also provides examples of ways to decolonize the classroom that strengthen the classroom, support Indigenous learners, and support all learners. For Student Affairs and Services (SAS) professionals, embedding change for individuals and the profession, but also for students, may require taking some of the decolonizing approaches offered by Ottmann.

2.5 Critiques of the Indigenization of Post-Secondary Education

Several critiques of the Indigenization of Higher Education have emerged. Some of these are specific to higher education, while others can be applied more widely to Indigenous
engagement outside of it. The critiques are also useful for Student Affairs and Services (SAS), although they may characterize larger issues occurring in the institution.

Gaudry and Lorenz (2018) outlined three ways post-secondary education has introduced Indigenization: (1) Indigenous Inclusion, (2) Reconciliation Indigenization, and (3) Decolonial Indigenization. Indigenous Inclusion is mainly focused on increasing the number of Indigenous peoples, including students, staff, and faculty members, at the institution, thereby increasing the volume of Indigenous knowledge present. Gaudry and Lorenz (2008) identified this as one of the main strategies currently used by institutions today. Gaudry and Lorenz (2008) warn that this does not automatically contribute to reconciliation efforts, nor does it make the institution more welcoming to Indigenous peoples. The burden is placed on the shoulders of Indigenous peoples to change the institution. Reconciliation Indigenization is focused on reconciling Indigenous and Western ways of knowing at the institution in an effort to create permanent space for Indigenous knowledge. For example, an institution might establish an Indigenous advisory board or implement a mandatory Indigenous curriculum. Gaudry and Lorenz (2008) note that Reconciliation Indigenization is what most institutions think they are doing; however, what institutions are doing is more similar to Indigenous Inclusion. Decolonial Indigenization is the “wholesale overhaul of the academy to fundamentally reorient knowledge production based on balancing power relations between Indigenous peoples and Canadians” (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018, p. 219). Where Reconciliation Indigenization focuses on fixing current systems, this form of Indigenization focuses on breaking the institution apart and building a new structure or organization from the beginning. Gaudry and Lorenz (2008) described two ways Decolonial Indigenization might look: (1) treaty-based, whereby existing post-secondary education institutions are newly-governed by the treaties on the land they are located; and (2) resurgence-
based, whereby land-based and community-based Indigenous resurgence reshape the processes, activities, and structures of the institution.

Ahenakew and Naepi (2015) provided four “examples of how efforts to make Indigenous people visible can, at the same time, include and silence Indigenous peoples” (p. 192) framed by the work of Sarah Ahmed. The first example is “how creating a space for Indigenous people can reaffirm the ‘normality’ of the institution” (Ahenakew and Naepi, 2015, p. 187). An example of this in Student Affairs and Services (SAS) could be that the existence of departments that specialize in services for Indigenous students might prevent other departments from decolonizing and Indigenizing their areas. Ahenakew and Naepi (2015) provided a second example of “how declared commitments to Indigenous engagement can allow the institution to continue doing business as usual” (p. 187). For institutional Student Affairs and Services (SAS) divisions, this might look like a small number of individuals, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, working to make a change while others continue business as usual. For some institutions, this could be a group of individuals entirely outside of the Student Affairs and Services (SAS) division. A third example is “how Indigenous people are perceived to have a debt to the institution that has created a space for them” (Ahenakew and Naepi, 2015, p. 187). Many colleges and universities are devoting resources towards decolonization and Indigenization to make changes to many areas, including Student Affairs and Services (SAS). It may be undesirable to call out other forms of racism occurring at the institution while benefitting from these other changes. Finally, Ahenakew and Naepi (2015) provided a final example that “how language needs to be carefully chosen if Indigenous people want to negotiate with the mainstream” (p. 187). In Student Affairs and Services (SAS), this could mean that specific changes being implemented related to decolonization and Indigenization may need to be carefully worded for the general Student
Affairs and Services (SAS) professional. Ahenakew and Naepi (2015) identified how these examples could be damaging to Indigenous peoples at the institution and offered ways they might combat these dangers through ancestral stories.

Daigle (2019) applied the spectacle of reconciliation to universities in Canada. They defined the spectacle of reconciliation as “a public, large-scale and visually striking performance of Indigenous suffering and trauma alongside white settler mourning and recognition – which secures, legitimates, and effectively reproduces white supremacy and settler futurity in Canada” (p. 706). In this way, “settlers’ understandings of and encounters with Indigenous peoples become shaped through spectacular images rather than through direct experiences and relations” (Daigle, 2019, p. 706-707). Daigle (2019) described two spectacles they had witnessed on university campuses: (1) the opening of The Indian Residential School History and Dialogue Centre (IRSHDC) at the University of British Columbia and (2) the increasingly common practice of land acknowledgments at university events and activities. Daigle (2019) provided these as examples of the “performative politics taking shape across Canadian university campuses” (p. 711), lacking any real action, implications for practice, and responsibility. The article continues by describing a current rush by universities to develop and implement Indigenous content. The work of creating this content is often tasked to Indigenous students, staff, and faculty. Daigle (2019) suggested that “course content and pedagogy must center the experiences of Indigenous and other racialized students rather than re-centring whiteness in the classroom as the normative starting point” (p. 713). Daigle (2019) also recommended non-Indigenous employees receive training and that the content must be present across a program and not contained within a single course. The article concludes with Daigle (2019) that universities must go beyond what has been described above as well as creating Indigenous spaces or
displaying Indigenous art. For universities to take responsibility would require them to adopt “not a performance or feel-good mandate, but relations of responsibility and accountability based on Indigenous law” (Daigle, 2019, p. 715). This work is critical to consider in the context of this thesis, in that Student Affairs and Services (SAS) professionals, especially those who are non-Indigenous, may feel comfort in defaulting to feel-good opportunities of Indigenization, and, therefore, avoid those that cause a more significant disruption to their colonial ways of knowing and being. It might be tempting to rely on Indigenous colleagues or the Indigenous student services office as a conducting the work, without having to work through one’s own discomforts or rethink the activities of one’s department.

Another critique of Indigenization was provided by Arrows (2019), who cautions on the risk of “Pan-Indigenousism” where Indigenization principles are applied without connection to local Indigenous communities and Indigenous knowledge. The article starts by sharing four personal stories that exemplify the tensions that can exist between Indigenous knowledge and Western knowledge (Arrows, 2019). They say that Indigenizing education involves understanding the principles that “all or most Indigenous communities hold via an Indigenous worldview” and “unique understandings of a particular place” (Arrows, 2019, p. 8). Non-Indigenous educators should learn (1) the concepts that are likely common to most Indigenous knowledge systems, and (2) they should also learn what knowledge might be specific to that place. Arrows (2019) focused on the risk of Indigenization becoming dominated by ideas of pan-Indigenousism; the risk lies in the potential for Indigenization to be applied without connections to local Indigenous peoples and, therefore, without including local Indigenous knowledge. Arrows (2019) suggested that there are still too few Indigenous teachers and leaders in education; they further suggested that Indigenous and non-Indigenous people can do the work
together. The article ended with Arrows (2019), providing some suggestions on how to Indigenize education. They also stated that there are some traditional Indigenous learning methods that work well for all learners, Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples (Arrows, 2019).

Stein (2020) provides a further critique of Indigenization that “most institutions and individuals have yet to face the full extent of their complicity in colonization” (p. 156). Stein (2020) provides an overview of the colonial aspects of post-secondary education in Canada, the idea that Indigenous inclusion is conditional and can be revoked by settlers, and that if institutions desire real change, they must go beyond merely the inclusion of Indigenous peoples. These ideas are similar to, and Stein (2020) references the work of Gaudry and Lorenz (2018), highlighting the differences in depth that institutions decide upon when Indigenizing. Stein (2020) provides a series of questions for individuals and institutions to think about as they pursue Indigenization and decolonization efforts. The questions are divided into five dimensions: historical, political, economic, epistemological, and psycho-affective (Stein, 2020). Stein (2020) ends the article by stating that “if settlers remain unwilling to name the wrongs of colonialism, and face up to our ongoing complicity in them, then the Indigenisation of higher education may continue to operate as a form of conditional inclusion” (p. 168). This article highlights the need for action to take place by both individuals and institutions. It will not suffice for only one of these to explore their complicity in colonization if Indigenization and decolonization are to move forward. There is not an easy answer for how to, on one-hand, implemented department-wide changes and, on the other hand, encourage individuals to find their own changes – all that contribute to institution-wide change. I think this will be an on-going conversation: how can institutions move forward together but also encourage their individual members to move at their own pace too.
Indigenization is also happening in primary and secondary education systems. Gebhard (2017) examined teachers' experiences with reconciliation as part of the K-12 education system in the Canadian prairies. The researcher conducted thirteen qualitative interviews with K-12 teachers about their experiences with reconciliation and examined them using post-structuralist discourse analysis. Gebhard (2017) was aiming “to examine what is sayable about residential schools within a community of teachers, analyzing how some discourses are taken as truth while others are excluded, constrained, or limited” (p. 10). If part of the Indigenization of the academy involves post-secondary education engaging with complicated histories such as residential schools, then it may be possible that selective engagement or selective truths are also used in post-secondary education. Difficulty engaging in conversations about race, the use of knowledge of residential schools as a move towards innocence, and perceptions about Aboriginal student success and its relation to the quality of Aboriginal parenting were all identified as commonly held (covert) beliefs by teachers in the study. One of the conclusions offered is “the necessity of reconciliation to involve the acceptance of uncomfortable knowledge about residential schools” (Gebhard, 2017, p. 22). Gebhard (2017) concludes with a series of questions that might be useful when thinking about on-going reconciliation efforts and, by extension, Indigenization efforts:

How does this knowledge position Aboriginal peoples and settlers?

What might be learned from this story about ongoing racism and colonialism, and how can we use this story to learn more about these systems?

What are the harmful stereotypes reinforced by this knowledge and which ones do they challenge?

Who is missing from this story, and how is white privilege maintained by erasures?
How can this story be retold in a way that foregrounds the colonizer?

Can it be retold in a way that refuses to (re)pathologize Aboriginal peoples?

(Gebhard, 2017, p. 23)

Louie, Poitras-Pratt, Hanson & Ottmann (2017) completed a case study on Indigenizing efforts of an education department within a Canadian post-secondary institution. The intention of the case study was to address a common barrier to implementing Indigenizing practices of “non-Indigenous scholars is a lack of knowledge, training, or confidence to incorporate Indigenous knowledge or methods of education in their classrooms. (Louie, Poitras-Pratt, Hanson & Ottmann, 2017, p. 22). Student Affairs and Services (SAS) professionals may have similar hesitations and barriers to Indigenization of their practices. The authors describe their experiences and reflections of implementing various Indigenous methodologies (e.g., remembering, claiming, connecting, negotiating, celebrating survival, creating survivance, and storytelling) in the classroom. One of the key takeaways from the article that can be applied to this study is the “connections between the kinds of change that can occur in everyday, small-scale, and often personal ways in our classrooms, and the larger-scale change that institutional leadership is striving for over a longer-term. (Louie, Poitras-Pratt, Hanson & Ottmann, 2017, p. 28). Similarly, Student Affairs and Services (SAS) professionals, especially ones that identify as non-Indigenous, may feel paralyzed to undertake Indigenization due to either (1) a lack of perceived knowledge or (2) an idea that their small action may have a minimal contribution. As a Student Affairs and Services (SAS) professional, I can relate to this feeling of paralysis, but it also gives me hope that, individually and together, we can take small actions to lead to more significant changes in higher education. If we believe we have limited knowledge, there are, as I
have previously described, ways we can improve our understanding of Indigenous peoples knowledge and places.

Restoule and Chaw-win-is (2017) have also commented on the barriers that educators identify related to decolonization and Indigenization. They defined these as moments of hesitation whereby “teachers struggle to find ‘good ways’ to teach Indigenous education in mainstream classrooms since they are affected by their own ‘hesitancies’” (p. 16). Restoule and Chaw-win-is (2017) also explained that these hesitancies are articulated in a series of fears, but particularly connected to the “fear of trespassing” (, p. 16), but that since trespassing “has already happened” (p. 16). Accepting that a teacher (or oneself) is not always and does not need to be an expert to teach about colonialism and Indigeneity in Canada is one of the starting points they suggest. They also suggest that to start, individuals may need to rely on Indigenous people (experts), but that over time, individuals can and will learn, and then, they will be able to teach on their own. Specifically, they also recommended teaching about “residential schooling and other colonial histories” (p. 17) as opposed to about Indigenous culture (Restoule & Chaw-win-is, 2017). They provided additional examples of activities teachers could be engaged in but also cautioned that “one doesn’t have to do ALL these things to be doing Indigenous pedagogy. It’s good to start with something small and build relationships, reflect, and then do some more” (Restoule & Chaw-win-is, 2017, p. 17, original emphasis). Although this research specifically referenced teachers (presumably K-12 teachers), these moments of hesitancy can also be applied to Student Affairs and Services (SAS) and higher education broadly. Student Affairs and Services (SAS) professionals are often in positions of teaching students, especially in developing life and career skills. During times of teaching with students, Student Affairs and Services (SAS)
professionals might hesitate to teach difficult topics such as residential schools in Canada if they do not feel confident in their knowledge.

2.6 Accepting Truths and Moving Forward

One of the barriers to accepting truths and moving forward is the understandings that settlers have and their reluctance or unwillingness to change them. Davis et al. (2016) examined a compilation of initiatives aimed at changing the understandings that settlers have about colonial histories through a website developed by the authors. From this, they developed a definition for transforming settler consciousness:

- Creating narratives, processes and practices that hold settlers accountable to their responsibilities, as beneficiaries of colonization, both historic and on-going.
- Naming an upsetting the status quo, and challenging the power dynamics that perpetuate settler colonialism.
- Building just and decolonized relationships with Indigenous peoples, the land, and all-beings.
- Engaging in an ongoing, complex and dynamic process grounded in a lifetime commitment, which occurs at the level of the individual, family, community, and nation (p. 402).

Davis et al. (2016) identified several tensions within the initiatives as they reviewed them; these tensions were (1) the type of language used in each source, (2) uncertainty on to what role and extent settlers should be involved in Indigenous education and transformation, and (3) being critical without undermining the intent. The authors had concerns that (1) the intent of the initiatives, with most focusing on the benefits for all, and (2) that most initiatives posed limited or no challenge to the position of settlers. Davis et al. (2016) noted “that many of the initiatives
positions settlers as knowledge gatherers who are invited to make easy or superficial shifts in the process of settler transformation” (p. 408). Secondly, Davis et al. (2016) questioned “whether the centering of Indigenous perspectives and leadership, and the related decentering of settler narratives, is in itself unsettling or transformational” (p. 409). These findings may be useful for Student Affairs and Services (SAS) professionals that are settlers who want to be intentional about transforming their understandings of colonial histories as part of changing their practices in higher education. In the end, this still leaves settlers holding power and with the ability to engage when and how they want to. Although the article does not provide specific ways to move beyond this, it is something that should be considered, especially by well-meaning settlers.

Boudreau Morris (2016) has explored ways that settlers can work more effectively in solidarity with Indigenous peoples. Part of the challenge identified by Boudreau Morris (2016) is that settlers need to reorient their “approach away from avoidance of settler uncertainty or solidarity as a type of settler identity, and towards decolonization as a practice that includes nurturing a habit of discomfort” (p. 456). Boudreau Morris (2016) presents a framework with three conditions for decolonizing solidarity. First, Boudreau Morris (2016) suggested that settlers examine their identities in relation to place because “it is not enough to be self-reflexive while imagining oneself existing nowhere” (p. 464). Further to this, Boudreau Morris (2016) identity and location also have components of epistemic or knowledge-based locations that should be used in solidarity work. Second, Boudreau Morris (2016) comments that “the enemy of solidarity is not difference, but lack of engagement with difference” (p. 466). Engaging with difference has often been done in a way that further contributes to colonizing, including being “frequently ignored, suppressed, or whitewashed” (p. 464). Since difference does not dissipate over time, it must be engaged with over time (Boudreau Morris, 2016). The third condition addressed the
tensions that may exist between discomfort and uncertainty. In this way, settlers may avoid discomfort to have more certainty about their identities and knowledge. Taken together, the Boudreau Morris (2016) identified that these conditions form a framework for decolonizing solidarity that requires intentional action and will change over time. For Student Affairs and Services (SAS) professionals, especially those that are settlers, that there is no true end to decolonization or Indigenization. We must continue to examine our identities, engage with difference, and lean into discomfort.

In the final pages of their book, Regan (2010) provides some guidance as settlers confront truth and reconciliation:

I ask non-Indigenous readers to resist denying, dismissing, or rationalizing my words. I invite you instead to question the myth, to name the violence, to face the history – to turn over the rocks in your own garden, which has been cultivated with such care. Connecting head, heart, and spirit in ways that value vulnerability and humility enables us to accept harsh truths and to use our moral imagination in order to reclaim our own humanity (p. 237).

Regan’s (2010) comment encourages settler to dig deep and go beyond what the superficial understandings they may have of colonial history. Even when settlers have started to do the work, stopping because it is uncomfortable should not be an option. Regan (2010) is also encouraging settlers to start with their own “gardens”, start with what they know and what is part of their identity. These parts closest to us may be more difficult to transform, but their transformation may be deeper than parts that are further away from us.
2.7 Theoretical Framework

I am interested in how Student Affairs and Services (SAS) professionals make sense of changing organizational priorities and expectations as a result of increasing calls to Indigenize higher education institutions. I have chosen to use a theoretical framework of organizational sensemaking and sensegiving to form my research questions and evaluate my data, combined with an understanding of the strategic change process and a focus on “unlearning.” Kezar (2013) defines sensemaking as “creating an understanding of the change” (p. 763) and sensegiving as “influencing the outcomes, communicating thoughts about change to others, and gaining support” (p. 763). Sensemaking and sensegiving have previously been applied to the role administrators should take in effecting strategic change (Gioia, & Chittipeddi, 1991), first-year experiences of university presidents (Smerek, 2011) and managers in Danish post-secondary education (Degn, 2015). As well, the concepts of sensemaking and sensegiving have been previously described as a change from the top-down (Gioia, & Chittipeddi, 1991; Smerek, 2011) and change from the bottom-up (or middle manager-up) (Degn, 2015; Kezar, 2013, p. 763). Eckel and Kezar (2003) noted that effecting change requires participation by many individuals in the organization (not just senior administration).

Gioia and Chittipeddi (1991) identified four strategic change initiation phases: the envisioning phase, the signalling phase, the re-visioning phase, and the energizing phase. These phases were segregated and identified through ethnographic research following the installation of a new university president and their strategic plan development process. As the proposed research is concerned with making sense of a recently implemented Indigenous strategic plan, the latter two phases are of most interest. The Re-Visioning stage is “a sensemaking effort by the
stakeholders, wherein they try to figure out the meaning of the proposed vision to them and revise their understanding” (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991, p. 443). The Energizing phase is “a sensegiving effort by these stakeholders, wherein they respond to the proposed vision and attempt to influence its realized form, but it also is a stage marked by the emergence and communication of an organization-wide commitment to action toward the vision.” (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991, p. 443)

Several binaries describe the transition through these phases; these include sensemaking/sensegiving, understanding/influencing, and cognition/action (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991).

Engaging with Indigenous knowledge is an essential component of Indigenization. In developing my research questions, I kept returning to the idea that I did not know enough or accurate information about Indigenous peoples. For me, Indigenization and this research project represented opportunities to unlearn and relearn about Indigenous knowledge. I felt these observations might reflect my research participants' feelings and attitudes, and I used them to form my third research question. Unlearning can be defined as “questioning and potentially rejecting what has been learned in the past when understanding are found to be incorrect” (Nathan & Perreault, 2018, p. 76). In their study incorporating Indigenous engagement in a library, archival, and information studies course, Nathan and Perreault (2018) found that students had “genuine concern about a lack of knowledge, an interest in learning more about Indigenous initiatives, and a desire to unlearn problematic biases and assumptions” (p. 76). The authors conclude that “instructors may not feel they have the training and education needed to engage with Indigenous history and ongoing initiatives” (Nathan & Perreault, 2018, p. 81). Kluttz, Walker and Walter (2020) applied unlearning to allyship, including considering ways to unsettle,
decentre, and decolonize their beliefs about being a settler ally to Indigenous peoples. Each author presents an autobiographical vignette about their “journey towards unlearning allyship and learning towards decolonising solidarity” (Kluttz, Walker & Walter, 2020, p. 56). Another idea presented that is consistent with this research is the idea that we need to “balance waiting around for direction in social action with taking action consistent with Indigenous leadership” (Kluttz, Walker & Walter, 2020, p. 63).
Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Methodology Approach and Rationale

This chapter outlines the qualitative methodology I used in this study. Specifically, I describe how I used interview methods to address my research questions. I also describe the recruitment and management of research participants, the research setting, and how the data was collected and analyzed.

I used a hermeneutic/interpretive worldview to frame this study. A hermeneutic/interpretive epistemology “assumes that all human action is meaningful and hence has to be interpreted and understood within the context of social practices” (Usher, 1996, p. 18). The double hermeneutic is one characteristic of this worldview whereby the researcher and the individuals under research are both trying to make sense of and interpret their environment. The knowledge or interpretations are, therefore, partial and different based on who is interpreting them. More so, these interpretations can be thought of as “circular, iterative, spiral” (Usher, 1996, p. 19) as opposed to “linear and cumulative” (Usher, 1996, p. 19).

3.2 Research Questions

I formed the research questions with an understanding that Indigenization may be a new concept within post-secondary education, and therefore some stakeholders (e.g., Student Affairs and Services professionals) may take time to understand and make sense of this new way of thinking. The following research questions guide the study:

i. How do student affairs and services professionals make sense of on-going efforts to Indigenize student affairs and higher education in Canada?

ii. How are some Canadian student affairs and services professionals Indigenizing the work they do, the departments they work in, and the campuses they work on?
iii. In what ways do some student affairs and services professionals at a Canadian higher education institution engage in unlearning and relearning of the colonial histories of Canada?

3.3 Location of the Research

Data collection occurred at a single post-secondary institution in British Columbia, Canada. The campus community was comprised of approximately 700 staff members, 700 faculty members, and 10,000 students (of whom 5% self-identified as Indigenous). Statistics on the population of staff, faculty, and student was obtained through the university website. The name of the university has been kept anonymous, and the numbers have been rounded to protect the confidentiality of the research participants and the research site. The institution’s size was deemed manageable for (1) the desired number of interviews, (2) the scope of a master’s thesis, and (3) to form a complete picture of what was going on at this institution. This research site was also selected because it had started exploring Indigenization. Several other institutions in British Columbia were considered. The majority of the interviews were conducted in the participants’ private offices, with two interviews that took place in department conference rooms.

3.4 Research Design

A qualitative research design was used in the research study, and the specific qualitative method used was interview data (Creswell, 2014). Semi-structured interviews were used to guide each discussion (Creswell, 2014). The use of semi-structured interviews aligns well with the hermeneutic/interpretive worldview. Participants were actively trying to interpret and make sense of their environment, in this case, the Indigenization of Student Affairs and Services (SAS), and understand how it applies to their practice. The somewhat structured and somewhat
fluid nature of this type of interview provided flexibility on how the interview was conducted, depending on the participants' responses.

The “interview guide” (see Appendix B) was structured to address the research questions. It was created in consultation with my research committee. The main lines of inquiry and their order in the interview guide were: (1) the local Indigenous land acknowledgment and inquiry into its meaning to the participant; (2) an overview of their job responsibilities at the university; (3) a description of their workplace, including its organizational and physical location at the university; (4) explorations of their understanding of Indigenization and its application to their work; (5) their understandings of how Indigenization was shaping student affairs and higher education; and, (6) ways they were unlearning and relearning about Indigenous peoples, cultures, and histories. I used the interview guide to prompt my lines of inquiry with participants. During the interviews, I occasionally asked additional questions, skipped questions, and changed the order of questions, depending on the individual interview. Probing was also a useful technique for more descriptive answers.

3.5 Participants

Participants were eligible to be included in the study if they were: employed full-time by the university; participants self-identified their role as supporting student learning and growth; participants had others, including student employees, reporting to them. Prospective participants were excluded from the study if they identified as faculty members or considered themselves a part of the university’s senior leadership team. The recruitment email described the inclusion and exclusion criteria, and they were again reviewed at the start of the interview.

Potential participants were identified through the university’s publicly available contact directory. The contact directory provided information such as the individual’s name, title,
department, email address. Job titles and departments were used to decide who might be a good fit for the research study. Initially, I created a long list of 255 potential participants before creating a shortlist of 44 people. With this shortlist, I identified individuals with relevant job titles with ranks such as “advisor,” “manager,” or “director” from departments that appeared similar to functional areas within Student Affairs and Services (SAS). Potential participants were sent the “recruitment email” (see Appendix A) to solicit their participation in the study. In total, I sent 26 recruitment emails across two rounds of recruitment. Of the invitations, twelve individuals declined the interview, one individual was on leave, and thirteen emails resulted in scheduled interviews. One participant cancelled their interview before it occurred. Most of the interviews were scheduled before I arrived at the research site, and all participant recruitment was by email. Participants were not compensated for their participation in the study, and I had never previously met any of the participants. I completed two rounds of recruitment to secure and complete twelve qualitative interviews. Through consultation with my supervisor, we decided that between eight and twelve interviews should provide diversity and saturation of the research site.

Twelve university staff members took part in the research study. Eleven of the twelve participants were female, and one of the participants identified as Indigenous. Half of the participants reported being included in the university’s central Student Affairs and Services (SAS) unit and two participants reported being members of the Canadian Association of College and University Student Services (CACUSS). The participants represented a variety of different functional areas: academic advising, admissions, career development, co-op education office, disability services, enrolment services, Indigenous student success, international student success,
the university library, registration services, student housing, and student leadership. Each functional area was represented once, except for two participants from the university library.

The following table is a summary of the twelve research participants. Each participant was given a pseudonym and also provided the information below during their interview.

Table 1. Characteristics of Participants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview number</th>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>University Department</th>
<th>CACUSS Member</th>
<th>University Student Affairs and Services (SAS) portfolio</th>
<th>Indigenous or Non-Indigenous</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Crystal</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Student leadership</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Non-Indigenous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Elizabeth</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Disability services</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Non-Indigenous</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Mary</td>
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<td>University library</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>Non-Indigenous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Student housing</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Non-Indigenous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>John</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Enrolment services</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>Non-Indigenous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Katherine</td>
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<td>International student services</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Non-Indigenous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Kimberly</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Indigenous student services</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Indigenous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Heather</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Admissions</td>
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<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Tiffany</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Academic advising</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Julie</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Co-operative education</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>Non-Indigenous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Brittany</td>
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<td>University library</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>Non-Indigenous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Jessica</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Career services</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Non-Indigenous</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.6 Data Collection

The data were collected using semi-structured interviews, “in which the researcher asks informants a series of predetermined but open-ended questions” (Ayres, 2012, p. 811). This strategy uses an interview guide “based on the research question and the tentative conceptual model of the phenomenon that underlies the research” (Ayres, 2012, p. 811). The format of semi-structured (and unstructured) interviews often leads to “the development of rich, relevant data” (Ayres, 2012, p. 811). This data collection method was selected to gather a selection of voices from different functional areas among student affairs and services professionals at a single university. Specifically, using semi-structured interviews allows the participants and the interviewer some flexibility in the questions that are asked and how they are asked.

Indigenization is an emerging post-secondary education concept with limited amounts of published research so having more openness within the interviews is valuable.

I visited the research site and conducted interviews over five days. Each interview was scheduled for 90-minutes, though most lasted on average 60 minutes. After meeting the participant, I briefly introduced myself and the research study before obtaining informed consent through the completion of the “consent form” (see Appendix C: Consent Form), asking a series of exclusion/inclusion criteria questions, thereby completing the “cover sheet” (see Appendix D: Cover Sheet), and asking them if they consented to use the recording device. All of the participants consented to have the interview recorded.

The interview guide formed the basis for the discussion, and follow-up questions were used to deepen participant responses. I limited how much I participated in the discussion to reduce/eliminate any influence on the participants’ responses. After turning the recording device off at the (seeming) end of the interview, I noticed most participants wanted to understand my
thoughts on Indigenization. A short but robust discussion would often follow. As a result, I started asking participants consent to continue recording the discussion after the formal interview had ended.

3.7 Data Analysis

The interviews were transcribed by an outside vendor after they were completed. Member checking was one validity procedure used in the study (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Each participant was sent the raw data, in the form of a written transcript, to give them a chance to add, remove, or modify any of their original statements (Creswell & Miller, 2000). The data analysis included both marking printed paper transcripts and marking electronic transcripts using the NVivo 12 software. The NVivo 12 software was available and downloaded from the Information Technology department at the University of British Columbia. An iterative process was used to analyze the data in several phases. This iterative process can be considered a second validity procedure of triangulation, whereby data across multiple participants was used to form themes (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

The first phase of data analysis involved printing each interview transcript and reading them in full. During the readings, I made notes of each transcript that were relevant to the research. These notes on paper were transferred to electronic notes in the NVivo 12 software. I gained a deeper understanding of the participants’ voices through this chronological and thorough reading. This phase took place from approximately April 2019 to August 2019.

During the second phase of data analysis, I utilized the NVivo 12 software to narrow the data analysis by coding each transcript specifically for my three research questions. In some instances, this confirmed data I had already marked as relevant to my research, and in others, it
revealed new information that I had not noticed previously. This phase took place from approximately September 2019 until October 2019.

Retaking a turn from electronic to printed coding, I printed the codes I had applied in the NVivo 12 software. This time, I labelled each code with interview information and what research question they were associated with. I then cut each sheet of paper into its unique codes using scissors. This next reading of the data involved confirming each code applied was related to each research question and also grouping related codes together. Again, I made notes and highlights on individual codes to further distill the content. Through this, themes started to emerge under each research question. Once grouped, I took pictures of each to confirm the relations between the data. This phase took place from approximately November 2019 until March 2020.

This switching of data analysis between printed and electronic methods helped distill the data set from broad and extensive to focused and small. Each phase of data analysis was grounded in the three research questions, with greater clarity after each phase. These final pictures of the data were the basis for the data analysis that I have written in this manuscript.
Chapter 4: Research Findings

In this chapter, I discuss the viewpoints the participants in my study provided related to how they made sense of Indigenization, how they see it applying to their work and measures they had undertaken (both learning and unlearning) to learn more about Indigenous peoples in Canada. This chapter's organization has been framed into three main sections in response to the three research questions.

4.1 How do Student Affairs and Services Professionals make sense of on-going efforts to Indigenize Student Affairs and Higher Education in Canada?

For many Student Affairs and Services (SAS) professionals, Indigenization could be a new and different post-secondary education concept. They may be trying to understand it for the first time. This research question investigated how Student Affairs and Services (SAS) professionals in the study were making sense of the Indigenization of higher education. Through the interviews, I observed that each of the participants had processed, to varying degrees, what Indigenization meant to them and how it applied to their work. Two subthemes emerged from this research question: (1) recognizing and understanding Indigenous knowledge and (2) thinking about why Indigenization matters.

4.1.1 Understanding Indigenous Knowledge

One of the critical elements of Pidgeon’s (2016) definition of Indigenization is the centring of Indigenous knowledge. Although not easily defined, participants did clarify that understanding Indigenous knowledge would be essential for Indigenization. Elizabeth from the disability services department said that Indigenization could result in others “acknowledg[ing] and respect[ing] that there are different ways of knowing that are equally valuable.” Elizabeth further posed two questions related to knowledge: (1) “What does it mean to know something?”
and (2) “What is knowledge?” Kimberley from the department of Indigenous student services furthered this when she said, “Indigenization…on this campus needs to be in partnership and leadership with the [local First Nations].”

Some participants also provided ideas about how they had, or they might include Indigenous knowledge into university activities. Brittany from the university library had experience working with faculty members to design courses, described how Indigenous content must be developed to ensure that the course “is welcoming to those Indigenous students who may or may not be present.” This approach can also be applied to how student experiences are designed by Student Affairs and Services (SAS) professionals. Experiences must be created to ensure that Indigenous students can see and feel themselves in the experience among other non-Indigenous students. Similarly, Crystal from the student leadership department commented that Indigenization was “not creating things that are Indigenous out of nothing.” Indigenous knowledge is part of the foundation for Indigenization.

When thinking about Indigenous knowledge, it is hard not to also think about place. Katherine, from the international student services department, described this as “understanding where each of us are situated.” In contrast, Kimberley from the department of Indigenous student services described this as “placing ourselves in the [local Indigenous] territory.” Mary from the university library, highlighted that “Indigenization is very site-specific and will look different and feel different and act differently in different locations, depending on the needs of the local Indigenous people.” These comments highlight the need for Indigenization to be contextualized and localized with local Indigenous peoples and communities. A one-size-fits-all approach to Indigenization may not achieve the desired results. From the career services department, Jessica
discussed the opportunity to “use the campus as an educational piece” to educate and build bridges between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.

4.1.2 Why Indigenize?

When making sense of Indigenization, many participants shared reasons why they felt Indigenization was important. Crystal from the student leadership department voiced support for Indigenization as “a point where Aboriginal students feel safe and comfortable in all of our spaces but also that our staff are trained to engage in dialogue and calling out people.” This viewpoint is significant because it describes how Indigenization can help Indigenous students, but it also clarifies that Student Affairs and Services (SAS) professionals can actively make this happen. Sarah from the student housing department described another form of comfort that, for them, Indigenization would mean “feeling more comfortable and feeling able to have connection with students who I may have not been able to in the past.”

Katherine from the international student services department felt that Indigenization represented “the opportunity to learn, the opportunity to create a more equitable place for people, the opportunity to have a greater understanding of difference and people’s different perspectives and ideas and things that they can bring.” Katherine is inferring that Indigenization could have a ripple effect on other individuals and groups within the institution who are also oppressed. With their specific area of work, this could be international students and newcomers to Canada who may face different barriers than Indigenous students but may be similarly oppressed. Heather from the admissions department had a similar feeling when they said that “something that excites me is the trickle effect that [Indigenization] could have beyond the campus.” Kimberley also added that Indigenization would mean “making a safer place, more visibility, more understanding, more cross-cultural sharing and understanding.” Again, this could be extended to
Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. Julie from the co-operative education department commented that while in their role, they could not “help [Indigenous peoples] get into post-secondary education, but once they are here…we can help them be successful.”

Another sentiment shared by several participants (Heather, Jessica, John, Tiffany) was the idea that Indigenization could not merely be an add-on to other initiatives at the institution but needed to be valued across all areas of the university. According to Heather from the admissions department:

I think what Indigenization would ultimately mean would be integration across all different facets from the admission side of things to the academic side of things. Indigenous content wouldn’t necessarily be an add-on to the curriculum or to the practices and processes that we have in place but something that is created from the ground up.

This means that all university units and departments have an active role to play in the Indigenization of their departments and the university. It also means that individuals are active participants in understanding and implementing Indigenous initiatives at an individual level.

4.1.3 Applying Sensemaking to Indigenization

Kezar (2013) noted that sensemaking is “about understanding a change” (p. 775) and may require individuals to “rethink existing understandings” (p. 774). It is evident above that those individuals understood that Indigenous knowledge is the foundation of Indigenization on the campus. Some participants also understood that Indigenization is going to be a permanent fixture of their work at the institution and not merely an add-on to their work. Although not explicitly captured above, it is likely that participants took time to think about what Indigenization means to their work in the Student Affairs and Services (SAS) profession.
Kezar (2013) also noted that sensemaking is about “making it meaningful to its stakeholders” (p. 775). Students and Student Affairs and Services (SAS) professionals were identified as stakeholders by the participants. Some of the participants identified how Indigenizing their work could be meaningful for all students, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous. Some participants also identified meaning by how it could also advance their individual departments' work, even those not directly focused on Indigenous students.

To some extent, participants were also engaged in sense-giving whereby they “provide feedback to change the vision to absorb their ideas” (Kezar, 2013, p.763). This may be seen in the way that individuals (and departments) that do not directly support Indigenous students were able to identify the value and meaning of Indigenization for their work and the institution as a whole. It is difficult to discern between sensemaking and sense-giving in the above quotations. However, it is clear that participants had and were actively considering the meaning of Indigenization for their work at the institution.

4.2 How are some Canadian Student Affairs and Services Professionals Indigenizing the Work they do, the Departments they work in, and the Campuses they work on?

The second research question explored specific activities Student Affairs and Services (SAS) professionals at the university were undertaking to Indigenize their work. The participants gave many examples of Indigenous initiatives that were happening at the institution. The individual involvement of each participant varied. I have attempted to focus on initiatives with a high level of involvement. However, some of the other examples provide context on how the campus addressed Indigenization as a whole. Participants identified three major categories of activities: (1) on-campus student activities; (2) off-campus activities; and (3) university-wide activities.
4.2.1 On-Campus Activities

One of the university's main initiatives related to Indigenization was an admission and retention program for Indigenous students. The program allowed Indigenous students to access the university and its academic programs even when they might not meet the admission criteria. Kimberly described how each week, they meet with the admissions department and academic faculties to “go through every eligible application… and find a pathway for them”. Sarah from the student housing department described how, after being admitted, they “work really hard to make sure they get housing.” Brittany from the university library indicated that they had taught students admitted through this program to learn “the expectations of university-level research.” These are good examples of coordinated and holistic programming across multiple departments aimed at supporting Indigenous students.

Katherine from the international student services department commented that the new student orientation for all students centred on Indigeneity. They stated that “part of the orientation program is bringing people from the [local Indigenous Nation] to campus to be involved with the students and have workshops with them.” The online new student orientation included “the first opening page was the introduction of where [the university] was situated.” The participant identified these as both examples of “taking it beyond the acknowledgment.”

Sarah, from the student housing department, supervised an Indigenous-focused housing community where Indigenous and non-Indigenous students could apply to live. Sarah estimated that about eighty percent of the residents in this specific community self-identified as Indigenous. This community also developed and led Indigenous programming to the greater university community, including students that lived off-campus. Sarah indicated that “students are very open to Indigenous programming.” Sarah described how each housing community, led
by the student residents, was responsible for planning and executing programs and events for students; the Indigenous-themed community and their associated programming had high registration and attendance compared to our student activities through the department of student housing.

Jessica from the career services department had recently joined the university. They indicated when working with Indigenous students, they “try to open the floor to learn from them… to understand what the local area, what is happening here”. This participant also talked about how career advising with Indigenous students can take on different forms as individuals decide whether to or how much of their identity they want to disclose, sometimes depending on what types of jobs or disciplines they are applying to.

4.2.2 Off-Campus Activities

Some of the participants described specific activities the university had done to connect with Indigenous peoples off-campus. Brittany from the university library mentioned that the library could provide self-identified Indigenous people “with no proof of documentation required” community member access to the library. From the international student services department, Katherine described how an advisor within their office has made connections with “[the local First Nations], other indigenous groups on campus, and worked with indigenous students from other countries.” John from enrolment services commented that “the university has a number of different agreements… throughout the province and across Canada.”

Brittany from the university library commented on a previous initiative where “Aboriginal people from the community [could] test out the university before joining the access program.” The library could grant temporary access to the library’s resources, even without the individual
being a registered student at the university. Brittany commented that through this program, there had been students “who started in that education project who have graduated here.”

Kimberly from the department of Indigenous student services mentioned, “there’s a group of us that meet…[of] a lot of self-identified Indigenous staff or faculty will come to that and… we’ll hear about what’s going on and how can partner”. This group included both faculty and staff from various parts of the university.

4.2.3 University-wide Initiatives

The third category of activities related to Indigenization happened across the university and was beyond the individual departments and participants' scope in this study. Many of the examples provided related to the ways the university made Indigenous knowledge visible on campus. Four participants (Sarah, Kimberley, Heather, and Tiffany) commented on bilingual street signs the university had installed, written in English and the local Indigenous language. Tiffany, from the academic advising department, noted that “the signage is a daily reminder to people that we are on the unceded territory.” Tiffany and Kimberly also commented on the installation of a permanent outdoor Indigenous art. Kimberly said that “before that, we had there was like nothing, there was nothing visibly Indigenous or where students can see themselves anywhere on campus.” Sarah, from the student housing department, mentioned that the university had recently given an honorary degree to an Indigenous artist. With these examples, Sarah felt that these were “very subtle ways of infusing Indigenous language and Indigenous culture in our campus.” Jessica from the career services department commented that “you’ll see some of the things on campus… like the language, the streets, the flag-raising… we are really recognizing the land”. 
4.2.4 Applications of and Sensemaking of Indigenization

Considering the work of Gioia and Chittipeddi (1991), the above are examples of the “energizing phase” of sensemaking. The energizing phase can be characterized when the stakeholders, in this case, Student Affairs and Services (SAS) professionals, take the strategic change and adapt it to their particular department. In the above examples, Student Affairs and Services (SAS) professionals are applying Indigenization into their work at the university. The examples provided show that the participants are taking an active role in influencing how Indigenization looks and feels on the campus. In this way, the participants are engaging in sense-giving practices as they influence how others (e.g., students) see and experience the results of Indigenizing.

Another characteristic of the energizing phase is institution-wide commitments, which the university has made through Indigenous strategic plans but can also be seen through the initiatives identified above happening across the institution. These initiatives make it clear that Indigenization and Indigenous peoples are priorities on the institution, regardless of your role or position in the institution. Taken together, individual actions and university initiatives show cohesion and diversity in how Indigenization can look and feel on the campus. The potential feedback loops of understanding and influencing can further into the future as Indigenization continues to occur on the campus.

4.3 In what ways do some Student Affairs and Services Professionals at a Canadian Higher Education Institution engage in Unlearning and Relearning of the Colonial Histories of Canada?

It became evident through the interviews that many participants felt unsure about their knowledge of Indigenous peoples and culture. Acknowledging these feelings also seemed to be a
catalyst for activities they had done or were doing to improve their knowledge. John from enrolment services commented that “everyone will go through this in a different way and level of understanding, so that’s okay, and that’s life.” Julie from the co-operative education department acknowledged that their “own personal lack of awareness and knowledge I think just makes me feel uncomfortable because I don’t know enough.” This uncomfortable feeling was shared by other participants when asked what made them nervous or unsure about Indigenization.

The final research question asked participants what they were doing to change or enhance their understanding of Indigenous knowledge. Participants seemed to be doing this learning in three main ways: (1) engagement with the department of Indigenous student services; (2) independent learning experiences, (3) campus-based learning experiences, and (4) learning from Indigenous peoples directly. The following table summarizes these types of activities, example experiences, and who had participated.

Table 2. Examples of Indigenous Learning Experiences by Participants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Experience</th>
<th>Example Experiences</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Engagement with the department of Indigenous student services | ● Volunteering with the department  
● Regular contact and communication  
● Attending events host by the department | ● Crystal  
● Elizabeth  
● Heather  
● Katherine  
● Mary  
● Sarah  
● Tiffany |
| Individual learning experiences  | ● Completion of university courses, continuing education courses, and Massive open online courses (MOOCs)  
● Attending professional conferences  
● News articles | ● Brittany  
● Jessica  
● John  
● Katherine  
● Mary  
● Sarah  
● Tiffany |
| Campus-based learning experiences | ● Participating in staff training activities  
● Attending campus events and activities  
● Member of university committees | ● Brittany  
● Crystal  
● Elizabeth |
Learning from Indigenous Peoples

- Experiences growing up and during post-secondary education
- Experiences with Indigenous students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning from Indigenous Peoples</th>
<th>• Heather • Jessica • Mary • Tiffany</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

4.3.1 Indigenous Student Services Department

Many participants identified the department of Indigenous student services on campus as a welcoming staff and space great for learning. Every participant was aware of the department of Indigenous student services, with some having more regular contact than others. Heather from the admissions department commented that “[they are] so good in terms of running activities for their students, but also for staff, so… I think a lot of learning can happen on campus and off-campus through the programming and the speakers and through the activities that [the Indigenous student services department] runs”. Mary from the university library commented that the department of Indigenous student services would “be a place that I would send anyone to start on that journey because it is a very safe and very welcome space.” Kimberly from the department of Indigenous student services believed that their department offered “a safe place to ask questions and figure out stuff,” but also acknowledged that “it’s a lot of work, like extra work I guess.”

4.3.2 Independent Learning Experiences

A second type of learning identified by participants was independent learning experiences. These experiences were defined mainly by being initiated independently of the university. Three participants (Jessica, John, Sarah) had taken post-secondary courses with Indigenous topics. Sarah from the student housing department was currently completing their
master’s degree program and commented that “there’s a very big push in education around Indigeneity and Indigenous learning.” Jessica, from the career services department, had completed their bachelor’s degree at the institution, including mentioning they “took a lot of Indigenous studies courses” during their degree. John from enrolment services indicated that during their bachelor’s degree, they “took a first-year level class in my first year of studies… as an elective… and it really changed my perspective… I almost completed a minor within my degree in First Nations Studies”. Mary from the university library and Heather from the admissions department recommended that individuals take Indigenous studies courses, including those offered at the university. Another form of independent learning identified by participants were non-credit online courses such as massive open online courses (or MOOCs). Four participants (Elizabeth, Katherine, Heather, Tiffany) identified having enrolled in a MOOC on topics such as understanding Indigenization in higher education or Indigenous issues in Canada.

Several participants (Crystal, Jessica, Julie, Tiffany) also mentioned the recently released *Pulling Together: A Guide for Indigenization of Post-Secondary Institutions; A Professional Learning Series* publication by x (n.d.). The intent of these learning guides was to:

- support faculty and staff with the incorporation of Indigenous epistemologies into professional practice, enabling post-secondary institutions to continue to build the structures and processes by which Indigenous students experience their post-secondary education in resonance with their own lives, worldviews, and ambitions (BCcampus, n.d.)

The guides were released close to the time I collected the data. Participants were aware of the guide and intentions from senior leadership to include it in staff training. Crystal from the student leadership department believed that the guide relevant to student services would be integrated into “all new staff and old staff will be getting a whole training session around Indigenous issues...
and how to be more culturally sensitive in your work.” Jessica from the career services department believed that “this book [will] help individuals in student services understand and be a part of the education process.”

### 4.3.3 Campus-based Learning Opportunities

Another source of learning identified by research participants was programs and events at the university that focused on Indigeneity. This group included both activities targeted to participants, such as staff training sessions and activities open to the entire university community. I have grouped experiences that were organized by the university and completed in groups. Participants identified several examples of on-campus training for staff that were related to Indigenization that had occurred. Mary from the university library described a professional development experience where staff “visited the school, visited the museum, had talks by people” from the local Indigenous community. Mary also described an activity where they “had to create a timeline of these events… all to do with the history of racism in Canada… then we discussed them and learned a little bit more about them, and that was just a really powerful exercise”. Heather from the admissions department shared that “recently… I did… the blanket exercise for the first time,” and when asked about its impact, they stated that, “you felt a visceral reaction more so than reading it on paper.” Mary from the university library mentioned that they make “a point of finding time within my schedule to attend those events because it’s important.”

### 4.3.4 Learning from Indigenous Peoples

A prominent place to learn about Indigenous peoples is from Indigenous peoples themselves. Mary from the university library spoke of their experience growing up near and eventually working at an Indian reserve in Saskatchewan. Jessica from the career services department indicated that in high school, they “had a ton of Indigenous friends who [they] still
have and [they] had attended pow wows and different cultural events.” Jessica also described that when they are working with Indigenous students, they see “if they are open to have conversations… to understand the [local] area, what is happening here, what does the past look like, you know, just understand a bit more”. These examples indicate that if we are interested in improving our Indigenous knowledge, getting to know Indigenous peoples is a logical step.

4.3.5 Making Sense of Learning and Unlearning about Indigenization

With the many examples of learning (both learning and unlearning) identified above, it is evident that most participants were actively engaged in learning. Only one participant, Julie, from the cooperative education office, had not identified a specific learning experience they had undertaken. Although I did not specifically ask participants their motivation behind these initiatives, it might be assumed that their motivations were similar to those described in Nathan and Perreault (2018) article: to address knowledge gaps, satisfy a genuine interest in Indigeneity, and dismantle biases that may be problematic. Most of the activities described above seem to be related to the first two motivations for learning.

The experiences that participants have described can be divided mainly into two groups: attempts at learning (1) principles that are common for many Indigenous peoples (e.g., completing a MOOC course, reading a guide to Indigenization in British Columbia) and (2) localized Indigenous knowledge (e.g., visiting the local Indigenous community, engaging with an Elder for new student orientation). These are in line with Arrows (2009) that Indigenizing education involves both gaining an understanding of shared principles for all or most Indigenous people and getting to know local Indigenous knowledge.
Chapter 5: Conclusion

The focus of this study has been how Student Affairs and Services (SAS) professionals, one group within post-secondary education institutions, have made sense of efforts of Indigenization at a post-secondary education institution in Canada. The first research question explored how Student Affairs and Services (SAS) professionals were making sense of Indigenization in the context of their work in post-secondary education. The second research question examined Indigenizing activities and initiatives participants had engaged in. The third research question outlined the many ways participants were learning and unlearning about Indigeneity in Canada. Through these interviews and subsequent data analysis, it became evident that Indigenization is an on-going process that has just begun within higher education. At the time of data collection at this institution, there was much momentum and enthusiasm for Indigenization, but still many questions and sensemaking to come. The participants in my study and at this institution were committed to Indigenizing their work, even if they were unsure exactly what that might look like or mean as they continue to move forward.

5.1 Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

5.1.1 Assumptions

There are several critical assumptions that should be mentioned in relation to this research project. Firstly, this research project assumed that Indigenization was a priority for the research site and also for post-secondary institutions in Canada. This assumption is most notably supported by institutions that have created specific Indigenous or Indigenization strategic plans. The research site did have an Indigenous strategic plan. Secondly, the study assumed that including and educating Indigenous people in existing post-secondary institutions is of interest to both Indigenous people and the post-secondary institutions. The study's significance would
decrease if one or both of these parties were not interested in engagement. For example, Indigenization has primarily taken hold in Canadian post-secondary education. However, it may not gain the same level of support or reverence in non-Canadian contexts, even ones with significant Indigenous populations. Another approach has been to create specific institutions (e.g., Native Education College, First Nations University of Canada) focused on creating academic programs and student experiences specifically relevant to Indigenous peoples. Thirdly, the study assumed that Student Affairs and Services professionals (and post-secondary institutions at large) have sufficient agency to change their policies, practices, and institutional cultures in support of Indigenization. A common thread at many post-secondary institutions is a lack of institutional support and resources (time, money, and people) for well-intended campus initiatives. This third assumption may relate to the second assumption whereby something may be of interest to accomplish or engage with, but resources are finite.

5.1.2 Limitations

Price and Murnam (2004) define limitations as “the systematic bias that the researcher did not or could not control and which could inappropriately affect the results” (p. 66). One set of limitations relates to the sample included in the study. A second limitation is my own position as a Student Affairs and Services (SAS) professional.

One of the first limitations of the current study was the inclusion of only one self-identified Indigenous person and one self-identified male in the sample of twelve. The sample was mostly female and non-Indigenous. Participants were recruited based on their job titles and department names as listed in the campus phone directory in an attempt to represent a broad set of student services. This approach did achieve what I had hoped, with eleven individual departments represented by the twelve participants. However, in reflection on the study, I think
there could have been a value-added to the study if a more diverse sample was included. For example, individuals who identify as LGBTQ+, Black, people of colour, and others may make sense of Indigenization differently. This may be the result of their own experiences of prejudice and discrimination. Adding more Indigenous participants could also have added more to the research data. Understanding Indigenization from the perspective of Indigenous people could add exceptional value to the study. When conducting my interviews, I did not anticipate (although now it seems obvious) that I would need to adjust my questions for Indigenous participants. In some ways, the interview guide seemed silly as I asked an Indigenous person about their experience with Indigenization.

Another limitation of the sample is the possibility that those individuals who choose to complete the study already had an advanced understanding of Indigenization. For example, it is possible that some individuals declined to participate in the study because they felt they did not have sufficient knowledge about the topic. The potential effect of this could be a study with inflated results of Student Affairs and Services (SAS) professionals' understanding of the topic. It is clear from the research data that each participant did not have some previous engagement with Indigenization. I do believe that the twelve participants did provide a diverse range of viewpoints on Indigenization.

A second limitation of the study is my role as a Student Affairs and Services (SAS) professional. In conceptualizing and completing this study, I was and continue to be an active member of the Student Affairs and Services (SAS) professional. It is this experience that, in part, motivated me to do the study. The effect that this could have on the present study could be seen as both a strength and a limitation. As a member of the same professional group as the participants, I could have an unfair influence on how the sample was selected, the data
collection, and data analysis; this is why I selected a research site that I did not work or study at and the reason I only interviewed participants I did not know.

5.1.3 Delimitations

Price and Murnan (2004) define a delimitation as “a systematic bias intentionally introduced to the study by the researcher” (p. 66). This research project had several delimitations that are worth discussing. These delimitations could provide starting points for future research. The delimitations ensure the research project's scope and this thesis were manageable and reasonable for a master’s degree. The delimitations I outline are (1) the inclusion of Student Affairs and Services (SAS) professionals and (2) the selection of a single research site.

The first delimitation of the present study was related to the sample. Specifically, the study included individuals working in Student Affairs and Services (SAS) and excluded other members of the university’s community, such as faculty members and students. These decisions were made because (1) research related to Student Affairs and Services professionals in Canada is limited and (2) the study intended to make comparisons across professionals within the same group (e.g., comparing as opposed to comparisons between different groups (e.g., faculty, staff, and students). For a fuller picture of Indigenization, it will be essential to include the voices of other groups present at the institution. For example, faculty members are expected to Indigenize their teaching and research, and students are experiencing (and may also be involved in) the Indigenization of the campus around them.

Another delimitation introduced into the study was to include a single research site as defined by selecting participants from a single university campus. Ultimately, the goal was to create a holistic picture of how one institution was experiencing Indigenization. Another approach, which would have added value in different ways, could have been to frame the study
on individuals in several institutions and compare practices across institutions. This delimitation could affect the overall generalizability of the study but was deemed necessary in constructing a single narrative of one institution at a deeper level.

5.2 Significance and Applications of the Research

This research study will be of particular interest to those working in Student Affairs and Services (SAS) and post-secondary education in Canada. The participants' experiences included here provide crucial information on what individuals, departments, and institutions can do to make sense of and implement Indigenization into their work. Eventually, these understandings of Indigenization are going to impact the experience of students on campuses.

The research study is also significant as it is adding to growing literature on (1) the Indigenization of various aspects of post-secondary education and (2) on the field of Student Affairs and Services (SAS) in Canada. It also captured a specific moment in time as post-secondary education continues to become more inclusive of diverse people, including Indigenous peoples.

5.3 Suggestions for Future Research

Considering the study as a whole, several suggestions for future research have emerged related to Indigenization. The current study was only composed of Student Affairs and Services (SAS) professionals. However, there are many other post-secondary education members, such as students, faculty members, and senior leadership teams. These groups may have unique experiences of Indigenization. Specifically, I would suggest that future research examines the experiences of how Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples are experiencing Indigenization. Ultimately, post-secondary education could not exist without students, and ultimately, many Indigenizing efforts are aimed at the student experience.
A second suggestion for future research would be to re-examine the experiences of Student Affairs and Services (SAS) professionals of Indigenization in the future. Presumably, the knowledge and skills related to Indigenization will change over time, so examining these experiences in the future could identify essential developments that have taken place.

The third suggestion for future research would be to examine the Indigenization experiences at different campuses, provinces, and even countries. This study included a single post-secondary education institution in British Columbia, and the knowledge generated may be specific to this research study. These other locations will (and should) experience Indigenization differently. Further to this, Indigenous knowledge may have some shared worldview principles, but it also is localized within specific places.

5.4 Personal and Professional Reflections

As I reflect on and gather my final thoughts on this research project, I am left thinking, “What will I do with this knowledge I now have?” This learning has been deeply impprofoundly on my own practice, but it’s also very close to my heart to share this information with others. To me, defending the thesis and writing the thesis are only milestones on a long journey of decolonization and Indigenization. In hindsight, there are so many things about this project that I might approach differently, but at the same time, this was the perfect way for my project to unfold.

I have presented knowledge, and my evolving understanding of it, throughout the duration of the research project. This information has been shared at research and professional conferences. As I write this, I am also starting to write several proposals for upcoming conferences. In preparing these, I have asked my Student Affairs and Services (SAS) colleagues what they most want to learn about; thus far, the consensus seems to be on practical measures
they can take related to Indigenization. I also hope to translate this new knowledge I have gained into other formats such as articles in professional magazines or blog posts.

In 2020, for the first time, I was asked by my own institution to help them understand Indigenization and how it might apply at our school. Our school is mostly comprised of international students, and Indigenization is something new for our staff and faculty members. This was an opportunity that I did not anticipate when undertaking this project. These conversations have begun and have now expanded with other staff and faculty members taking the time to learn and apply Indigenous knowledge in their courses and programs.

In my daily work in career development with international students, I have also started to more deeply connect my learning from this project to that work. For most of this program, I have not shared much about my classes or thesis with my student workers. I made the wrong assumption that they would not be interested and that it might take away time from the “regular” department tasks. This fall, I decided it was the right time to talk to my student workers about this thesis, and Indigenization, and how it might apply to our work. I was pleasantly surprised that not only were they interested, that we have done readings together (from the Pulling Together guide) and had rich discussions.

Some of these last activities, technically outside of the thesis, have returned me to the reason I selected this research topic altogether: I felt I did not know enough about Indigenization, and I wanted to learn more for myself and others. The small examples above are indications to me that this project really has been timely, and I have so much to share. I still consider my knowledge incomplete, but I have the skills and confidence to know where to look. I have grown so much as a researcher and a practitioner.
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Appendices

Below you will find four documents in my appendices: the recruitment email, the consent form, the interview guide, and the cover sheet. These four documents have been referred to in Chapter 3: Methodology.

Appendix A: Recruitment Email

Making Sense of the Indigenization of Student Affairs and Services at a Canadian Higher Education Institution

Subject Line: Research study – Indigenization of Student Affairs and Services in Canada

Body of email:
Dear [name of individual],

My name is Logan Lorenz and I am an MA student working under the supervision of Dr. Amy Scott Metcalfe in the Department of Educational Studies at the University of British Columbia. I am writing to invite you to participate in my research study about the Indigenization of Student Affairs and Services in Canadian higher education.

You're eligible to be in this study because you work in student services at the [the university]. I obtained your contact information from the [university staff directory] webpage.

If you decide to participate in this study, you will be asked questions about the work you do with students through your student services job. One focus of the interview will be the recent efforts across Canada to Indigenize university and college campuses. To participate in the study, you do not have to have specific experience working with Indigenous peoples or in the area of Indigenization of higher education. The interview will probably last 60-90 minutes.

I would like to make an audio recording of our conversation and then I will transcribe the recording for further analysis. Your identity will be kept strictly confidential. The results of this study will be reported in a graduate thesis and may also be published in journal articles and books.

I will be visiting [the university] during the week of March 4-8 to conduct interviews for this project. If you are interested in participating, can you please suggest some date(s) and time(s) during the week of March 4-8 you are available? For scheduling purposes, it would be great to hear back from you no later than 5 p.m. on Thursday, February 28.

If you'd like to participate or have any questions about the study, please contact me at [email address].
Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Logan Lorenz  
MA Student, Higher Education  
Department of Educational Studies  
University of British Columbia
Appendix B : Interview Guide

Making Sense of the Indigenization of Student Affairs and Services at a Canadian Higher Education Institution

We will be talking today about your experiences with Indigenous engagement in your Student Services and Affairs job. I just want to repeat again that you can stop the interview at any time or let me know if there are any questions you don’t want to answer.

1. LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Considering the topic, a natural place to begin our discussion might be with a First Nations land acknowledgment.

(reads land acknowledgment specific to location)

1. What do you think about when you hear this statement?
2. How do you use the land acknowledgement in your work?
3. Do you identify with this statement? Why or why not?

2. ROLE AT [THE UNIVERSITY]

I would like to start by learning more about you and your work in higher education.

1. In your own words, could you briefly describe your role at [the university]?
2. Why did you start working in higher education and student affairs?
3. How long have you been in your current role? How long have you been at [the university]?
   a. Have you held other roles at [the university]? What were they?
4. When did you start working in higher education and student affairs?
5. What are some of the main ways that your work supports student learning and growth?
6. Does your work directly or indirectly support Indigenous students? If so, in what ways?
7. Does your work involve local Indigenous communities or peoples? If so, could you briefly describe these connections?
8. Do you identify yourself as Indigenous?
   a. Does this influence how you approach your role?
   b. What influence does it have on the services you offer?
9. How do you feel your work impacts students?
10. What excites you most in your work with students?

3. YOUR WORKPLACE

Next, I would like to learn about your workplace, the people you work with, and the space you work in.
1. Would you describe the unit or department that you work in?
2. How many people work in your department or unit?
3. How does your department or unit work with [the university’s] academic departments or faculties?
4. ~You discussed the role you personally play in supporting Indigenous students. What about your department more broadly? What are some examples of how it supports Indigenous students?
5. Does your department or unit have any connections with local First Nations? What is the nature of this relationship?
6. Do you think the physical environment of your unit or department is welcoming to students?
   a. How so? Or Why not?
   b. Is it welcoming to Indigenous students?

4. WHAT INDIGENIZATION MEANS TO YOU

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission has released their Final Report including a number of Calls for Action.

1. Can you describe what truth and reconciliation means to you?
2. Are there specific activities or events that you’ve participated in to learn about Indigenous peoples, cultures, and ways of being?
3. Do you have any suggestions of where others can look to learn more about truth and reconciliation?

5. INDIGENIZATION AT [THE UNIVERSITY]

The [university] has made commitments to Indigenization, including through the development of an Indigenous Strategic Plan.

1. What do you know of [the university’s] Indigenous Strategic Plan?
2. How do you see [the university’s] Indigenous Strategic Plan applying to the work that you do?
3. Can you provide some examples of how your work has changed because of [the university’s] Indigenous Strategic Plan?
4. Do you feel pressure from your supervisor (or others) to Indigenize the work you do?
5. Have you had discussions in your workplace about Indigenization? What were they like? What do you think your team thinks about Indigenization? Do they see Indigenization applying to the work they do?
6. What challenges have you faced in trying to integrate the Indigenous Strategic Plan in the work you do?
   a. Or trying to Indigenize the work you do?

6. INDIGENIZATION IN STUDENT AFFAIRS AND SERVICES
The Canadian Association of College and University Student Services (or simply, CACUSS) has developed the Student Affairs and Services Competency Model. One of the eleven competencies is Indigenous Cultural Awareness. They write that:

“The Indigenous cultural awareness competency refers to knowledge, enhanced self-awareness, and skills that enable Student Affairs professionals to work respectfully and effectively with Indigenous students.”

1. When you read this statement, what do you think about?
2. Do you think you have achieved or are actively working towards this competency?
3. What are some ways you are building your knowledge?
   a. What are some ways you’re building your self-awareness?
   b. What about your skills?
4. In particular, what does Indigenization of higher education mean to you?

7. CLOSING

The interview is almost done. I just have a few general questions about your experiences with Indigenization.

1. What aspects of Indigenization excite you?
2. What aspects of Indigenization make you nervous or unsure?
3. What do you think are some of the biggest challenges of Indigenization?
4. What is your formal educational background?
5. Other than formal education like courses and degrees. What other ways do you learn?
6. Are you currently enrolled in any graduate program or other degree program?
7. Is there anything we haven’t covered that you’d like to mention?

Thank you very much for your time and help with this project.
Appendix C : Consent Form

Making Sense of the Indigenization of Student Affairs and Services at a Canadian Higher Education Institution

Principal Investigator: Dr. Amy Scott Metcalfe, Department of Educational Studies, [telephone number], [email address]

Co-Investigators:
Logan Lorenz, MA Graduate Student, Department of Educational Studies, [email address]
Dr. Michael Marker, Department of Educational Studies, [telephone number], [email address]

Study Purpose: You are being asked to take part in this research study. We are asking you to take part in an interview to learn about your experiences with indigenization in your student services job. You will be asked how you see indigenization applying to your field of work and higher education broadly. You are being asked to participate because the work you do supports student success and learning at [the university].

Study Procedures: The interview will take approximately 60-90 minutes. It will involve a conversation between you and the Co-Investigator about your experiences. If permission is given, the interview will be audio-recorded to capture the details accurately. The Co-Investigator or the Principal Investigator will be happy to answer any questions you have about the procedures.

Study Results: The results of this study will be reported in a graduate thesis and may also be published in journal articles and books.

Confidentiality: Your identity will be kept strictly confidential. Audio recordings and transcripts will be identified only by code number. They will be kept on the Co-Investigator and the Principal Investigator’s encrypted and password-protected computers. Only the Co-Investigator and Principal Investigator will have access to the identities of study participants. You will not be identified by name in any reports of the completed study.

Potential Risks of the Study: There is no known risk to you in participating in this study. If you don’t feel comfortable answering any of the questions, you can simply tell the interviewer and you don’t have to answer.

Potential Benefits of the Study: We do not think taking part in this study will help you. However, in the future, others may benefit from what we learn in this study.

Payment: We will not pay you for the time you take to be in this study.
Contact for information about the study: If you have any questions or would like further information about this study, you may contact Dr. Amy Scott Metcalfe at [telephone number] or [email address].
**Contact for complaints:** If you have any concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant and/or your experiences while participating in this study, contact the Research Participant Complaint Line in the UBC Office of Research Ethics at [telephone number] or if long distance e-mail [email address] or call toll free [telephone number].

**Consent:** Taking part in this study is entirely up to you. You have the right to refuse to participate in this study. If you decide to take part, you may choose to pull out of the study at any time without giving a reason and without penalty.

Your signature below indicates that you have received a copy of this consent form for your own records.

Your signature indicates that you consent to participate in this study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| Printed Name of the Participant signing above |
Appendix D : Cover Sheet

Making Sense of the Indigenization of Student Affairs and Services at a Canadian Higher Education Institution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Eligibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are you employed at [the university]?</td>
<td></td>
<td>If yes, then eligible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is your primary role at [the university] in Student Affairs and Services?</td>
<td></td>
<td>If yes, then eligible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you have others, including student employees, report to you?</td>
<td></td>
<td>If yes, then eligible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is your role considered to be part of [the university’s] leadership team?</td>
<td></td>
<td>If yes, then not eligible.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>