

**Notes on sessions at the Canadian Science Policy Conference (Nov 7-9, 2018) that may be relevant to the Indigenous Reconciliation team**

Summary by:

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Disclaimer: This document is based on what session speakers said during the proceedings of the Canadian Science Policy Conference, and summarizes the content of each session. But all notes and views expressed are my own, and do not necessarily reflect the position of Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

The full conference program can be found at <http://cspc2018.ca/>

**Session 216: Incorporating Indigenous ways of knowing into applied research**

Panelists:

**Pitseolak Pfeifer** (MA student Northern Studies, Carleton University, and consultant on Arctic Governance and community engagement)

**Bronwyn Hancock** (Associate VP Research Development, Yukon College/University)

**Krista Robson** (Chair of Research Ethics Board and Professor, Red Deer College)

**Émilie Parent** (PhD Candidate, Université de Montréal)

**Gabriel Snowboy** (President, Nihtaauchin Chisasibi Center of Sustainability)

Pfeifer:

Prior to considering how IK and western science complement each other it is important to consider the power dimensions and imbalances between Inuit and non-Inuit. Reconciliation must play a central role when considering how to move forward in this relationship, but need to acknowledge there is still a lot of hesitation around accepting IK. Further explorations are needed on incorporating IK into knowledge production since it requires a holistic view of the world. Inuit have intimate, interconnected knowledge about the world. Knowledge (disciplinary) silos are a significant barrier to integrating IK and western science. Interdisciplinary research is part of the solution. Acknowledge and understand that research is a very intrusive process. Therefore trust and consistency play a central role in relationality and reciprocity. IK is not historical knowledge, it has contemporary placement in Inuit ways of life. The focus of integrating IK and decision-making should be on capacity-building.

You can find a critique he wrote on the tensions between IK and western knowledge [here](#)

Hancock:

Yukon College/University (YC) has developed a research model where engagement with the community occurs at the on-set of the process. Partnership building impacts research in significant ways. Yukon is home to 14 self-governing First Nations with overlapping territories, and complex governance structures. YC staff carry out ongoing conversations, and start off with small research projects that help build trust. Partnerships are centered on person-to-person relationships, and meetings take place face-to-face. Additionally, YC approaches the partnership with no expected, concrete outcomes. Outcomes

emerge and evolve as partnership progresses. Some critical work needs to be done before going to the table, core competencies should include for example, an understanding of the history of colonization, why Indigenous maybe resistant to establishing partnerships, and an acknowledgement of one's own biases. Community advisors can help navigate the intricacies of partnership/relationship-building with Indigenous people so that staff are ready to develop these relationship. Prior to developing your workplan, identify what you want to honor in the project.

Robson:

Consider how your research/work can advance understanding and implementing OCAP. Red Deer College approaches working with Indigenous people from the perspective of incorporating the Cree concept of 'walking together'. This facilitates the acknowledgement that the project will likely take a non-linear path, and the destination might look different than when just considering western science. Communities should/need to maintain ownership of research, information should be analyzed with the communities, and research results must be communicated back to the communities. Protocols for relationship building should include the following: create an ethical space, and ethically and respectfully integrate OCAP.

Parent and Snowboy:

Need to adjust and reassess project goals as needed. The local assembly, general council, or band office can be a first point of contact for research collaborations. If you are unable to locate the local office, approach the provincial Indigenous organization. Example: working with the Chisasibi First Nation on food security problems in Northern Canada. Elders pass on their worldview on respecting animals and plants, and this needed to be incorporated into the project. Ultimately, researchers let the community guide the direction of the project.

#### Session 217: Bridging science and Indigenous knowledge systems: Best practices

Panelists:

**Rachel Olson** (President and one of the Founding Directors, The Firelight Group)

**Scot Nickels** (Director, Inuit Quajisarvingat: The Inuit Knowledge Centre)

**Leah Braithwaite** (Executive Director, Arctic Net Inc.)

**Solange Nadeau** (Senior Forest Sociologist, Canadian Forest Service, Natural Resources Canada)

Olson:

A First Nations person from Yukon, and social anthropologist engaged in the IK space, Olson referred to the UNESCO definition of IK and noted the following characteristics of IK-

- IK is about practice, values, and belief systems.
- It is adaptive, and encompasses both environmental and social information.
- It is cumulative, and based on risk management.
- It is experiential, passed down through oral traditions, locally-based, and temporally deeper than western knowledge.

However, methods for considering IK in decision-making are not as straightforward, and are difficult to operationalize. But regulatory review boards in the north have operationalized how IK must be considered in northern development projects. Olson and a colleague developed a direct-to-digital mapping tool that can incorporate IK indicators. Whereas paper maps are limited in their information capacity (usually limited to where, what, and who), this new tool is able to include many key pieces of contextual information. Including relational data (network of usage), kinship data (who taught you), and observational ecological data.

Nickels:

Inuit have knowledge about issues such as policy and research in a modern sense, in addition to the natural world. The social equity of research for Inuit is still poor. In other words, increased research and monitoring doesn't always lead to positive outcomes for Inuit. A good reference on this matter is the National Inuit Strategy on Research, and the accompanying implementation plan, especially the NISR priorities, objectives, and actions. DFO recognition of Inuit Nunangat as a policy space is a big step forward.

Braithwaite:

Arctic Net is a network of Arctic experts throughout the world and has worked on engagement in the Inuit Nunangat. Inuit partnerships established through Arctic Net are one of its core achievements. No projects at Arctic Net proceed without northern involvement. Understand that engagement is a process. Some projects at Arctic Net operationalized the concepts of co-design and co-develop. But knowledge mobilization continues to be a challenge. One example of successful knowledge mobilization is the maps created by the Canadian Ice Service. Communication strategies differ between western science and Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (IQ), western science is about defending the data while IQ is about reaching consensus. Formal best practices for working with Indigenous communities must be updated.

Nadeau:

Natural science takes people out of the equation. We must value qualitative insights from people. Biases against the value of social science can be attributed to the perception that natural science is value-free. IK encompasses all aspects of existence. Need to redefine/reshape research assumptions to accept IK. Consider the relevance of the research project to the community. Revisit information sharing agreements as the project moves along. Look to existing protocols for guidance. Leave it to the communities to decide on level of IK detail they are comfortable sharing. Once a product is created, check-in with the community to get their approval, and ensure they are satisfied.

#### Session 505: Supporting the next generation northern scientists

Panelists:

**Kelsey Wrightson** (Dechinta Centre for Research and Learning, Director of Policy and Programming)

**David Silas** (First Nations Engagement Advisor, Yukon College)

**Krista Zawadski** (Curator of Inuit Art, Department of Culture and Heritage, Government of Nunavut)

**Joanna Laskey** (Director, Pilimaksaivik Federal Centre of Excellence, Inuit Employment in Nunavut)

Wrightson:

The Dechinta Centre for Research and Learning (on Treaty 8 territory) uses a co-development model for education, and emphasizes the importance of place-based learning/teaching (including the Dene concept of 'knowing two ways' when teaching STEM subject matter). The model is also informed by three key documents: RCAP, UNDRIP, and the TRC Calls to Action. It is important to challenge scientific thought, and what the scientific process should look like to foster curiosity and genuine interest.

Silas:

Yukon is not on Treaty land. Need to look back before moving forward (i.e. understand the history and consequences of colonization). Recognize that land claims do not equal self-governance. IK mobilization is key to supporting northern scientists/research.

Zawadski:

The quality of education across Nunavut needs to be improved. Nunavut Sivuniksavut, affiliated with Algonquin College, provides a unique cultural and academic experience for Inuit youth, and also helps students develop/bolster their sense of Inuk identity.

Laskey:

There are many challenges (e.g., logistics, culture) associated with STEM education in Nunavut. There are many vacancies, but they require post-secondary education. There is a need for capacity-building in order fill the many vacancies. Capacity-building should focus on making genuine connections.