

"Words are not objects to be wasted. They represent the accumulated knowledge, cultural values, (and) the vision of an entire people or peoples."
Lee Maracle

On May 11, 2021 the Aboriginal Education Council held a Talking Circle over Zoom where all Aboriginal Peoples at Ryerson University were invited; faculty, students, and staff.

The invitation read as follows:

Topic: Indigenous Community Talking Circle on Standing Strong Task Force

An alternative opportunity for the on-campus Indigenous community to share their input on the Standing Strong Task Force. We understand that some folks prefer this type of opportunity to speak with peers on the topic. This event will incorporate time for debriefs by experienced counsellors and Elders.

This event does not exclude your participation in the Standing Strong Engagement process available at: <https://standingstrong.civilspace.io/en/projects/standing-strong-mash-koh-wee-kah-pooh-win-task-force>

If you would like to learn more about the longstanding institutional memory of Egerton Ryerson please feel free to access the Aboriginal Education Council Statement on Egerton Ryerson at: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1_Qw5WLAZZbDU7OXXWKFoKHmwKWp_BoW1o3-l6xMjnE/edit#heading=h.d6ec29xep5qv

and the work here at Ryerson University on Truth and Reconciliation, at: <https://www.ryerson.ca/equity/programs-reports/truth-reconciliation-ryerson/>

For this event we used the traditionally recognized within Indigenous communities, Talking Circle format; where the Facilitator outlines the order of speaking "going around the room", the person with the talking stick or feather (neither were used in this virtual format) had the floor to speak with no interruptions, conjecture or otherwise. Each person shares their Truth to the topic. It was also shared that there is no expectation, participants are not required to share their own past trauma in relation to this topic at hand. Strong evidence of how the statue induces trauma has **already** been recorded by the University.

Post event self-care details were provided to participants with Counselling options; Breakout rooms as debrief rooms with the counsellor, and post session option for counselling along with brief biographies of the Facilitator, Elder Witnesses, and Counsellors.

At the event the Administrative Coordinator explained the roles of the Grandmother Facilitator, the Elder Witnesses and why they are in attendance with us. For your context, Witnesses provide testimony to the event of what they heard expressed. As they are also Elders, they were also called upon to provide parting words of wisdom, so that participants could carry on for the remainder of their day in a good way. This testimony is included at the end of this report.

The discussion questions, addressed one at a time, for this Talking Circle were:

- What are your thoughts and ideas about the statue of Egerton remaining at Ryerson?
- What would you want to see the university do next?
- Final thoughts, concerns, and/or ideas around the room.

BIOGRAPHIES:

Grandmother Dorothy Peters, Anishinabe. Traditional Teacher, Welcome Home Program, Aboriginal Legal Services Toronto. Dorothy has long been an active member of the Toronto urban Indigenous community. Many will know her through her previous work at Anishnawbe Health as Coordinator of the Nmakaandjiiwin (Finding my way) Program. Dorothy has been called upon many organizations to share her traditional knowledge and one to one counselling.

Dr. Eileen Antone, Emeritus University of Toronto, is a member of the Oneida of the Thames First Nation- Turtle Clan. She is the past Director of Aboriginal Studies/Centre for Aboriginal Initiatives at the University of Toronto. Dr. Antone served as a faculty member in the department of Adult Education, Community Development, and Counselling Psychology as well as the Transitional Year Programme. During her academic career the subject of her research, professional writing, teaching and field development has been Aboriginal knowledge and traditional ways of being.

Rev. Dr. Grafton Antone , Wolf Clan, is from the Oneida of the Thames First Nation. He learned the Oneida language as a first language and then learned English prior to going to the Indian Day School in the Oneida community. Grafton worked in Construction Engineering

before he obtained a B.A. from the University of Western Ontario and a Master of Divinity from Victoria University, University of Toronto. He received an Honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from Victoria University, University of Toronto. He retired from the United Church of Canada's Toronto Urban Native Ministry as well as the board Co-Chair at the Sandy Sauteaux Spiritual Centre in Beausejour, Manitoba Canada and the Board of the United Church Aboriginal Ministry Council.

Ms. Lisa Osawamick, (Wasseaabno Kwe) of the Loon Clan is an Ojibwe/Odawa, Anishinabek Kwe from Wikwemikong Unceded Territory. A single mother of five and a Nokomis of one granddaughter. She is a strong believer in culture, community and is passionate in helping individuals obtain personal growth, balance and wellness. As of June 21, 2019, Lisa Osawamick launched into her own private practice; Zaagidwin Counselling & Consulting. She is known for her dedication, hard work, humour and her love, in sharing the gifts and knowledge she carries with those around her.

We recognize that employees may need support after the talking circle has taken place. Ryerson's Employee and Family Assistance Program, through Morneau Shepell, has arranged for a counsellor, Lloyd Robertson, to be available for individual, confidential support, if needed. Lloyd Robertson identifies as Metis and provides trauma counselling to many Indigenous communities in Western Canada.

If you would like to arrange a confidential conversation with an Indigenous counsellor who is responsive and respectful of Indigenous culture, please call the Morneau Shepell Care Access Centre at 1-844-880-9142 and request an appointment with Lloyd Robertson.

The Talking Circle began at 11:04 am, May 11, 2021.

What are your thoughts and ideas about the statue of Egerton remaining at Ryerson?

Participant A:

When I first came to Ryerson I didn't even know who Egerton Ryerson was until I started doing a paper on residential schools and then I realized holy shit! You know I mean? It wasn't like a good experience, but it was like an awakening of who was involved in our cultural catastrophe.

There's still people, to this day, who are lost and experiencing addictions, and who turned to suicide to mitigate their loss of self, identity, and culture, of who they are. Before I even came back to school I knew there was something wrong, but I couldn't really put my finger on it, and then, when it came to school I realized who robbed me of my

language, culture, and our collective histories. So I don't know why we are memorializing cultural catastrophes.

The nicest way I could put it is, are we celebrating racism and domination, and subjugation?

It hurts, it's very painful learning about residential schools but it's something that has to be done and I don't know if keeping a statue, or our name around is like celebrating eugenics.

I was adopted and raised by my Grandparents who were residential school survivors. At the time when residential school survivors (started receiving money) received their financial compensation I still didn't understand and it was comparable to a band-aid fix, as though they were expected to receive their money and forget about it [the experiences that they were being compensated for].

Thank you.

Facilitator - Grandmother Dorothy Peters: So Miigwetch A for that.

It is a very difficult topic and I think it's true to say that a lot of us, even our younger and older people don't really know too much about our history, so that conversation needs to be had, and I think that it's important to engage our community. These are some of the things that we really need to talk about; what's happening and how do we move forward and how do we teach our young ones about the history? What you say is really important.

Participant B:

My name is --- I am actually tuning in from --- First Nations, that's across the river from Grafton and Eileen so, Sagoli (Hello). My dad's from Oneida as well, my grandfather was Theodore ---. Theodore went to Mount Elgin Indian Industrial School. One of the first residential schools in Canada, or what is currently Canada, and I have several relatives that went to Mohawk Institute and Shingwauk and other residential schools. I actually grew up on the former grounds of Mount Elgin School. Both sides of my family for several generations went to those schools so it's very, very much intertwined and the legacy Egerton Ryerson's legacy directly impacted me and my family.

This is really hard, I'm an assistant professor at the University named for him.

I teach Indigenous perspectives courses to Ryerson students. My course is required in the --- department and it's very difficult to teach legacy that I still deal with and I still have to heal from.

It's not made much better by the fact that, when we were in person, I would have to walk past his statue on my way back from class or to class or my office or just walking around campus.

I think one of my first days teaching or lecturing and I walked past a statue and I just kind of thought, really reflected deeply on where I would come from and how I got to be there at the University, because it was like success, I finally made it, you know, I worked so hard for through school and my undergraduate my graduate getting my doctorate and staying committed and close to my community, and it was very difficult to do that work. Then walking past the statue and thinking like despite all of what I had to put up with in my family, the fallout of residential school, despite all that - I'm here.

I don't feel good about the fact that I have to walk by a statue or I have to put his name on my accomplishments. You know what I've accomplished, despite what he's done to my family, my Community, my nation, and all of us as Indigenous People.

I hate it. I hate that the statue of Egerton Ryerson is still up. I hate that the university is named after him.

I took the position, despite the fact that the university was named for him, I had other offers to other universities, but I really liked the work that was going on at Ryerson, like the Department of Sociology, the Yellowhead Institute, the fact that I could teach in the First Nations Technical Institute program. All of that was why I came. It was not, had nothing to do with that it was named for somebody who designed the genocide of my family and my people. I came here despite this.

I want it changed, I want the statue removed, I want the university changed and I'm actually really disturbed by the process that became or came out of the task force.

I took the survey, and it was all like about reconciling with Ryerson or reconciling commemoration or thinking about commemoration. Commemoration to me, when we're thinking in a white Canadian context is commemorating the people who made Canada and the people who made Canada committed genocide against my ancestors. Commemoration in a Canadian context will always mean memorializing the people who erased my people and the Me is true for Ryerson. I don't think there's any redeeming quality, and I think that there's a lot of people out there, Canadians who want to hang on to it, because they don't want to admit that their country is genocidal and violent and continues to invoke and to enact violence on us.

And that's just Indigenous People, not to mention that Ryerson believed that women should stay in the home, that women shouldn't get an education past grade five or grade eight, and that black folks should be segregated. As somebody who comes from lineages as a woman, as an Indigenous woman, and somebody who comes from the black people. I have ancestors, who are subjected to the segregation system that Ryerson made. There's no way that I would ever think that it would be okay as an

Indigenous person and Indigenous woman that Egerton Ryerson remains as the statue and as a namesake for this university.

So Miigwetch (Thank you).

Participant C:

I'm still on the learning curve, in terms of Ryerson.

I did some research on my own, and it was quite eye opening. I attended the session last week, and it was quite interesting to hear their various types of feedback about it. I'm still trying to process all of it in terms of what and how I feel about it.

My initial thoughts are that I don't have a good feeling about it, I think it's a reminder to a lot of people - bring back a lot of painful memories or thoughts.

This group here is great as I'm glad to have this opportunity to openly discuss this. That's all I'm going to say for now.

Participant D:

My name is ---.

When I came to Toronto, I actually was working in the shelter system, I stayed for work and I went to Ryerson to study social work as a result.

My time at Ryerson was interesting, it helped shape who I am and it has brought me into a new world in life. I'm now a teacher, I went back to school later in life. I am so proud and happy to support community members and young people in so many different ways. I am very honored by that and I also recently became a member of the Ryerson Aboriginal Education Council. I'm just so honored to be here today with everyone to discuss this very important issue, if you want to call it that. I have so many feelings about it, it's hard to sort of ground or describe in words.

I know my Indigenous ancestry is from the East. My great grandmother went to residential school and this information was the secret in my family. I didn't even know about this until I was in my 20's. The family, I guess, had chosen to hide this and that in itself is very painful and it's very difficult to piece together information that's important for me to know and for me to share and explain to my own children.

My first degree is a Bachelor of Arts in history where I studied at Dalhousie. I have an opportunity to teach history to students in Toronto.

I'm always focused on Indigenizing any perspective, anything we talked about. I've been able to learn and assist with curriculum writing and to me, this is something I really focus so much on and I share with other teachers and people about. I think that's one way, I feel I can contribute, but I have so much more to learn. But I this issue about Ryerson is something that's really important to me and I really look forward to being with everyone here today listening, learning and to continue doing everything I can to move forward and be in the real world, where we are today and have a positive impact, I think that's all I say, for now.

Thank you for the opportunity to be together with you today.

Participant E:

My dad and my mom both grew up in Saskatchewan on the reserves, and my father went to the residential schools.

He doesn't talk about it. When he got older he left and never really looked back, so we never really got a chance to get to know our family out there. A lot of those teachings, that history ended with him. My brother and I were never really exposed to that [teachings, and history]. We were raised sort of that Christian path. I never belonged there you know. I didn't believe what they believed, I didn't hold the Me values that they held, and so I just I didn't belong, and because I didn't have you know that other side of me [Indigeneity] in my life. I just didn't feel as though I belonged anywhere, and so I sort of just drifted through life, and struggled with addictions, you know got involved with the gangs and crime, and you know that whole lifestyle and definitely down and really, really bumpy road for a long time.

You know I wasn't exposed you know to my culture until I was actually Incarcerated. I was at [detention centre] and one of the brothers brought me into the brotherhood and got me involved in what was going on there and introduced me to an Elder by the name of Vern Harper. I was still really new [to the Indigenous community], I didn't really know anything about all this. So I was asking what we believe. I know what I don't believe, I know where I don't belong, what do we believe? Vern, he said "What do you believe?" That was powerful, for me, because nobody had ever actually asked me that before. I think, also because I didn't have an answer for him, I didn't really know what I believed. I knew that I had beliefs, but I wasn't able to really articulate those beliefs. I've spent the rest, the past 15 years or so, trying to figure out what I believe. That has taken me down many different directions. I spent many years on the Native ranges in federal institutions across Canada and also went to the ---- Healing Lodge. I was there for a couple of years. There I met a bunch of people who were suffering.

I lived with a man by the name of Henry for a couple years and he didn't talk much at all. He never talked about his childhood. We were carving one day and he opened up about his childhood, and his experience with the residential school. It's horrific what he had to go through as a child and what they took from him.

He repeated those Me violence's against others later in life and so he'll spend the rest of his life in prison and his children have to grow up in foster care, and they're likely to follow the Me path, you know how foster care is.

The cycle continues, you know, and there are people that are still hurting from the violence that this country committed against Indigenous People, so that it could profit. It is a lot larger than just one man that was trying to kill Indigenous culture, but he did play a role. [Egerton] as a Reverend and as an educator, it's my belief that he supported kidnapping children and forcing them to convert to Christianity and I don't think that that's something we should be celebrating.

It's something that a lot of these contemporary issues that we see in Indigenous communities today are a direct result of a lot of those historical violence.

These residential schools resulted in quite literally, the mass alienation of Indigenous people from the education system in Canada, and general distrust of public institutions. Therefore, I don't see how it's appropriate that Egerton Ryerson be the face of an educational institution that has committed itself to reconciliation.

It doesn't make sense, this is not a problem that's going away, we saw these problems get inflamed most recently with the Black Lives Matter movement and everything surrounding police brutality and injustices of minority populations.

This is not the first time that has come up. This keeps coming up over and over and over again, and this will keep coming up, and so I think it's time to change directions and to commit ourselves to reconciliation. This is something that we can do to show our commitment to truth and reconciliation.

Quick quote that I found that really shaped my thoughts around Egerton Ryerson. I know that he was a minister and he was a politician. In essence, according to Ryerson education for the Indian would be couched in Christianity, with him, referring to the Indian:

"Nothing can be done to improve and elevate his character and condition without the aid of religious view."

Putting this into context as (one of) the architect(s) of the residential school system and as a minister and as a politician, I strongly believe that this was his intent and that he strongly supported the residential school system and I could go on for days, but I will end it there.

Thank you so much for listening.

Participant F:

My mom was institutionalized for much of my life. She suffered from serious mental health issues and I and really for a lot of my life I didn't really know much about my mom or her ancestry or really anything about it, I was raised Italian Catholic.

It wasn't until I took a trip to the ---place-, that I found out that we were -Nation-, that our family identifies as -Nation- I found out a little bit more and more, and I was piecing it together.

I found out that my mom was removed from her family, she was put into a Catholic orphanage and that was where she spent most of her childhood.

In terms of understanding the statue I actually am an alumni from Ryerson and I when I was going to Ryerson in my 30's I really didn't similar to Participant A, I was not familiar with Egerton Ryerson and then, once I got to Ryerson I started learning more about it because I was studying social work, and it was being talked about a lot in social work, and so I started to explore that.

As well, having worked with students that go to Ryerson - Indigenous students; overwhelmingly I hear on a very regular basis, I would say, the vast majority are very much Not okay with that statue. And my own opinion is that I don't like seeing it.

I don't want it there. But I think more as I've been exposed to so many conversations and hearing from so many students that are so negatively impacted that that also plays on me, because I think I hear from all the students that access RASS and what their feelings are.

I think that's it for me.

Participant G:

When I moved to Toronto, and I got my job at ----.

The first thing I did was I looked up who --- --- was because for a long time, I knew that there were corporations and institutions that the history of them, sometimes were not favorable to Indigenous People, and I wanted to contribute to an organization that was not part of that history. I wanted to ensure that whatever dead white guy legacies living on, that it wasn't going to be something that was going to be negative towards Indigenous People and given the history of Indigenous People.

I knew about my history growing up, because I grew up on the rez so everybody always told me as a kid growing up "This is your land. This is your culture, this is your language." I learned my language, I experienced culture shock when I went to live in actual city, because I

didn't you had to stay on the sidewalks and not cut into somebody's yard, which is where I grew up on the rez just doing that people didn't mind, but in the city you'd have some guy yelling at you to get off of their lawn and that was like culture shock for me, I had to like get used to new societal norms which are very different from the way I was raised.

So I knew a lot of my history growing up, so when I came to the city and I knew where I was going, I wanted to make sure that I was going to be proud of, where I work, so I looked up who --- --- was and he was one of the first people who created a library. He wanted public libraries to be public, for everybody to learn education everybody should have access to education to learn, and so I was like Okay, I can get behind that I didn't really see anything negative that he did to Indigenous folks he felt it was for everybody. I thought he probably was inclusive of Indigenous People as well, so like he wasn't being discriminatory towards that. It was easy for me to work for that organization, knowing that history.

While I was there I always advocated for Indigenous People. When we had town halls we would have an opportunity to ask the President questions about where the College was going with specific things. I [would] always ask

"What are you doing to increase Indigenous enrollment? How many Indigenous students do you have on campus? What kind of programs are you going to offer to increase Indigenous student enrollment within the College?" I was always that person asking these questions, because that stuff always mattered to me.

I always wanted to see our Indigenous People be successful because I understood what they went through. My grandparents were residential school survivors and I saw how that affected my family.

My aunt would show me pictures of my grandmother when she was a teenager saying "she just left residential school, she was 15, this was right before she got married to go live with her husband and be a housewife because that's what she got labeled as in residential school", so I understood this history because it wasn't that long ago that it happened to my family.

So, when I started at Ryerson I didn't know about Ryerson. I didn't know who Egerton Ryerson was until I was in the student lounge and there were little flyers about protesting the Egerton Ryerson statue. I read about it and thought, 'why are students upset about this statue? Who is this?' They were like, "you don't know who Egerton Ryerson is?!" and as I was, like "okay tell me about it". I started learning about it and I started doing some of my own research as well. When I found out who he was I was

like "Okay, this makes sense. I get why students want to remove this statue. I understand this."

I felt so happy to be working with Indigenous students and working within the Aboriginal Student Services Center; it completely flew over my head, that I was even going to work for an institution that [went against] my core beliefs. [These beliefs] were always: work for someplace that you could be proud of, work for someplace that you can have pride in your employment, pride in your profession, and pride in the place that you are contributing to.

I didn't even think to look up who Egerton Ryerson was until I came here, and then I saw the flyers that students were circulating around, protesting the statue. When I learned about it, I was like 'okay well I've already accepted this job. I [have] got to do what I got to do." This is unfortunate now, because I now know who Egerton Ryerson is.

When I went home for a funeral I was visiting with my uncle and he's from -town, city- and he owns a fish farm. His mom, my grandma, didn't speak English, she only spoke Anishinawbemowin. He took care of her a lot of his life. They had trouble going to school because they had experienced racism. He would tell me about these things all the time when I would always talk to him. We'd always catch up and he was asking me "What are you doing now?" I shared with him that I left -workplace-, I don't work there anymore. I'm working at Ryerson University, now as the -job title-. He frowned, then he looked at me and he said "Isn't that guy racist?" And I said "He was the superintendent who created the curriculum for residential schools..." My Uncle said "Yeah, that's what I thought" "Yeah, that's what I meant". Then it settled unwell with me, like I can't be proud to tell my family where I work because they know that history too, and how can I be proud to say where I work when they still feel the effects of residential schools and who that person is.

For me it's hard to be proud of the place that I work at given the history of that and it's hits so close to home.

I've always been for taking down the Egerton Ryerson statue because it is a constant reminder of genocide our people have experienced. I'm -- years old and my aunts and uncles still feel the harshness of that legacy, my grandparents went to residential schools of that legacy.

My father, his birth certificate doesn't even say "Birth Certificate of a Canadian citizen." It says: Certificate of an Indian Birth. He was born in an 'Indian hospital' which, it wasn't that long ago that segregated vision [of colonizers] was so profound in this country. I think it's time that in the name of reconciliation, to actually reconcile and accept that that's Canada's truth.

If you want to reconcile, take that history, take that statue down, acknowledge that history and say "We're going to do better". The first step that you can do with that is: take it down.

That's what I have to say about that. Thank you for listening.

Participant I:

I've been doing a lot of thinking. I started at Ryerson and like Participant E, I was in the same kind of boat; getting lost in alcohol and all that.

Then finally made my way to Ryerson and got employed over there. Worked with Monica, so I pretty well started my healing there. I've been doing a lot of work on myself, and when we had the [Aboriginal] Foundations Program started that's when I was able to get that extra help. I started to pursue that Aboriginal Knowledge and Experiences Certificate program. I finally completed it. It was quite the traumatic program, because both of my parents are gone and I tried to understand what all happened in that time. Why did we live off the reserve? I am still not happy with the result, but I have to get over it, and move on. I don't think that [not being allowed to live on reserve/in community] was fair to my father and my mom because we were outcasts. I always wondered "Where do I belong?"

Even though I have a Ryerson community and I got to know a lot of the students in the program, I would see a lot of their hurt when we [took] the social work classes. I'm so glad that I took part in that because I was already on my healing journey, so I was already starting and I already had lots of supports. I was very lucky there with the supports [I had in place for myself].

I've also been one of those people that has been trying to fit in in the world and not really understanding the whole Ryerson thing at the time. I bought the sweaters and all that, and I bought it for my nephews. Now that I know about him and that we're going to think about removing the statue, changing the name, I really want to just burn the shirt.

I'm going to have to replace those sweaters that I gave my brothers and my nephew now that I really know the history. When I walk down the street and I see my Indigenous brother and sister. I'm thinking 'I wonder what they're thinking?' You know I shouldn't really be wearing this, but you know it is keeping me warm. Now I have to do what I usually do with my other sweaters: take the logo off.

During the lock down I had to go to campus because I had to do some work and I looked at the statue and I said "Oh my God, it looks so disgusting.

We should just get rid of it" because it does a lot to our Indigenous people.

Until it's gone I think we're going to have to have some kind of ceremony for everyone so that they can get past this. As soon as we get rid of the statue I think we can probably move on.

We're all very strong, we're examples from our ancestors that we're still here, that's what I've learned.

Thank you.

Participant J:

It's actually not my first time being associated with Ryerson. Back in 2014 or 2015 I actually took a program at Continuing ED which was on Tuesdays and Thursday evenings in addition to working full time.

While I was going to school or doing classes, I never had the opportunity to engage with RASS at that time, because I was always in evening classes. So I never had the opportunity to up that point to associate with anyone at RASS. Prior to that, back when Ryerson was being called the Ryerson Polytechnic Institute, my intent was to apply to Ryerson for mechanical engineering.

I had an inkling of who Egerton Ryerson was before I started working [here] full time. I knew a little bit of things. I didn't do a lot of research when I was first applied to school here. I knew that Ryerson had one of the better engineering diploma programs back then. I was discouraged from attending Ryerson [Polytechnic] because it was not considered,.. the diploma I would have received in engineering education would not be seen as a degree or diploma in the same context that you get in an engineering or diploma degree from other post secondary institutions, universities.

As I grew older and the opportunity to work within post secondary came up. I became more involved with, and a passion [grew] to work with students and work with people who are on their ways to their post secondary education, whether that be in college, university or some other kind of format.

Eventually, when I did start at Ryerson I was really happy to be a part of that because I knew that the university, although it was small, could have a potential to have to make significant impacts to the lives of its students and Indigenous People, notwithstanding.

From an Indigenous perspective, it's a really big deal for Indigenous students to go post secondary. It's significant because from my generation and everyone else before, maybe even a little bit today as

well, oftentimes we don't see ourselves as being good enough, but we want to try. A lot of that has a historical foundation - from the time we started public school to high school, there was this [guidance] to take "the safe route"- to study General level courses in high school. Back then there were Basic, General, and Advanced [level courses]. Basic or General wouldn't get you into a University.

I was told from an early age, "You should just stick with a General education, it is not that hard, you can go through, and you shouldn't have any trouble". I took that advice when I first started high school. When I got them, and when I got into high school and started taking courses, I found that they were way too easy for me. So easy in fact that I started failing because I just didn't have the [appropriate] educational and academic challenges that were supposed to be available when you start. I made a choice and I transferred myself into advanced courses which were really beneficial to me, it really brought up my grade level, and I was [then] an honor roll level student in high school.

But that with that being said, I did go off to college in Ottawa and then I went to university at Lakehead. I came back to Toronto, went to university at York. I was a professional student for a while.

And then when I started working at Ryerson I realized that this is where I want to be- helping students and helping any way we can to advance their academic careers.

I knew that working at Ryerson meant that there would be scrutiny over why I chose to work there because of the legacy of Ryerson and the implications that his policies have had on Indigenous People and people of color.

In order for us to make change, we have to have people working in those institutions where we can make meaningful change.

In the past four years I've been at Ryerson I've seen such a significant increase in Indigenous recognition at the university. Not just through the Ryerson TRC report and the committee but also through the artistic expression out on campus if you look for it. Stuff like that is only increasing.

I still have issue with the name and the statue. I go back and forth about having the statue removed. I think, at the very bare minimum, I would like to see the statue removed from its place of prominence and put somewhere else. I'm also of the thought that it should be removed completely.

What I also consider is if the statue is removed completely and the name is changed, I am concerned about the history, which we may be erasing from ourselves, good or bad, it is history that I think that we should always know about and acknowledge.

I go back and forth on the statue. If possible, I would also like to have it removed from its platform and [have] it brought down more to ground level and moved somewhere else.

If that's the bare minimum, I would be okay with that, but ultimately yeah, I would like to see the statue removed as well. Maybe boiled back down and recast in some sort of other fashion.

I think the fact that we're having these conversations is really a testament to how much the Ryerson University as a whole, the executive group, the Senate and all these other folks want to see a kind of meaningful change and acknowledgement at the university.

I'm open to whatever change, but at the bare minimum, there needs to be something done with that statue.

Maybe colour it red from now on, I don't know, but something that we can be proud of and not have that kind of sense of anxiety when we walk past it and look at it. I find it hard to look at too. I absolutely do not like walking by that, but I do and every time I look at it, I tend to not look at the face of that person, I gravitate more towards the signs that the AEC erected beside it which makes me feel a little bit better.

I'm interested to see where this conversation goes with that.

PARTICIPANT K: What are your thoughts and ideas of the statue remaining at Ryerson?

If it were to remain, I would be very upset and very surprised at the University for not moving, for not taking action in the year 2021. What century is this?! Cities in the States, they've removed statues. There have been other statues removed here in Canada as well.

So I would be very upset if it were to remain.

Ideas?. . . I like what 'Participant I' said about ceremony because we've been affected by this, we need again - that ceremony for healing of that. And then continuing education. If he were melted down and transformed into something else that our [Indigenous] community primarily, and other communities can live with.

Continued education on why, if that were to happen, why that [statue removal] happened. Education, education, education. I don't care if they change the name, I again go back to, I agree with Participant J on the need to know these names, need to be said again and again and reference back to [their historical impacts].

That's all I'm going to say on that. Thank you.

Participant L:

I was listening to the previous speakers and I think it might have been Participant J who mentioned the history aspect.

The first time I heard about a statue being removed, it was actually in Ottawa. It's that statue of Champlain. There used to be an Indian crouching at the foot of it. They say 'Indian' because Champlain was a person, the Indian [figure] was just not modeled after anybody in particular, it was just a mythological guide that they've made up.

Ovide Mercredi, who was the National Chief of the AFN at the time, mentioned that it was offensive and they decided to move the Indian off the statue. They made a little space for him down in the park and planted sweetgrass around him to make it nice.

However, there was this local photographer and he said exactly the same thing, 'when this history is removed it means that people don't know that these kinds of racist things used to exist, and so there has to be some memory of it'. So, he spent a lot of time photographing the removal of the statue and he's got this one amazing photograph of the Indian guide kneeling down, looking back up where his place used to be at Champlain and the caption is: Why is it always the Indian who has to move? Just love it.

So, I would like to see the statue removed, but I also would not want to see it just merely removed. I would like to see it replaced with something acknowledging that it used to be there and why it was important for it to be removed. If it stays, I like the idea of painting it red or doing something to it that signifies what it means.

I've been photographing it every time that somebody slops paint on it, or does something to it, I've been recording that. I've got this nice collection of photographs going on. I was thinking of photographing Indigenous People standing next to it in some way expressing how they felt and hanging those around the university if anybody's interested in doing that project, I thought it was kind of controversial, but maybe people would be into it.

I think something like that, where there's an ongoing conversation about it and it's not just a plaque put up and that's it. That we continue to acknowledge it and acknowledge the history of it remains in a really significant way.

That's my thoughts.

Participant M:

I have been thinking about this day for a very long time. I have a lot to say about this. I wanted to echo that everything that everybody has shared I really have similar feelings about.

Like Participant 'I' said, I don't feel comfortable carrying anything around from this university's name.

My ideas about the statue: I don't really like the way that the conversation has been framed. I don't like the way that the conversation has been framed because it focuses on an artifact, a statue of a person who caused a lot of harm, rather than the person themselves. So it is a symbolic gesture, obviously, that we still have this statue sitting up there and overarchingly having a presence on Gould Street.

It's the person that we really take issue with, and so the way that the narrative has framed this is that we then focus all of our energy and attention on a statue when it's a larger conversation than that. It really does implicate the person. How this is being approached and what type of language is being used to formulate these narratives, really bothers me on a lot of different fronts.

Because we're having a Community Conversation right now with the idea about what needs to be done with this statue and not letting history repeat itself.

For example, there's a whole underground storage facility for all of the Nazi paraphernalia that ever existed. It's in the United States, so there are ways to preserve this type of awful history. And having some kind of recollection of that in the cultural consciousness, we do this, all the time through films, we do this, all the time through media. There is a way to inform folks and to keep this history alive to make sure that no one forgets it and it doesn't get repeated. However, I don't think that that necessarily has to be done by just one simple action of focusing on one statue.

I want to contribute here is the fact that we have this microcosm of our namesake at this University, which obviously impacts pan-Indigenous Peoples across the nation. I feel like we have a responsibility to not only people who are localized to Ryerson university, but also those who have been here and those who are about to come.

I also believe that this is a bigger issue, because there are other aspects of this that we're not even looking at as valuable resources to take upon our own action and change aspects of the university itself.

I've spoken with A in the past and other colleagues of mine, there are easy ways that we can go about having signatures to change the name of a street such as Gould.

So if they don't remove the statue right away, which I would be very upset with, and don't melt it down and turn it into something that would be appropriate for the Anishinaabeg and the Haudenosaunee and the Huron-Wendat and all the folks who were here previously as caregivers and who had treaties previous to this, and now, which we are occupying on this land. I would be very upset.

I believe that there are ways that we can go about this without just throwing paint at a statue. [The university] took up [legal] action [against] the three Black Lives Matter members in Toronto for mischief and whatever else. Those impacts were in alignment with how both black and Indigenous People have been treated in the space of colonization and in this nation. What I see is that the [University's] response to them and then [on the same hand] Ryerson taking up the work of anti black Racism and Anti Native racism was just because they were finally like 'oh it's happening again'. So I'm very apprehensive of [the University decision makers].

Look how much institutional memory is in this room and how much work has been going on since not just when the AEC made its report about Egerton Ryerson, but also, the TRC and countless things, countless evidence reports. Even RCAP could have been a good example for this. There could have been anything that we could have spoken about that would be good.

I don't believe that the statue should be at Ryerson.

I believe that the mineral composition of the actual statue has a consciousness, I believe we have to do something with this statue that directs the energy into a better place. I don't think it's being honored -the mineral itself isn't being honored appropriately and it's garnering a lot of negative energy and attention because of who it symbolizes and what it represents.

Melting it down, I agree with. I don't think just painting it is enough, although Participant L, I really appreciate your words and J as well, because I think that the paint is something that can be worn away with weather. I think this needs to be an item that we think about in a way that, maybe we can have some kind of a ceremony or photography series with folks [perhaps] in Jingle dresses around it, or in powwow gear and having it be a piece of what we did with the statue before we took it down as a very conscious aspect.

Then do something with it, [ex.] why don't we give it back to local artisans and sculpture folks who specialize in sculptures, who would have the knowledge and the idea as to directed into either like some aspect of the creation story or some representation the three sisters, or something that would indicate that we're like wild rice because wild rice used to be abundant here. There used to be a lake there. Something that would symbolically take it back and have a different relationship.

I guess what I'm worried about is that the time frame of this task force has been so limited to one of the most difficult years that I think many of us have experienced. I feel very upset when things get pushed through in policy, or in timelines when we are all experiencing personal levels of distress, Community distress and global distress. How are we supposed to focus on actions like this that are taking space in our communities, when we don't have the adequate resources to even manage our own lives right now.

I don't think that this timeline is appropriate, I don't think that the Community consultation timeline from March to May, as appropriate. I don't understand what the rush is. It's not like Indigenous People are going anywhere. I also don't understand how reports and committees take time within governments and they barely even have the space to do that.

The TRC took five years plus. Then we can implement it and we can see slight formal changes over time. It's like the wearing of water against a stone. I needed this to be a more thoughtful process, I need this to be taken up in a way that we're not rushing through it, because we're just trying to appease the President's office who has handpicked the members of this task force, and I really dislike, extremely dislike the fact that there is very little present Indigenous voices available for students in this kind of framework. Where's the transparency? Where's the accountability? It's a very strange narrative that I can't necessarily get behind.

I will be participating in some form of consciousness raising and that folks will have the ability to listen [to]. [I] most likely will be participating in counter actions, just so you know. I can't, I can't just go through this formal process and feel okay - I'm too angry.

I didn't want to bring my anger into the room in a way that would negatively impact anybody that's here, but I just need to say that I appreciate you speaking your hearts, your minds, your thoughts and feelings about this.

They have to make this report transparent to us, and even if they don't compile all the information that was succinctly put into a report, I want to read it all. I want to know who is in that room, I want to know what

they were saying, and I think it's their rate of responsibility to do that for us, as a community.

I hope that this means that Ryerson will start taking some substantive steps towards changing its name, because I have to carry the name of this person on me now, professionally, for the rest of my life. That is a big impact that some people will never have to think about or never have to feel or never have to live with.

My suggestion would be [to] make it so that every single student entering into quote unquote Ryerson University has to take an Indigenous studies course when they first enter and that has to be a part of their degree. Make them understand the lived experience, history of Indigenous, black people and racialized people in this country and how they've had to be relegated or treated in other areas. Make education, a part of this prerogative as well as taking this statue down.

Thank you.

Participant B:

Can I add something to that about statues?

I volunteered last summer for this Diversity organization. In this one meeting it was agreed for me to do a workshop or a presentation, for an event that we were developing for the Region of Peel that would promote diversity and inclusivity. Then at the next meeting they removed it. They removed my programming from the event, so I left the organization. I told them that I felt like I was being tokenized. The reason they removed it, [according to] the leader of our group was because Indigenous culture and history is not part of their demographic.

I don't think statues are doing a good job in exploring history.

This, from my perspective, right you learn history from reading a book and not looking at some more memorializing of some statue that created a cultural catastrophe that is still relevant today and experienced by Indigenous Peoples [expressed] through addictions or even suicide.

That's all I just wanted to say thank you.

Discussion Question 2

What would you want to see the university do next? Share any thoughts, concerns, and/or ideas.

Participant A:

Well, first of all I just like to say the Indigenous and non Indigenous relationship has been formulated for well over 400 years in Canada now.

They've been trying to integrate education, while they've been trying to assimilate us since the 1620's. First they tried to 'Frenchify' us. [King James I] he wanted to integrate both cultures to create a New society but that initiative failed because the education that was being instructed to the Mi'kmaq at the time, well, it didn't reflect [Indigenous] values, so it failed. Then there were other attempts after that to try to Westernize us. Then the residential schools came and then again there were other numerous attempts to integrate Indigenous worldviews into the Western institutions since 1920. It failed then too. Then finally in '69 I believe it was at Carleton University who first integrated the Indian and Eskimo program.

Then the 1969 White Paper came and then the 1972 Report "Indian Control of Indian Education" by the AFN. There's been over 400 years of attempts of trying to educate or integrate Indigenous People into Western thought.

What I would like to [see the] university do next is influence Mandatory education in Western institutions. Other institutions, for example, Alberta, they just denied and they threw out that education curriculum last year. I would like the institution to advocate for more Indigenous education implemented into the Western institution.

Thank you.

Participant D:

What would I like to see the university do next? I would like them to definitely remove the statue and do all the important learning around it, which is the very, very careful, important part, in my opinion.

How it is done will affect how the learning happens, I believe, and that's a whole other conference which needs a lot of time and collaboration with the Indigenous community on how to do it in a good way.

We're in a modern day, it is difficult, and we always need to be acknowledging the history, but again, if there is some way to merge. We can't erase what we have learned and need to continue to learn about the history and if there's a visual way of doing it, I think we can work with that. That's a whole collaborative again and we have to do everything together in a very careful way and not to be rushed. Participant M mentioned, there's no rush for this, but we have to keep it in focus and keep it as a priority.

We have to continue to focus on Indigenous ways of knowing and being. [Holding this] at the forefront of how all, everyone is learning. Within

our own diverse Indigenous community, as well as, our overall [community]. We do that in the way our environments look and the content of what we are given to be doing our learning is, how Indigenous knowledge is embedded in all areas of education. That's again something that will take time and something that is also ongoing.

What I would like to see that university do next, is to make this a priority and to not rush things and to always be collaborating with the right people and being in the present and thinking always of the future.

Participant E:

I think it's past due that the university commits to action. I don't think we should be discussing 'if we should do something' with this statue. I think it makes all the sense in the world to do something with the statue. I think they should commit and say, "yes, we are doing something, and here's what we are going to do".

One of the ideas in one of the talking circles that really resonated with me was taking this statue off the pedestal. That just reinforces this idea of superiority and the superiority of Western approaches that I find disturbing when I walk past it.

Then possibly creating a memorial for residential school survivors, maybe adding additional statues. I don't know exactly how that's going to look with something that captures the strength and resilience of Indigenous people and overcoming everything that was thrown at these communities for so long.

The two most powerful organizations in the world, at the time, the Church and the British Empire, banding together to eradicate Indigenous culture. And we're still here, the teachings are still here, and I think that's the story that needs to be told.

I'm also involved in a research project with Indigenous Works and we're looking at barriers to Indigenous student enrollment in post secondary education and engaging with research based career paths. Part of that was a literature review. There's a lot more significant barriers. The enrollment that I've found in the literature really speaks to experiences of racism and expectations of racism. There was one that I read that I thought was relevant:

"Ingrained colonial structures that Indigenous students perceive as being unwelcoming, or unaccepting of Indigenous ways of knowing".

I thought that was significant.

When I was at -place-, I had a friend there who was a really smart guy. I was doing my university from there. I was trying to get him involved in

education. I just kept hitting this wall [with him], and I could not get through to him. He just was not open to the idea of a post secondary education. I think you know the world, certainly the university would be better for having him but, he wasn't open to it. What I came to realize, is it's not our thing. [Example}: "Why am I going to move to some city and learn how someone else does things?" And at the time, I thought it's just about knowledge and learning. But the more I'm ingrained in academia, the more that I can appreciate the wisdom in that [expression of} that "it's not our thing".

There is this superiority of Western approaches to knowledge creation [vs.] Indigenous ways of knowing and being that I think really needs to be addressed. It's not about looking at barriers and enablers to post secondary education for Indigenous students. It's about looking inward, looking at what the university is doing that makes these spaces seem foreign to many Indigenous students. A lot of that revolves around this unwillingness to accept our Indigenous ways of knowing and being as equal to Western approaches to knowledge creation . Really recognizing the value in diversity, and diversity of thought, and diversity of experience. I mean this couldn't be more true in research where this issue really needs to be addressed.

And that's all I'll say about that. Thank you.

Participant F:

I think I guess, too, I feel like this time right now is almost the perfect storm. There's so much happening in the world. People are speaking up. There is more acknowledgement of injustice that's going on, and so this is the perfect time to strike.

[As for] Ryerson, I feel like there's probably pressure as to why we're even in these talks. So that part I don't know for sure, but that's my impression. That part kind of bugs me. Regardless of why it's happening, take advantage of this opportunity.

When I think of the statue, it's absolutely, literally putting somebody up on a pedestal. They're being thought of in this manner that is almost untouchable. Now that there's so much more understanding of who Egerton Ryerson was, I don't think this statue needs to be there.

There's other ways to acknowledge history and it doesn't necessarily have to be a statue that you have to walk by every day or that you have to see and be reminded. There's other ways to remember. I really liked the idea of taking the statue down, putting some sort of permanent plaque that can weather all the different seasons of Toronto, something that's going to be there for a long time. I also like the idea of replacing it.

I don't know exactly what it should be replaced with, but I think the time is now. If there was ever a time that people are really looking for ways to change. I think that the statue needs to come down.

In terms of how fast it should happen, there's a part of me that just [wants to] get to it already. I also agree that it has to be done in a thoughtful manner, and that everybody should have the ability to participate in their understandings and ideas.

I did fill out the survey and I attended one of the Standing Strong Community Consultations where there were questions. Some of the questions were worded in a way, it just looked to me like people were you know . . ., "oh, shouldn't we be okay with acknowledging that Egerton Ryerson was of his time"... I think when you have thoughts like that, it's really important to also have circles like this, where people that are impacted by it daily have an opportunity to speak.

I also really like the idea of creating, whether it's a class, something that teaches history - Indigenous history that everybody should take. I don't know how quickly that would happen or how easy the how easily that would happen or if there would, unfortunately, be a backlash to that. I think those are some really great ideas and I agree with those.

Participant G:

So, What would you like to see the university do next?

I would like to see the university provide tuition reimbursement for all Indigenous students who have to carry around that Ryerson diploma with them and compensation for all Indigenous employees at Ryerson university, because they have to carry the weight of the trauma their ancestors endured at the hands of his name! I'm just joking, I know that would be nice in a perfect world.

What I would like to see is a number of things: One remove the statue already! Take it off the platform, put it down somewhere, paint it red. . . really just take it down, just take it down already. That's what I want to see.

Continuing to honor the legacy that is of his in the 21st century is a little old now. Come on, we've changed a lot as a society, we've grown so much. I don't know why we have to keep having this discussion back and forth about this history. Melt it down and put it somewhere else, talk about the legacy that he had, it really doesn't matter to me. Just like do something with it already and take it down.

I agree with what Participant E had said, setting up a memorial in place of where his statue is to acknowledge the residential school survivors or

the students who didn't survive at residential school. Honoring their names, letting those names live on in places where Ryerson University had his {Egertons'} statue. Because those students never got to go home. They never got to see their families and we can't just forget about them. Because Egerton Ryerson did create that legacy so that's a part of him, you could put *that* in places where his statue is.

The other thing I would like to see happen, is education around it, Indigenous education around the history of what Egerton Ryerson was. Not just being "A man of his time", but also acknowledging the legacy and the racism and his mindset at that time, in terms of, what he stood for and how vast it is from today's mindset and acknowledgement of our cultural norms in society.

Take it down, put it somewhere else, acknowledge that history of him. But also, in place of where his statue is that honour the residential school survivors and the students who attended residential school that didn't survive. Provide education around that Indigenous history. That's what I would do. That's what I would like to see done. Thank you.

Participant 'I':

We have the KAIROS Blanket Exercise at Ryerson and I think more people should be taking that [exercise] because I noticed in all the time that I worked at Ryerson there are a lot, a lot of people that I met, they are racists.

I remember working there at the very beginning and there was even an older guy and he was doing this [racist hand] signal [at me] in the hub. I was so upset when he did that. And then all he said was "It's okay I'm going to retire anyways". I'm trying to make friends in this university and you get people like that, they need to be educated. I don't care what area, because if they want the respect from us, give me respect. I always try, it doesn't matter what kind of field you're good at, what [role/position] you have. *They* need to be learning, all of this, as they come in [to work or teach at the University].

The statue - put it somewhere else.

With my healing some of the trauma that I had, I had to do some really heavy work so that it doesn't affect me as much. Even though with the name at Ryerson, I guess in some ways I'm getting used to it. Then there's someone saying that maybe we can't change that.

We need to have a little bit more support for our students, especially in the evening classes. What can we set up for them? Because when they're in a program, [for example] I've seen so many social work students

[experiencing difficulty] - it's hard and heartbreaking to see them in that state. How do you shake that? [without Student Support open in evenings].

When I get triggered it really affects me and I don't know how to bring myself down. I am very grateful for one thing we do, we always have tobacco for our students, we have sage. Maybe we should have little kits for our [night school] students. We need to have something more in place for our students to help them. Now that we have more support in numbers, we should have that available for them and/or some kind of App that they can get at their hands and be able to talk about [things], because when you're going through it it's really, really hard and I'll leave it at that.

Participant J:

What I am hearing is more around education and the history of Ryerson and the impacts of residential school to this day. Not only that, the intergenerational impacts are quite significant - we are still experiencing those today. I think of many students not thinking that they're good enough to go to post secondary. That's a significant intergenerational impact that we've all been dealing with and still continuing to deal with, to this day.

I would say yes, mandatory [education], introductory kind of thing would be the least amount of work that the university, or any post-secondary institution for that matter do. It could be like an online mandatory course that you cannot graduate until you complete that course or you cannot have your grade submitted until that is finalized. It puts it on the student to not only complete that, but it puts it on them to complete it at their own time.

We all agree that a lack of education around Indigenous history is one of the biggest barriers to acceptance in any kind of society.

When we talk about education specifically and how that has impacted Indigenous students, we, those of us who are Indigenous, we know what the impacts are and the lack of access to quality education, for that matter, is also quite a significant barrier to overcome. We are often left with second or third rate education in our public school systems on reserve, off-reserve because of a lack of that history. In some books, in some history classes that's taught at the public school level, it's basically a chapter, and even if that, it's chopped, it's a small chapter on Indigenous history where Indigenous people are put in a past context.

We are here, we are still here. What does it mean in contemporary society to be an Indigenous person looking at these barriers that we have to overcome every day.

Every day we are being racially profiled, whether we really realize it or not; by looks, by the attitude of ignorance, by all these kinds of things and it stems from a lack of quality education at an earlier level.

I would also like to see more languages taught in our post secondary systems, because there are those of us who are our students who may be just discovering their journey now. Maybe had reluctance or never had access to education, or their language and their culture at an early age. We all know, there are a whole slew of 60's/70's scoop survivors, and non-status Indigenous People out there who are looking to re-engage with their cultural identity. When we have a lack of services in place or lack of opportunities in place, we know that makes it difficult. There are all these kinds of programs we need to implement. This goes all goes back to education. It's education that we want to see. We work in an educational institution, why does it seem to be so challenging to look at non Western ways of education?

The generally accepted as the Western science worldview, the Western Westernized world view, but there are so many different educational systems out there that we have to be considering. That's one of the ways I think that we can decolonize the educational system is to look at other alternative educational systems. Our cultural knowledge is passed down through stories and within the stories are not only lessons, parables and everything like that there's also a history of scientific observation within our stories. And there's a reason why these stories have lasted for so long. Our oral all written history, notwithstanding the Westernized system, is still persisting and it is making a resurgence. But it's such a small trickle in the pond of knowledge that we have lost a lot of it and we're steadily trying to hold on to. Again, it comes back to access to education, access to quality education, bringing back those stories in a way that we can safely tell them in a Westernized institution. That we hold those knowledge's because there are so many people who grew up without that knowledge and that history.

Ironically, it took me moving off reserve to find out who I was as an Indigenous person, what my clan system meant, what the stories were that I heard. I got those from here in Toronto in the Native community and those didn't happen on reserve.

Again it's because of this impact of the residential schools and the policies that have happened.

In the context of what we're talking about it is that educational aspect that we need to bring back and a non Western way.

Participant K:

J shared his experience, as have many other students and staff and other folks have shared their experience that they were streamed.

It wasn't until they reached post secondary education that they got to learn and thus, unravel the colonization, and all these things that have happened to them, and to their families, to have an understanding of that today.

What can the university do with that piece; I would like them to hold a REACH back conference to educate elementary school guidance counselors and teachers to Stop. Streaming. our kids. Teach them to stop having this mind frame that we are less than, not up to par or can't keep up with advanced courses and whatnot.

What do you want to see the university do next? I'm feeling very passionate, oh my gosh, all right. It's a jokey idea, but under this jokey idea is, well, I'll talk about that, after.

I would love to have a day, where they finally decided to tear down the statue and we get to pay five bucks that goes into scholarships for Indigenous students then we get to pie Egerton or paintball him. That would be fun. The university suits probably aren't going to want to hear something like that, but I don't care.

Underneath this jokey idea, if you scrape off the humorous layer, for me it speaks to the want of some kind of retaliation to even the score for our people and all the oppression that we have received.

Another idea, once the statues taken down and something new, is created like an art piece and ceremony, something like a representation of the ever growing tree in its place, you know from the whole reconciliation perspective, representative of continued learning be there and that friendship and relationship that continued for always in this spirit of reconciliation and underneath that would be strawberries like from the Anishinabe point of view. That Heart Berry [strawberry] that's grounded in the earth and from our hearts for both parties, Indigenous and non-Indigenous.

Participant L:

I'm learning so much from hearing everybody else speak. My thoughts for what happens next. . I'll maybe restrict [my comments to] the statue as I take in some of the other things that I've heard.

I think that it should come down.

Discussions that we've had today show that before it comes down there [needs to be] discussion to happen about what replaces it. Which is a discussion that could be made even after it's down. You don't have to decide everything beforehand.

I did want to share two things that I was thinking of as the discussion was going on, just because I think people will like them and think that they're clever. One of my reporters was interviewing a M'ikmaq woman about the takedown of the Cornwallis statue out East. This Mi'kmaq woman said "People keep saying you can't erase history, which is what they say when you take down a statue" She said, "Really?! Because you erased ours!".

The other thing that I was thinking about was this comedian, sometimes out of the mouths of comedians joking around, they say the most clever things. He was saying "with all these taking down law statues, and people saying this is erasing history, what if, it's not, what if it's making history?" I think that's a really positive way to think about it- it's not about erasing history, it's about making history.

Those are my thoughts [on those topics].

I taught the Indigenous journalism courses here, which I wasn't planning on teaching it. I took it because it was empty. I have never really loved these separate courses because when I was in school, I had this history and I felt it should have been part of Canadian history. What happened in Canada includes us and it shouldn't be taught separately. Whether it's right or wrong, my personal take has always been that a separate course should be a deeper dive but not educated about something. Only ten kids signed up for it and only four really participated in it. The students asked for them, but then don't sign up for the courses.

The school tries to arrange a time for them where it forces the students to sign up for it, because it doesn't have at least eight students enrolled, they have to cancel it, so they kind of play with it, a little bit, to kind of even force them in. So it's this weird thing, where the students are asking for this, but then I'm not making the time to take it. In these discussions, I said I just don't understand why it's not part of the core courses. We had a discussion [where] some of the teachers said they don't know what to include. They're afraid they won't include the right things. Their own education wasn't fulsome. They're trying to learn [but] they're afraid of making mistakes. They're afraid that they don't know or have expertise in the material in order to do it properly. So they created a space for me to go in. I'm now looking at the first year mandatory course and we're going to include throughout that course material on Indigenous people, journalism, how to cover the issues

starting with a 101 on the Treaties and Indigenous Rights- where they come from. Then we're going to look at the mandatory second year course and do the same. I think it's going to be an evolving thing. I don't think it's ever really done but I'm really pleased that we are starting to go in that direction. I felt good about it. Hopefully it will become more of a you now know all the basics because you've taken journalism and Indigenous People are included in journalism, but if you want to specialize here's more kind of course.

So that's what I had to share.

Participant N:

I agree with folks saying that the statue should come down but there needs to be a deadline so people have a chance to vent because that's very healing too.

I also think that right now Ryerson is taking this opportunity to do an internal scan, but it's the energy that was put into erasing Indigenous thoughts and ways of life; needs to be equal. Ryerson can't do this alone. They need to work equally hard with the government's; Ontario and Canada, as well as the churches to re-educate Canadians. To tell the truth. That it's a concerted effort and that the Community sees that it's a concerted effort between these organizations.

That Ryerson foots the bill for touring the statue around to the [Indigenous] Communities, so that people have that chance to vent. [For example] we're going to go and the opportunity is to, you can take those foam bats and beat the heck out of him just to get that energy out, because people have been carrying that for generations. And it needs to be as long. I did some calculations, and it's been 156 years that this system was in place, so it needs to be at least 156 years that they're doing this work, concerted.

That Ryerson, these people, need to make that commitment, like all of them, need to make that commitment for at least 156 years. That they're going to [provide] free language classes for all Indigenous folks. And it needs to be a law across the universities; if Ryerson is going to be doing that, it needs to be all universities doing that, too, because they're the ones that are teaching the teachers.

They put a lot of effort into eradicating Indigenous ways of life. It needs to be as much energy and effort going into it, as it was to eradicate it.

Also policy there. In the policy departments there needs to be mandatory history all about Ryerson and about Canadian government colluding to erase Indigenous folks. There also needs to be education in the media, all of those blind spots- all the ways that they talk about us, the

different kinds of perceptions, and the different kinds of ways that they portray Indigenous folks. They need to teach [about] that bias, how to spot that bias in themselves because that's harming our people nowadays. Those things need to stop too, and if they can't stop it unless they take responsibility for it and teach people how it happened. How these filters were created so that they can see them for themselves and have a chance to to correct that while they're in school.

So those are just some additional thoughts about what I would like to see the university doing, but it needs to be a concerted effort, and as long as the residential schools were in place, if not more. I would like to see them do it forever, but whatever.

Final Thoughts, Ideas, Concerns Or Suggestions:

Participant A:

Participant L, thank you for sharing that about the comedian. The comedian I turn to is Charlie Hill. I like that quote or this one joke, he said,

"The strongest nations in the world have been trying to eradicate us for four or five hundred years. But guess what, we're still here! Handsome, strong, resilient, and Indigenous".

I like that.

Also, to come back to J's comment about the importance of educating the youth or children about history at an earlier age. So we're not diminishing their intellectual vanity or their perceptions of Indigenous Peoples. It goes further than that, how this false consciousness has developed, it's been developing for over 500 years. It's been done through inaccurate literature, media, and false representation of Indigenous people through media & film, rumors, and Declarations. Even the American Constitution still identifies us as "the ruthless savage Indians,". That's still in their Constitution. Narrow minded concepts such as Manifest Destiny influences the public narrative to view Indigenous Peoples as insignificant and easily disposable. It's still relevant today; [through] missing and murdered Indigenous women and people being followed around the store, especially dark skin Indigenous people get followed around constantly. I get followed around constantly, I could probably make a movie to tell you the truth. I have to pray before I go shopping just to remain cool.

When I was a kid, I went home and visited this one summer; my older cousin, who had kids that were the same age as me. She formed a jiggling team and called it 'The Fourth Generation'. I always wondered what that meant, the fourth generation, what does that mean? I was reading

something like just the other week, about residential schools. A residential school survivor, she was actually a pretty influential educator, she said, "We are the fourth generation since residential schools were implemented in Canada". So will it take the seventh generation for the statue, or a name change to occur, or is this going to be an ongoing thing, or is it going to happen today? It should happen today.

As we all know that the residential schools were designed to expunge children from their communities and annihilate Indigenous culture, languages, and history. To be deculturized and only become [educated] enough to become farmers, which is still relevant today, because education is only provided up to level eight in some communities. Some of the communities up north around Thunder Bay have to send their children to Thunder Bay for a basic education; where some of them go missing or murdered. They were murdered for being Indian.

Indigenous children didn't matter back then; and if we were to keep the statue and name around it, it would say that we Indigenous Peoples, still don't matter today.

Participant F:

I have thought about the name change a lot and think a lot of it has to do with money. Ryerson is a mainstream institution, on that basis, a lot of its decisions are based on money. I'm trying to put myself into their heads, as to what would appeal to them in terms of the name change, other than doing the right thing, because I don't necessarily think it's all based on doing the right thing. I think a lot of it has to do with pocketbooks. So it's, as I said earlier, this is whether people are doing it for the right reason or because they want to look good. I do think that this is the time, if you are trying to look good in the eyes of others because of so much pressure right now.

In terms of injustices, this would be the ideal time for Ryerson to change their name, because I think it would look good.

In terms of them saying 'Okay we've acknowledged that'. Whether they're doing it for the right reason or not, I think that it would bring a lot of good PR, saying that "We've decided, that we're going to change the name" and maybe, that would then make them realize that it could also attract a lot more students, and a lot of people that don't agree with this outdated name.

I mean that's not my reason for saying- change the name. I just think that Ryerson is a mainstream institution, and that is probably what goes into their thought processes; how does it look in terms of PR? How much

money are we going to lose? All those kinds of things. I'm always trying to put myself into what other people are thinking, good or bad, in terms of why things happen. I do see a lot of big institutions, even sports teams . . . this is a time that you're seeing all these institutions are making those changes, so I think if we are to push for something, this would be the appropriate time to do it [for those reasons], but I would hope that it would continue.

Thank you.

Participant G:

I do have a concern. It is that the University won't act on any of these suggestions or the input that students and staff have been providing, that would be really disappointing. It would actually be very disheartening to see another organization allowing us to provide our opinions and then not acting on them. My concern is that the university won't actually take action on this. They'll listen to what we have to say, hear it out, and then go about with their own agenda and that would be really disheartening and it wouldn't really show any kind of reconciliation or acknowledgement for the feedback that's provided here today. If that is the outcome, I think it might be problematic to further reconciliation talks with Indigenous People if that's their (in)action.

Thank you.

Participant K:

I feel that the actions of the protesters in July was a warning to the university. The citizens of the city - in this province have given the university a chance to do the right thing. I am going to say that if the university doesn't remove it, I feel that the citizens are going to take matters into their own hands like we've seen in other cities. Citizens will just go tear it down themselves if the university does nothing.

Participant J:

I have a couple closing thoughts as well.

I agree with what everyone's saying, and I also realized that the AEC committee asked for this Roundtable to happen so now it's on record. It's a matter of public record now and the university or anyone can't say "Oh well, we never get anything like that, or we never talked about it". It's on the record now in a more formalized format.

I'm also curious . . . we do have a number of senior faculty who are at Ryerson and I'm curious as to why they were not here today.

Maybe there's a separate session for them to discuss this at their levels? I think if this is an important enough conversation that people react to the statue or the TRC or any kind of Indigenous initiatives that are going on to comment on then they should also be here, available, and willing to have that discourse with us as well.

I've seen in the past that people have commented on things that have happened at university, with or without Indigenous knowledge, or without with or without *certain* people's input that has not always gone on in a positive manner. We, as the people who work at Ryerson, the Indigenous People, have to be able to have these conversations, all together, and in a safe space, such as this. That's my concern - Where are the senior [Indigenous] faculty members? What is their participation?

We can have these discussions, all we want, but we also need that leadership to step in and also provide that kind of constructive feedback as well.

So that's my take on it. You know I feel like there needs to be more discussion around this, because we need to have those people who are sitting at those bigger tables to listen to our input firsthand as well.

Closing feedback and event testimony from Facilitator and Elder Witnesses:

Facilitator, Community Grandmother, Dorothy Peters:

I just want to thank everybody for their input and for expressing their thoughts, and feelings. I know that there still needs to be a lot of work done, in terms of education, communication, engagement to reach out to other students, and also for the Community, because everybody needs to be involved. Like J said, when we come to the circles, it doesn't matter what title or what position you hold; we would all come together, even the youngest, those that could speak had a voice. They would talk, the teenagers, and young adults and the older people and everybody said what they needed to say from their own heart, from their own the way they saw things, because all of us, we see things differently. We never ever see things the same way as the next person.

That's how our communities used to sort out these things when there was troubles in our communities, long before courts and things like that came about or levels of different titles.

It was so important to have these circles, where community would come together. And they wouldn't stop, they wouldn't stop until everybody came to a consensus, where it was agreeable and it felt good in your heart.

Even if there was somebody that had doubts, they would go back around and talk some more until it was all talked out. Then it would be there, the truth of what everybody wanted would be at the table. I think that's what needs to be done, and I think it's coming.

We have these conversations, not just at this table. There are conversations that are happening and we do have a bigger picture to look at and to talk about because it's not just one institution, it also ties in with other institutions whether it's justice, or education, or among so many other [areas] that contribute to how Canada has treated us. I want to congratulate all the young people for their willingness to hear the stories, and to take that courage and to be able to question and talk about their own journeys and how those journeys also affected their families. Those are the conversations that are really important: to know where you come from and to know that journey of how you got to where you are.

For those that are in the post secondary education; you're there, you got there, but you still have to work 150% more than the other person does. That wears on you, but your presence there will also lead others to follow.

When I was over at Anishnawbe Health I used to [facilitate] the Community Health Care Worker program where I had six students. I really encouraged them to get a post secondary education. Ryerson was one of the places where I would take them; when they had cultural events, or when they had speakers. We piggyback on those things, because my program didn't have the funds to bring people in to talk about all these issues, and so I never once thought about why Ryerson or anything. I just said "Just get the paper it doesn't matter where you get it- just get it", because that's your step towards being able to just get that much [more] involved to knock down those barriers for those younger ones that are coming behind us. I always think that way: it's always making a path for those who are coming behind us, those middle ones. Those are the ones that are going to; if we provide a clear path, those are the ones that are going to talk very clearly about what their/what our journeys going to be and what the history- how it's going to change and how those changes will be made, what we need.

As I'm getting older, there's so many things that could change, and I wish I could be here to see all of that, because it's exciting, it's awesome to see changes.

Even from when I was a kid to where I am now, there has been lots of change, and so, if it wasn't for those people that took it upon themselves to hang on to culture, to pass that on, to pass on those teachings, the language, and all those things- we'd be struggling, like you're lost in the bush and you don't know where you're going. You have to make your way and eventually you'll get somewhere. That's what we need

to remember: trust in yourself most of all, in where you are and what you're doing and be kind, and be compassionate towards others. It doesn't matter who it is because we need to do that, we need to.

I heard somebody talk about how some of the instructors and those people that could make changes were scared to make mistakes and didn't know how to go about it. We can reach out to those people and say, well, this is what I can tell you. *Not* to tell them *how* to do it, but say "This is what I can tell you about what I know". That really makes a difference when you can do that: to share those stories and talk about those experiences. Really what's important is the stories that everybody has about family, what their families went through. And that takes courage. I think that a lot of people have that, have those teachings.

I wanted to leave you with that.

I say thank you for allowing me to be at my first zoom meeting ever! So, thank you.

Witness Testimony from Elders Eileen and Grafton Antone:

Grafton Antone:

I'm really glad that we've had this opportunity to listen to the concerns regarding who Egerton Ryerson was, is, and shall be.

So we're dealing with time. I think that the time, the time for action is now. I think that based on the times, because we are in a time of resolution, resolving things so that they can come to [an end], or that they can come and be launched again in a new way. Time, for the Ryerson University, it has come.

It has come down to: What about the name? What's in a name? And there's a lot of things I would say about a name. When we think about Onkwehonwe names, we think about the weather, the time of season, the things like that, where we refer back to our Mother Earth and into Mother Earth.

In Mother Earth we have our answers. Mother Earth has been bringing us [these answers] along all this time. Mother Earth is- if you look at the immense forest fires in the West every time in the fall and spring lately, those plains are burning up. They took our animals off of the land, they took the buffalo and just left it barren, not leaving people to look after anything. So when that happens, there's going to be change.

Our concern is to manage the change as best as we can, and knowing who you are.

I was looking at this 'No Face' corn husk doll, it's a symbol of our culture. And looking at this other one, which presumably, is the male.

You can tell by the nice long hair- that's the guy. That's one of the things that our people did in the past, they never cut their hair. Or they *didn't* do things- they let things grow.

As I was looking at that [doll], I thought "We need to see something new". I was thinking that if we had the legend of the 'no face doll'- you all know that story:

The young girl was so beautiful that she just continued to look and look in the water and admire herself wherever and whenever she could see herself. After a while Creator said "That's enough". And so, it changed.

Ever since then, our stories have been: 'To be' without really identifying the face.

I'm thinking that we should, maybe you should suggest that a no face corn husk folle be there.

We need the circle honored for how our people go around the big drum in a circle. Those are the kinds of things that we need to have ready to suggest as Indigenous people as being more contributing to the circle education of our peoples and in a good way. That would really do something.

If [the statute of] Ryerson wanted to be in there, you could put him down into the circle, as one of those dancing to the drum. It could be worked out.

The raising of the circle would be by an eagle staff, a dancer, a leader, and drummer [etc.].

These are the kinds of things that I heard from you people as you shared. I know that you were talking about the effects that have been hurt upon you, and I know that that's truth, truthfully hard. I was thinking because we're going into the future, we have to know that we are, based on the time that we are in, in control of our future.

The education that has been passed is one era. One era has now passed away. Egerton Ryerson era of forced education, enforced assimilation, enforced all those things. We need to make a declaration and we need the AFN to support our declaration. We need all those outside Indigenous supports to help us, to make a statement that it has to go further than here.

As students and faculty at Ryerson I'm happy that you all have a place to learn, that you have a place to get an education. As I remember, being an Elder at Ryerson for a while there in the past, it was really good to have been a part of that- listening to the ways of the students and for my part, I was, I was trying to do that- holding you up so you could

dance. Dance to the water drum, the big drum and hand drum- dancing: that's what made you all, who you are. It made me happy to have known that we did have a time that we were able to bring these kinds of cultural happenings at Ryerson University and across Toronto.

I remember the big powwows they used to have at the Skydome. That covered Dome was everything. Ryerson students were there too. We all know, our time. I remember we had a long line up there to try to get into the Skydome so we could get the powwow off in a good way.

I believe that's what we are at this time- Awesome. In this time of pandemic, in this time of this terrible disease that can affect our respiratory system, we need to be celebrating. Celebrating our survival again, because these diseases that have been brought here have been sent to us to affect us.

We're small in number [as Aboriginal People]. So we need to be able to support each other by clapping, we need to be able to support each other with our smiles, and our good faces, and we need to do all these things in this time of change.

I guess what I'm saying is: I like the input that each of you have had and I'm glad that you shared from the heart. You shared from your family, you shared from the experiences of them and it's just not you, it is your family, because you are the product of your generations that have gone before you, and now you stand here in the fourth generation.

The Dine people or the Navajo people, have this story of emerging worlds. I think we're in the fourth world where they emerge out of 'from below', and they come up. In the Iroquian tradition, or Haudenosaunee tradition, we are in 'the time of waiting the Peacemakers return'. We have been hunted, we have been chased around, we have been overmatched but we're not giving up, we're still here and we're still going to go on. So these are the kinds of things that we need to lift up. In the Anishinaabe tradition as much as I know of it, which is not too much, they talk about the seventh generation or the seventh fire or the Eighth fire even. They're saying: 'this is a time of rejuvenation'.

These are the kinds of things that we need to call on to make this statute replacement a viable and an enriching thing.

Witness Testimony; Elder Eileen Antone

There's been a lot of lamenting about the statue and the feelings that the person/that statue makes people think about when they pass the statute. I know that all of you have had very, very interesting things to say. We know that the past is part of who we are and we need to also acknowledge that.

When I think about the residential school system. I also didn't know about the residential school system. Both my mother and father went to residential school, but they never talked about it in the terminology and ways that I've heard of lately, where the children were beaten and where they had needles through their tongues and again it was based on the education system.

I just remember that my parents were gentle people and they were kind people. And so, again, the experience that different people had in the residential schools also impact what happens in the generations that are happening now.

I know that I've been at Ryerson in the past, for many, many events. They've had events that the students were interested in. I'm really, really glad that there are so many students there now because, again, you can see what has happened as the time has gone on and more and more students are there. More and more students can speak out now.

In the beginning [of this discussion], I heard it talked about not having a voice. I've heard people wanting to get rid of that statue. The thing that's really important is OK, if we get rid of something, then we need to have an alternative suggestion that will make sure that things can go on in a good way still.

As I'm thinking about it. I never knew about Egerton Ryerson in my early education. I started at the university in 1975. There were very few Indigenous students there. My thoughts were always "Okay, how come I haven't learned anything about the Native People. Surely they must have put something in something for Native People?" There wasn't really very much information about Native people. It wasn't until I got to a sociology course where they talked about Maria Campbell, who spoke about the Metis people, and Harold Cardinal spoke about how the Native Peoples, Indigenous people were treated in Canada. So it was from there that I started learning about our people and the situations that had a big impact on why we don't know our language, and why we don't have our culture, and why all of these things happened- because of the government and the church.

I've had to resolve these things because I was really angry, I was angry. I was really sad because of the experience our ancestors had to go through. I had to start thinking again, "well you know I could remain in this really angry stage and it wouldn't get me any place". I had to go through that introspection of the learnings that I was receiving from the post secondary education as those were things that were new very, very new to me.

Even when I first started over at OISE, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, there weren't [Indigenous] students there. There was myself and another student there for my first year there. Then there were some part time students that would come in as summer. [As students we questioned] where are the Indigenous faculty and where are the Native students? This is an Ontario school for studies in education, and we don't see any Native students here.

Now I hear there's now 14/15 Aboriginal/Indigenous faculty at the university and many, many students. Through all of these things, I can see that the change that has happened- from not having anything, to now: we have all of these students, all of you people that are teaching various students. We know we can't just teach the Native students, we know we have to teach *all* students.

I was hearing that we need to keep Egerton Ryerson in the history books. We need to make sure that people, all peoples can hear the history of what happened to Aboriginal Peoples through the school system that was developed by Egerton Ryerson, so it's important that we remember all of those things.

I know that Cindy Baskin, Monica McKay, Lynn Lavallee, and Ruth Green were here while I was at the University of Toronto. Those were my cohorts. I could get support from them and I tried to support them in whatever they were doing at Ryerson University too.

I want to say that we are remembering that it was this university that we're talking about today. The Ryerson university that has enabled all of you to be who you are today. I want us to remember that. It even impacted me.

I was involved in a lot of the different things in the early part of Ryerson when RASS was starting and the students were there and learning the traditions from some of the Elders like Lillian McGregor, who was at U of T. She had a big impact on a lot of people in making sure that we were able to do things. I know when I was going to Ryerson for the various meetings, we didn't have a meeting unless there was an opening and we didn't stop unless there was a closing. I don't know if those things still happen any place. That was one of the things that many of the Elders that I listened to, at the time, were adamant about. It was important for us to have that Opening, the Thanksgiving because it was a way to give thanks to each and everyone that was participating - for us to remember our relationship and when we talk about the people we have to talk about all of the people. It's not just 'my cousin', or 'my sister', or 'my brother', 'my kinship'. We remember *all of the people*, because we're related somehow or another, whether it's through education, whether it through (indecipherable audio), we're related to all kinds of people.

So it is always important for us to acknowledge that and give thanks for the people, give thanks for Mother Earth, give thanks for the water, the plants, it was important for us to do that, and I remember because that's what I used to go to Ryerson to do.

So, again, remembering that we need to do the ceremonies. The eagle feather was always important. We kept the eagle feather wherever we were to remind us to speak the truth as we knew it. The eagle feather reminds us that we get the gift of vision. We have the gift of vision within each and every one of us, and that's to remember that, whatever we do today impacts generations to come. Our people said it impacted seven generations. So, again we think about all of those kinds of things. Learning of the Seven Grandfather's, I learned from the Ojibwe people. I've worked with many Ojibwe people when I was teaching up at Georgian college. And so again, knowing that the Seven Grandfather's have the teachings there to remind us of respect, of bravery, of humility, of honesty, of truth, many, many teachings in there that we have.

So again, I heard the lamenting about the statue and the way it has impacted people at the University, but I also want to remind you that again, the University has made you who you are today. [It] has made many, many, many of us who we are, today.

That's what I wanted to share this time.