



**Final Project Report**  
The Australian Learning and Teaching Council  
*Leadership for Excellence in Learning and Teaching Program*

**An Institutional Leadership Paradigm:  
Transforming practices, structures and conditions  
in Indigenous Higher Education**

Conducted by  
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And  
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## Executive Summary

The Institutional Leadership Paradigm: Transforming practices, structures and conditions in Indigenous Higher Education project has been funded by the Australian Learning and Teaching Council through the Leadership for Excellence in Learning and Teaching Program. The purpose of the project is to strengthen institutional leadership capacity to develop and deliver culturally appropriate and relevant indigenous teaching and learning programs within the participant institutes. This strengthened capacity has supported and encouraged academics, students and administrators to change and transform institutional leadership practices, structures and conditions to more effectively advance excellence in indigenous teaching and learning, generate new knowledge, and serve the community. Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education (BIITE) is the lead institution in partnership with Australian Catholic University (ACU National) and has involved invited Australian and international higher education institutions over a 2 year period in developing a creative and innovative approach to institutional change. The key resource emanating from this project and available for use by others seeking to improve institutional leadership for indigenous outcomes is the values based Institutional Leadership Paradigm or ILP.

The Institutional Leadership Paradigm (ILP) project networked Australian and international higher education institutions to provide new insights into the ways the sector can support indigenous students and staff to succeed in tertiary education. Eight institutions, five from Australia and three international, were brought together to pool their collective wisdom and experience and produce an ILP to guide, change and renew institutional structures, practices and conditions.

In June 2006, project partners, Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education (BIITE) and Australian Catholic University (ACU National) advertised the project to Australian and international universities calling for expressions of interest to participate in the project. Those that responded were invited to submit a full submission. Nine were successful and each was provided with a modest grant (\$6500 for Australian and \$9000 for international) to support their participation in project activities. One institution withdrew due to other work commitments leaving eight participants who worked effectively together over the two year period.

The primary approach to working with institutions has been through two Working Seminars, one held in Alice Springs, Northern Territory in December 2006 and the second in December 2007 in Brisbane, Queensland. Working Seminars were designed as opportunities for participants who usually work in isolation to work together to share and reflect on the institutional policies, practices and conditions. As the project is collaborative and guided by the participants they were asked in the first Working Seminar to work in groups to identify key values that they believed could support institutional change in the best interests of indigenous students and staff. They developed a document referred to as the Institutional Leadership Paradigm - the ILP<sup>1</sup>. The ILP was then used to

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 1: The ILP

guide and support them to undertake specific activities within their own institutions in order to modify some aspect of their institution's practice, policy and/or conditions. Participants' activities focused on different issues and impacted at different levels depending on their spheres of influence within their institutions.

The project supported activities<sup>2</sup> undertaken within participating institutions resulting in a range of transformations to policies, practices and conditions. Each institutional activity, developed through an activity plan, identified the guiding ILP value or values, the goals, specific actions and timelines and evidence to demonstrate change. The results of these activities are seen in the following overviews of institutional change.

- *Empowerment* of a group of indigenous academic support advisory staff to see themselves, and be perceived by others within their faculty, as 'real' academics, through active engagement in research for the first time.
- *Partnerships* through inclusion of Indigenous Advisory Councils within two universities that had no such structures prior to the project. Inclusion enabled representatives from local Indigenous communities to have direct input into university decision making through examining policies and practices that impacted on Indigenous students and/or staff and to provide ideas for change which were acted upon.
- *Enduring leadership* and institutional *transformation* promoted through increased indigenous academic involvement within two faculties where only one Indigenous staff member had been employed previously.
- *Openness* to diversity and *empowerment* of indigenous peoples through increased involvement of indigenous and non-indigenous academics in learning more about indigenous knowledges, perspectives and issues in order to improve teaching practices.
- Institutional *transformation* through reflection on the mainstream university culture as a western construct limited in its capacity to work in true academic partnership with indigenous communities. True *partnerships* were developed through a strategic establishment of a place on the "edge" of the institution where the co-construction of knowledge, both local and traditional knowledge as well as western knowledge, was able to take place. Leadership and direction from indigenous community was prioritised and the university role was to support that leadership.
- Promotion of *cultural integrity* through the systematic development of curriculum that was culturally safe, dynamic and innovative. Courses were developed that allowed indigenous students to grow academically and keep their cultural strength. Through a vertical curriculum approach that infused indigenous knowledges throughout every course and every unit within every course, all students were advantaged.
- *Cultural integrity* sustained through a policy approach requiring all academics within a faculty to demonstrate indigenization of their curriculum. The lecturer's capacity to achieve this was then tied structurally to incremental wage increases.

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<sup>2</sup> See Appendix 2: ILP Subproject Overviews

- *Openness* and *enduring leadership* supported through a strategic intervention in a staff promotion policy in order to address the persistent lack of indigenous academics at higher levels within the university. This strategy included indigenization of position descriptions and assessment criteria for academic promotions within the institution.

## Acknowledgements

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Ms. Jillian Miller, University of South Australia  
Mr. Phillip Falk, Griffiths University  
Ms. Tracey Bunda, Flinders University  
Mr. Ken Ralph, ACU(National)  
Mr. Joe Fraser, Head of School, BIITE  
Dr. Jacquie Ottmann, University of Calgary, Calgary, Canada  
Dr. Alan Pence, University of Victoria, British Columbia, Canada  
Ms Linda Jones Different Cloud, Sitting Bull College, Bismark, North Dakota, USA.  
The Project Reference Group, National Higher Education Network  
Dr. Sandy O'Sullivan, Manager, Online Presence, BIITE  
Ms. Sarah Fleury, University of Victoria, British Columbia, Canada  
Ms. Anita Lee Hong, Centre for Aboriginal Studies, Curtin University  
Mr. Adrian Appo, CEO Ganbina  
Dr. Bronwyn Fredericks, Research Fellow, Monash University  
Dr. Kerri-Ann Hewett-Fraser, Pro-Vice Chancellor Teaching and Learning, BIITE  
Ms Shirley English, BIITE  
Ms. Stephanie Jacob, ACU(National)

## **1. Name of Project and Project Number**

Name: An Institutional Leadership Paradigm: Transforming practices, structures and conditions in Indigenous Higher Education.

Project Number: (LE62)

## **2. Outcomes**

The outcomes for this project were divided into two phases. In the first phase (mid to end 2006) the following goals were addressed.

1. strengthen the leadership capacity of participant institutes in the area of indigenous teaching and learning programs;
2. identify common and contested guiding principles, values and philosophies that inform institutional leadership practices, structures and conditions in these programs;
3. compare, contrast and analyse institutional leadership practices, structures and conditions and their outcomes for students within a range of national and international institutes.

In the second phase (2006-mid 2008), the remaining goals were addressed.

4. develop an Institutional Leadership Paradigm (ILP) to strengthen the leadership capacity of institutions to provide culturally appropriate and relevant indigenous programs;
5. establish how an ILP can be implemented, assessed and evaluated; and,
6. model and trial a process for strengthening capacity within participant institutes for improving indigenous teaching and learning.

## **3. Approach and methodology**

The approach taken in the Project was to strengthen the leadership capacity of Participant Institutes (PIs) in the area of indigenous teaching and learning programs through a series of planned activities centred on developing an Institutional Leadership Paradigm (ILP). The ILP's purpose is to strengthen the leadership capacity of higher education institutions to provide culturally appropriate and relevant indigenous programs.

The ILP Project comprised two phases.

### *Phase I (July 2006 – June 2007)*

Consultation occurred with invited Australian and international universities that represented the range of delivery models. In Australia, invitations for participation were made to universities that have a substantial indigenous enrolment and represent the range of models used in Indigenous Higher Education and the Project Reference Group.

Invitations were made to higher education institutions in Australia, which had well-established indigenous programs. Participant Institutes (PIs) were self-nominated through the return of an Expression Of Interest (EOI). The EOI requested PIs to:

- describe their program: history, student numbers, delivery features, successes;
- consider how the program is distinctive;
- consider how their institutional structures, practices and conditions provide leadership in the provision of higher education to remote/regional indigenous students;
- consider the strengths and challenges of current institutional leadership structures, practices and conditions;
- describe exemplary institutional leadership practices, structures and conditions for engaging indigenous learners; and
- describe how the institution engages with communities and establishes community partnerships.

PIs also answered the following questions:

- What are the leadership values that currently underpin their institution?
- How are their institution's values promoted and protected?
- What values guide the leadership process?
- Toward what end(s) is the leadership effort directed?

PIs were also asked to identify what benefits would be gained from working collaboratively as part of the ILP project. Based on the quality of the EOI, six PIs (including BIITE and ACU National) were selected for direct involvement and support. Internationally, invitations were made to higher education institutions in Canada, USA and New Zealand which had well-established indigenous programs. There was no response to the invitation from New Zealand, however, two PIs from Canada and one from the USA were selected. All PIs were offered financial support for the cost of attending a four-day working seminar in Alice Springs and establishing a local reference group. Each PI also made their own contribution to the costs.

The program created two key consultative mechanisms. On a national level, the National Indigenous Higher Education Network (NIHEN) agreed to be the external reference group for the ILP project. On an individual PI level, each institutional team was expected to communicate through an internal institutional reference group involving those participating in the project to provide leadership for teaching and learning including existing staff, students and graduates as appropriate.

ILP Project documents were made available to all participants on a secure section of a Web Repository ('basecamp') for consideration prior to Working Seminars and to the internal reference groups via regular reporting and consultation. At the first Working Seminar, the Project Team and participants worked toward developing an ILP through the identification of common values, philosophy and principles for guiding the work of higher education institutions for indigenous staff and students. To this end, a 'workbook' containing critically reflective questions for each university participant to complete provided a structure for the Working Seminar. Audio recordings were made of

discussions and deliberations and, combined with workbook reflections, formed the major data collection strategy for the project. On completion of the first Working Seminar, each PI developed an activity plan for discussion and distribution of the ILP within their institutions. Ongoing collaboration about the impact of the ILP activities, between Phase I and Phase II, occurred primarily via teleconferences that occurred on a monthly basis.

#### *Phase II (July 2007 – June 2008)*

The ILP resulting from collaboration in Phase I was distributed, discussed, assessed and evaluated at sites both in Australia and internationally. The individual PI's activities took various forms, such as seminars, workshops, and discussion groups. The choice of activity was decided by the individual PI and each was required to regularly report on progress.

The second major activity was Working Seminar II held in Brisbane at which PIs shared their progress and findings from activities undertaken within their own institutions. At Working Seminar II each PI:

- described their ILP activities;
- presented their findings;
- reflected critically on their activities;
- contributed to the evaluation and refinement of the ILP;
- assisted in identifying dissemination strategies;
- reported on the influence of this project on institutional leadership in the area of Indigenous Higher Education courses; and,
- contributed to the overall project evaluation.

The final activity occurred at the end of 2008 where PIs presented outcomes of their ILP activity at the World Indigenous People's Conference on Education (WIPCE) in Melbourne, December, 2008. They are also reporting on results of their research in the form of a refereed journal article, which will be published in a special edition of Batchelor Institute's journal, *Ngoonjook: Journal of Australian Indigenous Issues*.

#### *Participating Institutions and participants*

##### National

- Flinders University (Ms. Tracey Bunda )
- Curtin University (Ms. Anita Lee Hong)
- University of South Australia (Ms Jillian Miller)
- Griffith University (Mr. Phil Falk)
- Australian Catholic University (Mr. Ken Ralph)
- Batchelor Institute (Mr. Joe Fraser)

##### International

- Sitting Bull College (North Dakota, USA) (Ms Linda Jones)
- University of Calgary (Canada) (Dr. Jacqueline Ottmann)
- University of Victoria (Canada) (Dr. Alan Pence)

*Sample Project Activities (for an overview see Appendix 2)*

University of Calgary participant, Dr. Jacqueline Ottmann, undertook an activity guided by ILP values *Partnerships & Transformation*. The activity goal was to initiate the institutional transformation at a faculty level through gaining support and approval from the Dean, Associate Deans, and faculty staff to form an Aboriginal Advisory Board (AAB) comprised of First Nations people from surrounding communities in order to create meaningful relationships and collaborative partnerships between these communities and the university. Her activity involved establishing and then engaging the AAB in considering and approving Aboriginal reading materials to be incorporated and infused throughout the undergraduate teacher preparation program. As an outcome of this activity the AAB was established and continues to operate.

At Griffith University, participant Mr. Phil Falk focused on ILP values *Cultural integrity, Enduring Leadership, Empowerment*. Five goals for his activity were identified:

- To maintain cultural relativism within the Institutional framework.
- To balance community expectations with the individual requirements of employment.
- To foster institute forward planning as opposed to ad hoc approach.
- To plan for succession, short and long term plans.
- To empower staff, students and community.

His activity required a transformation of the ‘unofficial’ *Indigenous Law Program* into a formally recognised (and funded) Indigenous Law Centre with the outcome being the establishment of a funded Indigenous Law Centre.

Sitting Bull College participant, Ms. Linda Jones Different Cloud, was guided by ILP values, *Partnerships and Cultural Integrity*. Her goal was to demonstrate to students that traditional knowledge is not just relevant to anthropology and environmental science subjects to can be applied across the curriculum. Her activity focused on gaining the support of faculty, administration, and the Board of Directors to identify a culturally relevant concept and accompanying activity for implementation. She created a committee to identify, develop and teach the concept across the faculty and to hold workshops for wider community to keep them involved and informed. The outcome was the establishment of the committee and the development of the key concept. The concept of Mother Earth was identified and used across all curriculum areas with a significant degree of success although some lecturers were more supportive than others.

At the University of Victoria (British Columbia), Dr. Alan Pence reflected on ILP values, *Partnerships and Institutional Transformation*. His activity involved a collaborative writing project with senior administrators to explore the idea and utility of institutional borderlands for enhancing partnerships with external parties, particularly those with a different culture than the institution. The goal was to enable recognition at a management level of the need for atypical structures and ‘spaces’ for advancing partnerships and knowledge generation with ‘others’ outside of the institution. Although his activity recognised the resistance to institutional change that such an approach entails, it was clear from the article generated through this activity that purposefully utilising the ‘edge’ or borderland of an institutional structure enables the ideational centripetal forces to may be

sufficiently overcome to allow other perspectives, values, beliefs and knowledges to emerge.

Ms. Jillian Miller's activity at the University of South Australia engaged the ILP values of *Empowerment* and *Transformation*. Two goals were identified.

- To increase the profile and research capacity of Indigenous staff in Indigenous Academic Advisor (IAAs) positions.
- To raise awareness of Indigenous Leadership and how this could be best nurtured within the institution.

IAA's were invited to participate in two Australian Government funded research projects. They participated in training to conduct field research for the projects, visited other institutions to network and familiarise themselves with other Indigenous Education Centres and staff, conducted interviews and focus group discussions with staff and Indigenous students, recorded data, debriefed with project team, key advisors and other field researchers, prioritised findings and contributed to writing the draft report. The outcome was a significant increase in IAA staff confidence in pursuing the university's research direction and increased knowledge of how research relates to core business of the institution as well as recognition by other academics of IAA staff as 'real' academics.

#### **4. Use and advancement of knowledge**

The ILP Project was informed by the research in the area of institutional leadership and the conditions and processes required for transforming practices, structures and conditions in Indigenous Higher Education.

Institutional leadership has been described as 'academic development involving an interplay of person, role, strategy and institution' (Taylor, 2005, p.31). To this could be added, a willingness of the institutions to engage in the change process, to avoid addictions and choose morally and wisely (Duignan, 2004, p.14), in the context in which the leadership engages in any particular activity.

In an institutional sense, Taylor & Schönwetter (2002) suggest that leadership is characterised by a reciprocal process of setting goals and creating ways to reach these goals. Bleiklie (2005, p. 2) suggests that institutional leadership is more than making the organisation into an efficient tool. Leadership as a function based in organisations, means that the institutions are 'infused with value, have a defined mission and role, and have become the embodiment of that role'. Institutional leadership can also be discussed in terms of synergy amongst a number of variables - the academic role, development strategies and the institutional context - all of which determine successful practices and leadership in any given situation.

The building of institutional leadership through capacity strengthening (Lambert, 1998) and the development of capabilities and capacities (Duignan & Marks, 2003) is an important focus. In addition, building leadership capacity is linked with ethics and morality - deciding what is significant, right, and worthwhile (Starratt, 2004; Duignan & Macpherson, 1992). Such leadership elevates the actions of the leaders above mere

pragmatics of expediency (Hodgkinson, 1991). The focus of authentic leadership is on elevating leaders' moral reasoning which is central to Burns (1978) seminal distinction between leadership that is transactional and that which is transformational. It is also the type of value-added leadership that is most relevant to organisations involved in the teaching and learning of indigenous students.

In order for transformation to occur, certain conditions within an institution should be present to facilitate the process. There should be a shared perception of a need for transformation and this perception needs to be articulated and described through clear goals. In the planning for transformation, the culture of the institution needs to be considered and the transformation proposal needs to be clearly supported from the 'top'. This calls for effective leaders who understand the institution's culture and can position themselves to work in establishing these conditions.

Mentkowski *et al.* (2000) describes this positioning as 'standing in', 'standing beside', and 'standing aside'. When 'standing in' one develops 'an integrated understanding of what kinds of learning frameworks, strategies, and structures work' at the institution, with this understanding being arrived at through an analysis of the institution's policies and practice. In order to shape the institution's transformative acts and guidelines, 'standing beside' suggests a process of 'continuing analysis of practice in partnership with other institutions'. 'Standing aside' involves bringing 'ideas and evidence from the literature on organisational change', and tailoring and applying it to the specific institutional plan and context. To Mentkowski's *et al.* typology can be added the need for transformational managers to involve and engage in the process with all stakeholders 'across levels, functions, and external boundaries' (Taylor & Schönwetter, 2002). When planning for transformation, there is a need for the plan to be practical in terms of resources, and for determining that the appropriate infrastructure is in place.

Avdjieva & Wilson (2002) delineate a number of 'pointers' for leaders in higher education and suggest that for successful transformation, the needs of the organisation are made 'important' and made 'explicit'. For organisational learning to occur (which is part and parcel of transformation), the focus needs to be on the nexus between the individual and the organisation. This means that it must be 'encoded into the practice of the organisation, so that it becomes independent of the memory, motivation and action of those individually involved'. Built into the transformative process are mechanisms and strategies to facilitate transformation and to assist effective leadership. These include understanding organisational culture and context, building collegiality, setting expectations, networking and forming coalitions, communicating, and the use of effective teamwork (Taylor & Schonwetter, 2002). In addition, there must be a mechanism which will allow for 'continuous assessment and reflective evaluation' (Avdjieva & Wilson, 2002, p. 381).

The literature suggests that transformation takes place incrementally and that when differences in perspective and priorities emerge, that these differences are understood as critical perspectives rather than being viewed as resistant barriers. Mentkowski *et al* (2000, p.366) state that transformation, 'does not occur by fiat or drift' but rather it is

‘constructed out of processes that engage and depends on a high level of participation by faculty and staff’ and that it is a kind of ‘campus conversation...that integrates taking an institutional perspective – an awareness of the institution’s dynamic nature – with a focus on learning.’

Research suggests that building a transformative process involves the stages of:

- I. identifying shared philosophy and values,
- II. establishing conditions,
- III. planning for change,
- IV. implementing the change process; and,
- V. assessing and evaluating change.

These five stages were replicated in the ILP Project, in a broad sense, with each PI undertaking a range of activities that were informed by the ILP. The contribution that the ILP Project makes to the literature is in relation to the emphasis on values within an institution that should be present to facilitate transformative institutional leadership. The ILP Working Group identified these as follows:

- openness – for example, through a demonstrated belief that indigenous education is everybody’s business, not just indigenous student services,
- enduring leadership – for example, through a long-term commitment to an indigenous employment strategy,
- transformation – for example, by extending the learning of the individual into their respective communities,
- cultural integrity – for example, through approaches to learning and teaching imbued with indigenous traditions,
- empowerment – for example, including and involving the students’ families, as well as the students themselves,
- partnerships – for example, bringing indigenous communities into the university,
- inclusion – for example, providing higher education within communities.

(ILP Working Group, 2007)

Influential leadership (Duignan, 2007) at an institutional level requires organisations to model leadership by living their values. The ILP values statement assists Higher Education institutions to do this in that it delineates a set of values that it sees as being central for transforming practices, structures and conditions.

The ILP was a means for transforming and improving the situation of indigenous students and staff and strengthening the capacity of participating institutions to provide more culturally relevant teaching and learning programs. However, a statement of values alone does not transform institutions. The engagement in the ILP project processes, guided by the ILP values framework, supported individual participants and groups within their institutions to work for change over a two year period. The nature of the framework, as a set of common values linked to institutional practices that embody and reflect them, meant that it could be accessed as a kind of ‘touch stone’ or ‘rallying point’ for guiding action to instigate change across a range different contexts and situations. In addition it

could be deployed in support of existing activities and change processes taking place within participating institutions.

Advice is provided through this project for other universities looking to improve their practice in the area of indigenous teaching and learning. Participants agreed that current university practice is not consistent with their values, the values of the ILP. In their experience, these values are 'felt' by indigenous people as much as seen. When indigenous academics and students step into universities, they often perceive immediately that they do not belong and may opt out at this point rather than fight. Indigenous peoples are very community oriented which requires that universities include not just the individual, but their communities as well. Inclusion of indigenous communities within the institutional structures is critical for developing culturally safe working places where people can share their knowledge, with each other and with their institution. Exclusion of indigenous peoples also excludes valuable indigenous knowledge and practice that could strengthen the university. The employment of a few indigenous academics, often in lower level positions, does not provide the necessary critical mass to allow knowledge sharing or provide for institutional change. Indigenous people, employed at all levels, are needed to create sustainable, deep seated institutional change. Those few indigenous academics in the system require enormous dedication and commitment to remain there. This advice on practices reflects the way the ILP can be used to guide change within a higher education institution.

However, participants were aware of the limitations of the ILP to affect change at an institutional level because prevailing institutional values are drawn from those available in the societies in which they are embedded. Specifically, university policies, practices and conditions tend to reflect society's values and beliefs about indigenous people. When indigenous people step into universities and demand change they make these institutions reflect on their values and what they really believe about indigenous people. Significant change is needed to university structures, practices and conditions in order to support real partnerships and to share real power with indigenous people, both within and beyond the walls of the university. This change can occur if institutions are willing to embrace and enact the values of the ILP.

## **5. Factors critical to and impeding project success**

As a project focused on institutional leadership for indigenous outcomes, the project team composition was critical to the success of this project. The team included both Indigenous and non-indigenous team members. Throughout the project each member developed a respect for each other and for the unique skills sets, knowledges and experiences each brought to the team. Project team roles and responsibilities were discussed openly and explicitly from the start and revised as needed. At the beginning of the project, partner institutions signed a Memorandum of Understanding (BIITE and ACUNational). This document created the basis for aligning and clarifying mutual expectations and beliefs about how to work together for mutual benefit and equity. It enabled an effective focus on the broader purposes of the project, moving beyond an individual or institutional perspective. The MOU supported the need to continuously reflect on the everyday business of the project team. For example, when team meetings, especially via

teleconference, became tense or when emails went unanswered, we revisited our processes, made changes and listened to each others views.

Face to face meetings were also critical for the opportunity they afforded for individuals who didn't know each other to assess each other's motives, integrity and personality. For a long term project to operate successfully across great distances, diverse institutions and different cultures, participants needed to trust each other as a foundation on which to build positive and productive relationships. The participation of PIs and the project team in the two working seminars, one in Alice Springs and one in Brisbane, was crucial for enabling these kinds of relationships to develop.

Deliberate and continuous consultation on all aspects of the project amongst the project team and project participants was also critical to the project. Achieving and maintaining connections amongst all of the members was not easy, despite availability of a range of communication technologies (i.e. phone, email, teleconference, video conference, and websites). Communications strategies were revisited many times in the course of the project, and two websites for project collaboration and information sharing were abandoned before finding a suitable site.

Willingness to go at the pace of the participants was critical. All PIs were senior academics with major demands on their time and attention and this project could not always be prioritised. As well as being flexible about time, it was also critical to support participants' participation through setting clear timelines, deadlines, and expectations for delivery of products. Public presentations of results, such as that afforded by the WIPCE conference, provided a real world focus for delivery of products.

It was important that the values developed for institutional leadership (the ILP) were reflected in the practices adopted by the project team. This was tested when some participants did not provide as much input as expected. For example, cultural integrity as a value required acknowledgement of diverse views and ways of doing things. When these views or ways of doing things did not fit within the timelines of the project additional time was negotiated to complete the project.

Evaluation of the project during the second Working Seminar asked each participant to reflect on the overall project, their initial expectations, what had been gained through their involvement that could inform current and future actions and their advice for improving the processes. They responded that the project approach had met their expectations and, in at least one case, exceeded it, which indicated to the project team that the project approach was acceptable. They reported gaining new contacts for networking with other indigenous academics, strengthened relationships, an opportunity to share their work and their concerns, a more focused understanding of institutional as well as indigenous leadership and a framework for making change within their own institutions. Their suggestions for improvements focused generally on the need for more time to work on their activities as individuals as well as together, face to face, as a team.

Much of the work of western academia is abstract, linear and word based and can be alien to indigenous ways of knowing, doing and being (Tuhiwai Smith, 2002). Tuhiwai Smith provides a list of approaches for exploring Aboriginal culture, one of which is visualizing. These types of approaches are more likely to preserve indigenous discursive paradigms (Dyck, 2005). A visual metaphor activity was used in the second Working Seminar as a way to further explore, clarify and express understandings of the values that underpinned the ILP. This activity gave participants a chance to think in new ways about these issues and they responded enthusiastically.



The metaphors (above) embody the relationships between the ILP values and the work of indigenous academics working primarily within mainstream higher education institutions and also reflect the diversity of indigenous cultures represented within the group. While a start was made during this project, further work on metaphors as vehicles for working for institutional change will be pursued by some of the project members.

The use of structured activity templates throughout the project prompted and guided participant responses, supporting their ongoing engagement with the project ideas and assisting them to adhere to the project timelines. These templates were a critical strategy for progressing the project and supporting participation.

Factors that impeded its success in general terms and that may provide assistance to other projects include the following. Participants' and project team members' lack of familiarity with and resistance to using a web based facility for communication and reporting was an impediment to the smooth progress of the project. We underestimated the degree of resistance that many people have to using these forms of communication. Even at the end of the project, some participants were asking for their passwords in order to access the online database set up to support their participation. A more formal training program at the beginning of the project, in how the use of this kind of website (basecamp in this case), would have avoided some of these problems.

The project managers and project leaders were one in the same in this project. We had not included funding for the role of a project manager and this, in hindsight, was an omission. In future projects, a designated project manager should be employed because of the high workload required to coordinate such a wide range of people and activities.

The most productive and effective use of time and funding in this project was achieved when participants came together for face to face meetings. Talking about values and working across cultures is difficult in any context. People need time together in the same room to form relationships. This is not to diminish the importance of using other means of communication, but there is no denying the power of direct, personal, real time

contact. Four or five face to face meetings, rather than two, may have accelerated the progress of this project.

## **6. Transferability of approach**

A key outcome for this project is the development of an Institutional Leadership Paradigm (ILP) which consists of keywords that capture the common values, philosophy and principles guiding the work of participants to improve higher education for indigenous students and staff. Implementation of the ILP into other educational institutions not previously involved with the project could be carried out through:

- drawing on learnings from the ILP project to develop an implementation package;
- engaging indigenous participants from this project in promoting the approach and outcomes more broadly amongst other Australian universities;
- recruiting Australian HE institutions not previously involved in ILP;
- facilitating the implementation of the package with invited Australian HE institutions through a series of structured, sequential, action research workshops;
- obtaining critical feedback through cycles of reflection that inform the refinement and consolidation of ILP;
- refining and extending ILP collaboratively with a wider group of Australian universities; and,
- creating an ILP resource package that includes a comprehensive account of the processes and products of the original ILP and ongoing ILP projects (i.e., a book or series of articles)

Funding is being sought to enable a broader implementation of the ILP project, including development of an ILP Resource Package, throughout the Australian Higher Education Sector.

## **7. Dissemination of outcomes across Higher Education Sector**

A series of six comprehensive planned outcomes, listed at the beginning of this report, serve as the basis for sharing the results of this project and there are three levels at which this has and continues to occur.

- Response at the personal level;
- Responses at the institutional level by each of the participants/delegates;
- Publication of the results and outcomes in journals, at conferences and seminars.

Developing an Institutional Leadership Paradigm has been a creative activity involving five Australian and three International universities and is the key outcome of the project. The sharing amongst the delegates of the project journey as well as its outcomes became a source of encouragement and affirmation as they identified similar though different challenges and difficulties when trying to develop indigenous institutional leadership and learning strategies. What was particularly helpful was the recognition of similar barriers and common experiences within their various institutions, whether in Australia or internationally. Using these insights for institutional transformation required them to

focus on what could be done within their respective spheres of influence, given their individual circumstances and contexts.

Dissemination occurred through a number of key presentations of project information.

- A presentation was made to the Executive Management Group of the Batchelor Institute in March 2008 which provided the opportunity to discuss with key personnel at Batchelor Institute of the progress and outcomes of the project.
- Project outcomes was provided by one of the project participants to the National Indigenous Higher Education Network, the project external reference group, in June 2008; another valuable opportunity to share information and disseminate learnings from the project.
- Eight of twelve team members presented project findings emphasizing lessons from which other universities could learn to the World Indigenous People's Conference for Education (WIPCE) *Indigenous Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Respecting Tradition: Shaping the Future*, in Melbourne, December, 8-11, 2008.
- A paper entitled *Exploring an Institutional Leadership Paradigm for Indigenous Staff and Students* was accepted for publication in the refereed conference proceedings of the WIPCE conference.
- Project participant Dr. Jacqueline Ottmann presented a paper on her involvement in the ILP project entitled to the *Thinking Beyond Borders: Global Ideas, Global values Conference*, University of British Columbia, Victoria, Canada, May 31 - June 3, 2008
- The project description, resources, papers and report are available on the BIITE website at <https://www.batchelor.edu.au/research/institutional-leadership>. This website will continue to be updated as results of this project are disseminated further.

The modeling and trialing of a process to strengthen the capacity of individual participating institutions to provide effective indigenous teaching and learning programs remains a 'work in progress' with further work to be done. Participants are preparing a series of articles to be sent out for review in early 2009. They will be published in *Ngoonjook*, a peer-refereed journal, for which two of the participants (White and Ottmann) have agreed to act as guest editors. In addition, at the February meeting of the ALTC Leadership Project Leaders a poster will be presented that provides information about the project in a succinct and accessible form.

## **8. Links between other ALTC projects and the ALTC Strategic Priority Areas**

The ILP Project is aligned to the Australian Teaching and Learning, Leadership for Excellence in Learning and Teaching Program, which aims to support 'systematic, structured and sustainable models of academic leadership in higher education', and has as one of its priorities 'institutional leadership to enhance learning leadership capacity-building at the institutional level' (Carrick, 2008). The ILP Project has links with a 2006 project - *Tiddas showin' up, talkin' up and puttin' up: Indigenous women and educational leadership* (Flinders University and ACU) and a 2007 project - *Strategic*

*leadership for institutional teaching and learning centres: developing a model for the 21st century (Deakin University)*. Both projects are concerned with the ways in which institutions show leadership, the former with indigenous women's leadership, and the latter with institutional stakeholders. Likewise, the ILP Project is concerned with institutional leadership and its relationship to teaching and learning. The ILP Project aimed to strengthen institutional leadership capacity to develop and deliver culturally appropriate and relevant indigenous teaching and learning programs within PIs. The ILP Working Group's values statement suggests that institutions that apply these values will strengthen their capacity to transform institutional leadership practices, structures and conditions so they can more effectively, advance excellence in indigenous teaching and learning, generate new knowledge, and serve the community.

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## Appendix 1: The ILP

The ILP Project makes a contribution through the identification and emphasis on key Indigenous endorsed values that should be present within an institution in order to facilitate transformative institutional leadership for Indigenous outcomes. The ILP Working Group identified these values as follows:

- *openness*, through a demonstrated belief that Indigenous education is everybody's business, not just Indigenous student services,
- *enduring leadership*, through a long-term commitment to an Indigenous employment strategy,
- *transformation*, by extending the learning of the individual into their respective communities,
- *cultural integrity*, through approaches to learning and teaching imbued with Indigenous traditions,
- *empowerment*, including and involving the students' families, as well as the students themselves,
- *partnerships*, bringing communities into the university,
- *inclusion*, providing higher education in communities.

(ILP Working Group, 2007)

## Appendix 2: ILP Subproject Overviews

ILP VALUES ADDRESSED	GOALS	ACTIVITY	LESSONS LEARNED
Transformation Empowerment Partnerships Inclusion	To initiate a meaningful change process that directly involves First Nations perspectives.	Form an Aboriginal Advisory Council that will consist of First Nations people from the surrounding communities with the hope that meaningful relationships and collaborative partnerships will be fostered between the Faculty and these communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Meaningful and authentic First Nations partnerships and guidance is critical; effective communication is important.</li> <li>b. To be sustaining and in-depth, change has to be both structural and affective.</li> <li>c. Value for First Nations students and faculty has to be perceived as important</li> </ul>
Openness Enduring leadership Cultural integrity Empowering Partnerships Communication Inclusion Transformation	To ensure Indigenous Academic Advisers (IAA) are supported and developed in their role by providing support for the development of research and teaching roles.	Motivate and support IAAs to become field researchers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Greater participation in decisions by IAAs.</li> <li>b. Increased team spirit.</li> <li>c. Increased knowledge of leadership and first year experiences of Indigenous students gained from the research projects.</li> <li>d. Knowledge of research process.</li> </ul>
Partnerships Transformation	To develop a structured higher education network for Indigenous staff at the Institution	Initiate a more focused approach on Indigenous staff development with a continued emphasis on networking with other organisations at a national level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The need for this network is absolutely necessary in order to support Indigenous staff.</li> <li>b. High Indigenous staff turnover, and unrealistic expectations of the workplace can be addressed by this type of support.</li> </ul>
Openness Cultural integrity Inclusion	For Indigenous students to achieve a better understanding of their culture, themselves, and of their course subject	Implement a culturally relevant concept – a focus on Mother Earth - into all classes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Institutional racism is hidden and exists.</li> <li>b. All subjects are relevant to the contemporary lives of traditional peoples.</li> <li>c. Students are significantly</li> </ul>

	matter through the infusion of culture across the curriculum.		more engaged when they are learning a subject from within their own worldview. d. Every course is relevant to culture in some way.
Cultural integrity Leadership Empowerment	To create an Indigenous Australian Centre of Legal Knowledge	Create original program as a platform – 5 year plan – to build respect with non-indigenous staff, the institution and the general legal fraternity within a major capital city.	a. Be well planned and informed. b. Be prepared for resistance, frustration and at times, conflict. c. Stay focused on the bigger picture/plan.