



Indigenous Student Development

Transcript

00:00:05:64 - 00:00:18:46

Speaker 1: I would like to begin with the land acknowledgment. I want to, of course, begin by acknowledging that we are gathered on the traditional ancestral and unceded territory of the Tk'emlúps te Secwepemc.

00:00:18:46 - 00:00:36:49

Speaker 1: I want to recognize and honor the enduring presence and legacy of the Secwepemc nation on this land. And also acknowledge the painful history of colonization and the ongoing impact of systemic racism, dispossession, and trauma that continues to affect Indigenous people today.

00:00:36:49 - 00:01:03:95

Speaker 1: As we gather here today, we commit to learning from and standing in solidarity with Indigenous communities and to working towards reconciliation, justice, and healing. As I was thinking about my own positionality as a cis gay man, particularly in light of today's talk, I'm thinking about the ways in which part of the queer community is built on fostering this dialogue, connections, and mutual understandings of the various threads that underpin queer communities across Canada.

00:01:03:95 - 00:01:15:28

Speaker 1: It also means that there is no unilateral approach to addressing systemic injustices for queer people. Just as there's no unilateral approach to addressing systemic injustices for Indigenous people.

00:01:15:28 - 00:01:32:16

Speaker 1: So it is coming from this place of gratitude and also humility that I'm particularly delighted to introduce our speaker, Marie Sandy. So Marie Sandy is from T'éxelc area, I apologize for my pronunciation, of Secwepemcúlcw.

00:01:32:16 - 00:01:49:85

Speaker 1: She has completed a Bachelor of Arts degree and a Bachelor of Education degree, as well as a Master of Education from Thompson Rivers University. Marie has worked with various Aboriginal organizations in BC across a variety of fields, including health, government, professional development, and education.

00:01:49:85 - 00:02:05:85

Speaker 1: She is currently the Manager of Indigenous Student Development and Secwepemctsin instructor at Thompson Rivers University. Her hobbies include, uh, knitting, reading, and she enjoys watching films and television. Thank you.

00:02:05:85 - 00:02:11:17

Marie: Thank you so much. Yes, kukwstsétsemc.

00:02:11:17 - 00:02:24:00

Marie: I will formally thank you, introduce myself in the language, though. Weyt-kp xwexwéytep. Marie Sandy ren skwekwst. Te T'éxelc re st'é7kwen, k'é mell ne Tk'emlúps re múmtwen.

00:02:24:00 - 00:02:32:90

Marie: Hello everyone. My name is Marie Sandy and I come from Where the Fish Charge Up Stream. However, I do reside here Where the Two Rivers Meet.

00:02:32:90 - 00:02:42:21

Marie: Where the Fish Charge Up Stream, it's the creek that runs into the southern end of Williams Lake. So, I am from the Williams Lake First Nation.

00:02:42:32 - 00:02:52:56

Marie: Yes, I do work here and I was like, oh yes, that's a little bit of an older bio. Yes. The manager here at Cplul'kw'ten

00:02:52:56 - 00:03:20:66

Marie: and still a sessional instructor for Secwépemc language, but for the Bachelor of Education program, the EDSL course, and I've let Tracy Thomas do the language now, and she's enjoying it so much. I'm here to talk about just Cplul'kw'ten and the importance of it here at TRU. Yes,

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Marie: I had a bit of a PowerPoint but I can't find it at the moment of course. So I will work from the website, which is just as good.

00:03:31:34 - 00:03:52:93

Marie: But I just wanted to just reiterate the importance of the House and why it's here on campus. It's one of the very few places, of course, that Indigenous students can come and be who they are.

00:03:52:93 - 00:04:10:16

Marie: They can come onto campus, and they can be with fellow students who understand Indigenous ways of knowing and being. We try to really foster that home-like environment as well.

00:04:10:16 - 00:04:15:92

Marie: So the house is very homey. We always have coffee on.

00:04:15:92 - 00:04:19:33

Marie: We always have tea. The tea water is hot and ready to go.

00:04:19:33 - 00:04:28:73

Marie: We've got tea and healthy snacks available for students. And we always have, of course, our elders that are there.

00:04:28:73 - 00:04:37:82

Marie: That was one of the reasons why I was a little bit late here, I was chatting away with Doe and lost track of time. I apologize, but it was very important.

00:04:37:82 - 00:04:45:04

Marie: She was talking about funeral protocols. So I couldn't, you just cannot leave some conversations.

00:04:45:04 - 00:04:56:80

Marie: That was one of them. Yeah, so it's really nice having the elders there because they're there, of course, not to judge the students.

00:04:56:80 - 00:05:07:47

Marie: They're there to just support them. They're some of the few people on campus where students can go and they will just say, how are you doing? Not,

00:05:08:33 - 00:05:13:61

Marie: what assignments do you have left? How's that test going to go tomorrow?

00:05:13:61 - 00:05:19:00

Marie: They just want to know how are you doing. Right? It's really wonderful

00:05:19:00 - 00:05:49:11

Marie: having the elders there because of course, we get the benefit, actually at the house as well, so myself and my four other team members. Actually, I should also introduce you online, on the screen, and I'm sure you all know who they are anyways. So here, if you go to tru.ca/indigenous,

00:05:49:11 - 00:06:03:68

Marie: you'll see all of the Indigenous-related information that's available for TRU. But if you're wanting to know more about what's happening for current students here, of course you can just go over here to the Current Students area.

00:06:03:68 - 00:06:14:04

Marie: Then you get a nice, beautiful picture of students that I have not seen in many years. So we need to update our photos a little bit.

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Marie: So yeah, maybe John, you can have some influence there. But yes, here we have our little intro to the house, which I won't go into.

00:06:25:53 - 00:06:44:38

Marie: It's really wonderful, but that needs to be updated as well. But what I'm really wanting you to see here has all of the wonderful information here for House #5 of course, which I can go through later, and also for Williams Lake campus.

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Marie: But I want you to meet the team. The people that are the most important to Indigenous students on campus are my staff members.

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Marie: Jason and Denise are the two Transitions coordinators on campus. If you need, if the students need, I should say, need anything at all on campus.

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Marie: They're the ones that are their go-to people. Right.

00:07:18:29 - 00:07:32:95

Marie: Denise's favorite saying is, she is here for students from registration to graduation and anywhere, anywhere, in between. She has done so much for the students.

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Marie: So has Jason. They go to the ends of the earth for our Indigenous students.

00:07:42:32 - 00:08:06:78

Marie: They have become sort of a jack-of-all-trades on campus. So students, maybe one student will need help with, you know like, conversing with an instructor if they don't know how to put their words properly or if they feel, like, maybe intimidated or something like that.

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Marie: They can always be an advocate for the students and go in with them. They've helped out students with awards and bursaries.

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Marie: They have helped them out with on-campus housing, counseling. Just chatting.

00:08:19:52 - 00:08:23:58

Marie: Oh my gosh. Jason knows so much about music. Like, a crazy amount.

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Marie: Yeah. Anyways, so yeah, they're awesome.

00:08:29:17 - 00:08:44:68

Marie: Lex is, he's the one that is the person that anything at all to do with our Indigenous mentors, he's the one that we're going to be going to. So he sort of mentors the mentors.

00:08:45:57 - 00:09:01:29

Marie: He is the one that makes sure that they know how to interact with all of the first year, or sort of new to TRU students. This year, he's got a really great bunch of students we just had.

00:09:01:29 - 00:09:06:86

Marie: And thank you so much, Jenna, for helping out with that program. It went really well.

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Marie: So, one of our Indigenous mentors took it upon himself because he really, really liked the Long Night Against Procrastination events that had happened before. And so he was like, well, I want to have that at House #5. And so he made it happen.

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Marie: He himself went off and he talked to Jenna, he talked to the librarians, he talked to security, he talked to everybody. And he set up a, he called it his anti-procrastination circle. It was really great.

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Marie: Lex has been mentoring all of his Indigenous mentors on campus. And they're there to work one-on-one with the first year and new to TRU students, and I say that because sometimes the students that are new to TRU aren't first year.

00:09:55:87 - 00:10:12:82

Marie: And they're there just to provide that additional person on campus to say hi, to get to know them. Get to know some of the processes that maybe they don't want to find out from faculty members or from staff members.

00:10:12:82 - 00:10:28:30

Marie: Right, they just want to know, where's the best place to study, or where's the best place to go and hang out and not get caught by your instructor. Yeah, so they're really great, those Indigenous student mentors.

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Marie: And Lex has been very, very good at mentoring them this year. Yeah, he's been very good at that.

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Marie: What it doesn't say on there, so it says he's the Mentor and Communications Coordinator. But he also coordinates our work study students and our practicum students.

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Marie: So for those who are in the social work and the HUMS programs, he's your contact for setting up all of those practicum placements and stuff. He's been really good at doing all of the paperwork that I don't have to. As well,

00:11:07:86 - 00:11:24:51

Marie: if you have any events that you want Indigenous students to attend, Lex is your person because he will inform all of our students, our social media pages, and our newsletters. Yeah. Okay. So those are those three.

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Marie: The other really important person is, not me, I'm just the helper, is Shawna Walker. She is the Indigenous Connections person.

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Marie: I'm sure, you all know Shawna, but she's really important for all of those off-campus connections that students need. So Shawna is the one that will help students find daycare.

00:11:51:80 - 00:12:04:22

Marie: She will help students find off-campus funding if their sponsorship falls through. Or if they were like, I thought I had enough money for tuition and I don't, how can you help?

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Marie: She's the person that students go to. She's really amazing at finding those pockets of money for those students.

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Marie: That's her job. And she'll also help students with connecting to other outside organizations.

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Marie: So she's helped students with bringing them to, like, ATEC, or, heaven forbid, even to doctors' or hospital appointments and stuff like that. So, she is amazing.

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Marie: That's why focus has to really be on them because they are the center of the stronghold, of our whole house. And if we didn't have them, you know, we wouldn't have that support structure for all of our Indigenous students.

00:12:54:43 - 00:13:00:97

Marie: Yeah. Does anybody have any questions about that and about our people? Yeah.

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Speaker 2: Did you happen to see Evelyn Asiedu's postdoc research for cultural mapping? And people's experience with EDI?

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Speaker 2: It was really cool because, overwhelmingly, so certainly, buildings were often drawn on these maps and the staff members were often referred to. And it was the center of the map where so many students responded and it was just something she pulled out in terms of the patterns that changed and she saw in the data. And it was just like, that's so cool.

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Marie: That is so cool and I'm not surprised. Because I do, we do service a lot of Indigenous students at the Williams Campus.

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Marie: A quarter of the students there are Indigenous and we have 11% Indigenous students here on campus. And I'm not even including Open Learning Indigenous students.

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Marie: There's so many more. And, yeah. Having the space is really integral for them.

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Marie: To just have a place to study, to be, and have cultural events. And it's been really wonderful at the House.

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Marie: We have different various events that happen at the house. Brian's anti-procrastination circle was one of them.

00:14:22:94 - 00:14:30:29

Marie: But it's actually not even something that was planned by our office, that was one of our mentors. So that's really something amazing.

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Marie: We do ask our Indigenous mentors to have some sort of project that they work on during the year. Brian's just happened to be something that helped the entire student population.

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Marie: Because we found on Friday that it was not just Indigenous students that attended the anti-procrastination circle. They were domestic students and international students.

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Marie: And everybody's like, yes, we're coming to study and have some place to go. And it was, yeah.

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Marie: And I'm pretty sure it wasn't just the free food that we had. It was also, like, the company and the atmosphere too.

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Marie: Right. So, yeah, it was really special.

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Marie: But we also have other events that happened at the house. We've had like, has anybody participated in Stick Games?

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Marie: No? Oh my gosh. We should probably

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Marie: have a campus Stick Games for staff members and make everybody attend. Yeah. You know, I'm going to challenge the Arts department.

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Marie: The Arts department can challenge Trades. It's really great. The Stick Games are

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Marie: really amazing events that are organized by Indigenous education, the Office of Indigenous Education. But they do hold a lot of the events over at House #5, just because they know that's where the students are.

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Marie: Yeah, we have a lot of events that happen there. We have our weekly Soup Circle.

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Marie: So, if ever you have an announcement to make kind of last minute, you're like, oh God, I forgot I needed to tell students about this and this. Soup Circle is the best time.

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Marie: Wednesdays at 11:30 we all meet up, we gather in circle and we share who we are and just a little bit of a get-to-know-each-other time. And that's a really good time to sneak in a little plug for something.

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Marie: We've often had people, we had Qwelminté Secwépemc come in. It's an outside organization.

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Marie: And they came in to plug their new summer student employment program that they're having for the students. They came in and they had their own quick little, they're like, we're going to take more than just a few minutes presentation. They took about five, which was okay.

00:17:04:37 - 00:17:41:82

Marie: But it's a really great time to just come in and meet with the students to build those relationships because I think that's one of the, it's really integral with Indigenous students is to build those relationships with them because, to retain them here on campus, I find that those students who have the strongest relationships with staff members and with faculty members, those are the ones that will stick around. Those are the ones that get involved.

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Marie: Those are the ones that become the leaders here on campus. So, thinking of, for example, Jacob Boisclair.

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Marie: He's become pretty integral to the PHP conference. I think he's going to be definitely missed next year.

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Marie: Yeah. And also for the writing center, right?

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Marie: Yeah. There are so many Indigenous students that you can just make those connections with.

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Marie: Yeah. So, coming to Soup Circle is a really good way to do that.

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Marie: Okay. I'm going to also introduce you to some of the elders.

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Marie: So here we have Elder Mike, which, another big thing today, he had some really scary news for me this morning, which I won't share, but just keeping in contact with them on a regular basis is really important. Elder Mike of course has all the stories. Yeah.

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Marie: Talk about a philosophical mind. Yeah. You don't want to get into that with him.

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Marie: Then we have of course, Elder Joanne Brown who previously was the supervisor at the House and goodness gracious, the fountain knowledge that she has is just amazing. And talk about building relationships and community connections. Oh my goodness.

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Marie: Joanne is so good at making those connections with students. Like, they come in.

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Marie: She has, by and large, all of the former students that come into the house, they're coming to see Joanne. Like, they will find out when her hours are and they're like, okay, we'll be in on Thursday.

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Marie: Come in and say hi. She's amazing.

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Marie: If ever you want to know anything about any of the past stuff that had happened at House #5. Or, any of the programs and services and why they're here?

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Marie: She's the one that I always turned to. Joanne is amazing.

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Marie: Sid, he's our newest Métis elder here actually at the house. Sid is really great.

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Marie: My goodness. He used to be, I shouldn't say used to be, he's still a helicopter pilot, but that's what he used to do is, pilot helicopters and went all over BC with that.

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Marie: He's amazing. He's got some really wonderful and crazy stories about his various trips and he's really great to, yeah, to connect with as well.

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Marie: Really strong connection to his Métis culture as well. And then of course, Elder Doe, Who, I think, Chelsea would just be lost without her.

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Marie: Chelsea Corsi, our Wellness Coordinator on campus. Of course, she does so many programs with Elder Doe.

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Marie: Like I said, we got into our cultural discussion this morning about funeral practices. It was really hard for me to actually leave that conversation because she gets into those.

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Marie: It's just amazing and you never ever want to leave a chat and a visit with Doe. Yeah. So those are our people.

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Marie: And I think the reason why I focus in on them is because they are the House. I find that our discussions about having a new building coming, it's a little bit scary, that's the change and whatnot.

00:21:39:28 - 00:22:03:36

Marie: But I think if we still have them, we're still going to have House #5 and we're still going to have The Gathering Place, Cplul'kw'ten. And the students, They just need somebody who believes in them and believes in their educational journey, and is really behind them and roots for them.

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Marie: Last year, Sean and I, we volunteered at the convocation ceremony and we had so much fun because we realized we got to visit with all of our Indigenous students who are convocating and, oh, it was so good because they were so happy to see us. You came. Like, of course we came.

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Marie: Building those relationships, I think is the number one aspect of House #5. Yeah.

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Marie: So, does anybody have any questions about that? Right? You're all like, what's

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Marie: there to be a questioning about?

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Speaker 3: How many mentors do you have?

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Marie: We have six right now. And I think in the past we've had ten before, which would be really wonderful.

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Marie: But we want to be able to stay on par with the honorarium. Yeah, I think we have six applicants right now, but if you think of any other ones, just send them Lex's way, if you can think of anybody else who would like to apply.

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Marie: But yeah, we do, every year. We recruit sort of through February and March.

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Marie: Okay. I can definitely let him know that.

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Marie: Yeah, for sure. Awesome.

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Speaker 4: Where can we see the post to apply for mentorship?

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Marie: Oh, I can show you that right now.

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Marie: Okay. I think I had it.

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Marie: Oh, let's go back one. So, up here.

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Marie: You have the "Apply for..." Yeah,

00:24:16:12 - 00:24:22:04

Marie: so it's right under Current Students. And if you go down and Apply for Indigenous Student Mentor.

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Marie: And then they can just apply right there. Yep. We want to get an idea of

00:24:32:51 - 00:24:45:73

Marie: what their past experience was like so we can have a diverse group of students. But this year we've only had six applicants.

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Marie: So we'll see how that actually goes. Yeah, they do receive an honorarium.

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Marie: How does the mentorship work? Are they for other Indigenous students?

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Marie: They're usually, we would like them, actually, to be third or fourth year students at TRU. Occasionally we've had second year students as well.

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Marie: Those are usually the ones that are really, really heavily involved. We want them to be students who've had much more experience here on campus and understand the ways of TRU.

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Marie: Yeah, this is the way, they will say. They're typically third or fourth year students.

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Marie: Their main, sort of, objectives I suppose, for the program, are, of course, they are there in the evenings from five 'til seven, so we always have our House #5 open until 7:00 P.M. The computer lab section,

00:26:00:00 - 00:26:17:06

Marie: anyways, so that Indigenous students always have a place where they can come back and study. But they're also tasked with having a program or event that they highly identify.

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Marie: And that's something that we ask them to work on for that semester. They're pretty much asked to do three hours a week.

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Marie: Yeah, at House #5. And so that extra hour a week, for example, with Brian, he was constantly planning for his anti-procrastination circle.

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Marie: He had one both last semester and this semester. That was his project for the semester.

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Marie: Some of our other students helped put on the TRU Round Dance and the TRU Powwow. Some have had beading circles, some have had moccasin-making workshops.

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Marie: There's various different projects that they take on for the year so that they can provide that extra, sort of, either studying or cultural piece for Indigenous students on campus. Yeah. Thank you.

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Marie: Did I answer the question fully? Okay. Good. I think I answered it.

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Marie: Yeah. That's our program.

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Marie: I think we have, I know, I should have left it with a better picture on, but yeah. That's our program at the House.

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Speaker 3: What happens over summer semester? Or, spring-summer. What's the spring-summer programming like?

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Marie: Yeah, the majority of our programming ceases pretty much in April, but that's when we're doing all of our planning. Yeah. So, we don't take on

00:27:57:81 - 00:28:04:70

Marie: any other practicum students for the summer. But yeah, we'll have more.

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Marie: We generally take that time to plan for the next semester. And then we'll do things like, make sure we have enough, so we go out sage picking and we make sure we have enough sage for the house for the year.

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Marie: Yeah. We just also rebuild ourselves a little bit so that we can handle the fall and the winter semesters as well because it takes a toll.

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Marie: Right? Not saying that it's a hardship for us to be with students, but it's really nice to be able to have that breathing space.

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Marie: But we still love seeing all of the students come in in the summer because it gets really, really slow. Yeah, in the summer time we're, yeah, we're doing a lot of, I suppose it's like rebuilding.

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Marie: And then figuring things out because this has been my first year as the manager. I'm wanting to look at some different opportunities and stuff.

00:29:06:86 - 00:29:24:46

Marie: I'm wanting to look at what we can do for, like, an Indigenous orientation process perhaps. And look into how we can support the mentors more, and maybe some of the TRUSU Indigenous clubs and stuff.

00:29:24:58 - 00:29:30:91

Marie: Yeah, there's plenty of projects left that we will be working on in the summer.

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Speaker 2: So, given how many Indigenous students we have, how many of them would you estimate actually connect with Cplul'kw'ten? I talked to someone who was like, I've never been there, and I'm like, what?

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Marie: Yeah. Well, we don't push the House on Indigenous students.

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Marie: Right? Although, like I said, I'm working on sort of an Indigenous orientation, and I'm hoping that we can make that a bit mandatory.

00:29:54:79 - 00:30:01:93

Marie: I don't know if we can, we'll see. But yeah, I think that's one of the pieces.

00:30:01:93 - 00:30:13:88

Marie: The House is ready for any Indigenous student to come to if they need it. We find that there's a lot of Indigenous students that, yeah. Like, it was so funny.

00:30:13:88 - 00:30:22:57

Marie: We had our Indigenous grad last year. Indigenous Education had their Indigenous grad ceremony.

00:30:22:57 - 00:30:53:92

Marie: We were looking at the picture and we were like, oh, I've never seen that student or that student or that student. I was like, wow, that's a lot of students that, we find that there's a lot of students, that actually really don't need our assistance and we're happy that they, I'm not saying that they don't need us but, you know, they're good. Yeah.

00:30:53:92 - 00:31:02:95

Speaker 3: I think it's probably the same with every service on campus. Some students who probably should be there could come visit.

00:31:02:95 - 00:31:06:13

Marie: Right. Yeah. Wouldn't it be nice to mandate it?

00:31:06:13 - 00:31:09:01

Marie: Come on. No, I know.

00:31:09:01 - 00:31:17:96

Marie: But yeah, there are some students that identify with different groups on campus and we're not going to push them a way that they don't want to be.

00:31:17:96 - 00:31:31:74

Speaker 4: Having an orientation in the beginning of their academic journey would probably be really helpful. And our art course program.

00:31:31:73 - 00:31:37:46

Speaker 4: If that's happening, probably some of our students would start attending that orientation.

00:31:37:46 - 00:31:38:98

Marie: Yeah, I think that would be really amazing too.

00:31:38:97 - 00:31:48:64

Marie: I've been playing around with it anyways, just thinking about different things that I can do for orientation. Because currently all we have is like, hey, welcome back.

00:31:48:64 - 00:31:55:20

Marie: And then we have a first friends feast. And we just get out there and try to greet as many people as possible.

00:31:55:20 - 00:31:57:74

Marie: But that's, like.

00:31:57:74 - 00:32:00:72

Speaker 2: I had a work study student who's also a mentor for the program.

00:32:00:72 - 00:32:09:09

Speaker 2: And when I got my teaching evaluations last semester, she was often mentioned in my teaching evaluations as well. Which I thought was just really so amazing.

00:32:09:09 - 00:32:18:04

Speaker 2: So students just had such a good connection. And if I would ask about something, they'd say, oh, she already told me about that.

00:32:18:04 - 00:32:21:78

Marie: Oh, okay.

00:32:21:78 - 00:32:23:68

Speaker 2: She was just such a great ambassador.

00:32:23:68 - 00:32:26:35

Marie: Yes. That's so amazing.

00:32:26:35 - 00:32:27:87

Marie: Yeah. We like to hear that.

00:32:27:87 - 00:32:34:14

Marie: Our students are helping across campus for sure. Yeah. So I'm sorry,

00:32:34:14 - 00:32:42:57

Marie: I didn't have much more other than that prepared, but that was it. Yeah, so thank you.