

## Promising Practices for University Indigenous Strategic Plans

### Summary of NIUSLA Summit 2025

1. **Land as Foundation:** Land is our first teacher—legitimacy and knowledge must be rooted in land connection.
2. **Embrace Cultural Foundations:** Ground efforts in cultural principles (e.g., “the good life,” Métis values), intergenerational knowledge, and Indigenous languages.
3. **Structural Change is Essential:** Institutions won’t transform themselves—change must be Indigenous-led and community-informed. Full Indigenization of the academy may not be possible—focus on identifying harms, creating new pathways, and speaking truth to power.
4. **Reconciliation vs. Indigenization:** As Darren Thomas said, “It’s everyone’s job, but it needs to be Indigenous-led.” Reconciliation plans should include everyone; Indigenization plans must be Indigenous-led.
5. **Center Indigenous Leadership:** Indigenous-led means more than representation—it requires land-based, community-rooted knowledge and decision-making power. Embed reconciliation work beyond individual tenures—especially at the board level.
6. **Institutional Readiness:** Faculty and students must be prepared for discomfort, complexity, and long-term commitment.
7. **Authentic Inclusion:** Go beyond symbolic gestures—ensure visibility in leadership, spaces, and systems. *Be in the Room:* Indigenous voices must influence budgeting, hiring, and strategic planning.
8. **Budgets Reflect Values:** Allocate resources meaningfully; build institutional capacity and support Indigenous agency.
9. **Celebrate and Sustain:** Find joy, support one another, and celebrate small wins while staying true to values.
10. **Expand Beyond Academia:** Indigenization must address broader community needs like housing, food security, and wellness.
11. **Assessment and Accountability:** Develop culturally relevant, context-specific evaluation models that reflect Indigenous definitions of quality.
12. **Acknowledge the Process:** Mistakes are part of decolonization; accountability, patience, and persistence are essential.

