

He Ala Kuikui Lima Kānaka: The Journey Toward Indigenizing a School of Social Work

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Abstract

This article focuses on decolonizing, or specifically Indigenizing, a school of social work that has a stated focus on Native Hawaiians, other Pacific Islanders, and Asian populations in the Pacific region. Armed with Kanaka ‘Ōiwi critical race theory (CRT), a recent theoretical model that centres Native Hawaiian Indigeneity, we reflect on lessons learned after the 10th year of an articulated process of Indigenization and discuss the implications for future decolonization projects in social work education. Mo‘olelo, or narrative stories, are provided to analyze this journey through a Kanaka ‘Ōiwi CRT lens. Believing that Indigenization is dynamic and ever-changing, we provide our mana‘o, or thoughts, on challenges and successes. Key lessons learned advise social work educators to: (a) acknowledge and push through the complexity of fitting Indigenous protocols and values into a Western institution; (b) understand the distinction between form (technical knowledge) and essence (embodiment); and (c) value co-learning from students and community practitioners, thus validating Indigenous ways of knowing.

Keywords: Native Hawaiians, Kanaka ‘Ōiwi critical race theory, Indigenization, decolonization, social work curriculum

‘A‘ohe pau ka ‘ike i ka hālau ho‘okahi

Not all knowledge is found in one school, there are diverse ways of understanding and learning.

— Pukui, 1983, p. 24

Indigenizing curriculum is of significant importance; however, translating intent into educational praxis is complicated by: (a) mainstream social work’s history of complicity with neo-colonialism and cultural genocide by proxy (Ka‘opua, Friedman, Duncombe, Mataira, & Bywaters, 2019); (b) the current paucity of literature on Indigenization processes (Harder, Johnson, MacDonald, Ingstrup, & Piche, 2018; Pete, 2016); and (c) the tendency to exoticize Indigenous peoples and issues, with failure to include processes that meaningfully involve Indigenous communities (Keaulana, Chung-Do, Ho-Lastimosa, Ho, & Spencer, 2019). With great and sincere humility, we offer this article as a contribution to the emerging literature on Indigenization processes.

Firm in the assumption that a curriculum Indigenization process is neither linear nor fixed, this article presents key lessons from us as three faculty, all women of colour, who have participated in the ongoing process of Indigenizing the Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work (MBTSSW) at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa (UHM). Our title for this article, He Ala Kuikui Lima Kānaka, which translates to “a steep pathway where group effort is necessary to climb safely to the top,” demonstrates our thinking about this journey of Indigenization. Since this process is dynamic and ever-changing, this article aims to: situate our process within the literature on Indigenization and social work, provide select stories of our School’s path toward Indigenization, and discuss what we believe to be key lessons for other schools embarking on a similar path. To be clear, this narrative represents our mo‘olelo, our story, from our unique positionality as academics and authors. We imagine that different perspectives will yield a different telling of the School’s journey, but we offer our mana‘o, or thoughts, hoping to further and deepen the dialogue for readers in navigating their own respective journeys in decolonizing and Indigenizing education.

Our first author is an assistant professor from California who identifies as Japanese American. Her parents were born in U.S. World War II concentration camps, and some of her work has focused on this dark period of history. Our second author is a retired professor who identifies with the cultural heritage of her Indigenous Hawaiian and Chinese settler ancestors. Our third author is a long-time social worker who is the Director of Student Services for the school. She identifies not only with her third-generation Chinese and Japanese American heritage, but as a practitioner and advocate of Indigenous knowledge. All three of us are dedicated to social justice and health equity for all, which we consider central to our work.

The School was founded in 1936 and made its official declaration to Indigenize the curriculum in a 2008 faculty retreat. As the School enters the 10th year of this process, it is an appropriate time for critical reflection on the meaning of Indigeneity, specific to Native Hawaiians and social work curriculum. We outline the literature that provides the backdrop for Indigenizing curriculum, a brief summary of the MBTSSW process thus far, and a proposal to use Kanaka ‘Ōiwi critical race theory (‘ŌiwiCRT; Wright & Balutski, 2015) as an appropriate lens from which to discuss lessons learned. Specifically, we intend to use ‘ŌiwiCRT, a recent scholarly development that highlights the complexity of race within Indigenous spaces. To be consistent with the terminology in the literature, it should be noted that we use the terms *Native Hawaiian*, *Kānaka Maoli*, and *Kanaka ‘Ōiwi* interchangeably to refer to the Indigenous people of Hawai‘i.

Social Work and Cultural Pedagogy

Social work education has utilized different approaches to incorporating culture and ethnicity into curriculum and pedagogy. Terms such as *multiculturalism*, *diversity*, *cultural awareness*, *cultural competence*, and *cultural humility* all have different meanings, yet they are sometimes used to convey a similar approach—one that values diversity of perspectives and cultures, emphasizes introspection, and dictates that students remain open to working with various vulnerable populations (Bassey & Melluish, 2013; Cross, Brazen, Dennis, & Isaacs, 1989). Common

concerns with these approaches are that they often assume a White, non-Indigenous social worker who is being trained to work with an “ethnic” (person of colour and/or Indigenous) client base, if they even acknowledge differences among cultural groups (Abrams & Gibson, 2007; Nakaoka & Ortiz, 2018; Sinclair, 2004). In other words, they follow a dominant paradigm in which the White social worker is saviour to communities of colour and do not really tend to issues that may come up for students of colour working within communities of colour, nor do they address different worldviews and political realities of those communities. A gap in the literature exists, then, when educating students of colour to work with their own or with other communities of colour.

Perhaps a more important misstep of these so-called “cultural” approaches is their failure to adequately address systemic issues of racism and oppression (Ortiz & Jani, 2010). Understanding culture alone does not provide adequate context for social work students’ interactions with populations impacted by health disparities, joblessness, “houselessness,” youth violence, disproportionate involvement in the criminal justice system and other social problems. When working with an Indigenous population, the history and consequences of colonization are vital to understanding the current state of the community. Aloha Āina, a deeply cultural concept, is defined by Ka’opua et al. (2016) as when: “time-honored values of reverence for the land (‘āina) is reflected in cultural wisdoms or proverbs, history and stories (mo‘olelo), chant (oli), and other traditional expressions” (p. 274).

To address these shortcomings, some scholars have suggested a critical race theory (CRT) approach to social work education (Abrams & Moio, 2009; Ortiz & Jani, 2010; Nakaoka & Ortiz, 2018). Ortiz and Jani (2010) defined a CRT paradigmatic framework as one that would “address a broad social context that includes institutional/structural arrangements, recognize the intersection of multiple identities, and integrate an explicit social justice orientation” (p. 175). A CRT pedagogy in social work would confront the power distributions in social work programs and could include the following elements, as suggested by Nakaoka & Ortiz (2018):

1. Recognizing the historical and contemporary meta-narratives that perpetuate racism;
2. Deconstructing these narratives by analyzing history, critiquing neo-liberalism and the current political economy;
3. Recognizing that social worker bias is inevitable due to the impact of these meta-narratives on their realities;
4. Emphasizing reflexivity and self-critique as a way to mitigate bias; and
5. Developing social work practice models that are strength based rather than those that use a deficit approach or those that pathologize communities of color. (p. 11)

Although this CRT pedagogy offers a promising approach for moving social work education forward, it does not speak to Indigenous knowledge and praxis.

As Lawrence and Dua (2005) pointed out, just as anti-racism movements require decolonization to fully recognize Aboriginal peoples, CRT also requires decolonization. ‘ŌiwiCRT provides a tool to centre racialization and Indigenous knowledge, without privileging one over the other. Centring Indigenous knowledge through ‘ŌiwiCRT is complex for non-Indigenous scholars. Ongoing attention to personal

and professional complicity with neo-colonialism and cultural genocide by proxy is essential (Ka‘opua et al., 2019). In recognizing the necessity to increase the visibility of Indigenous perspectives, it is requisite as educators to be mindful of the need to continually de-colonize our own perspectives.

Acknowledging the positionality of faculty leading curriculum change is an important, yet sometimes difficult component of Indigenization. We found this to be true for all of our faculty, and for us as we reflect back on the process. Thus, we look to ‘ŌiwiCRT to support our analysis of our Indigenization process. Since one of us is Indigenous and two are Asian American, we highlight our unique positionality. Often, non-Indigenous scholars must confront their privilege and acknowledge past harm to Indigenous communities and students (Gair, Miles, & Thomson, 2005). For example, as non-Indigenous women of colour, we have experienced racial and economic oppression through family histories of immigrant exploitation, housing and employment discrimination, and significantly, the historical trauma experienced by Japanese Americans imprisoned in U.S. concentration camps during World War II. Thus, Asian American critical race theory has been useful in analyzing our own experiences in the United States. In determining our roles as allies for Indigenous people, then, an ‘ŌiwiCRT lens resonates as a way to reject a settler colonialist approach to living and working in Hawai‘i. Perhaps most importantly, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars must also be committed to the value of Indigenization and how this is connected to the social work value of social justice (Morelli, Mataira, & Kaulukukui, 2016). The next section provides a review of the literature on Indigenization in social work education, using ‘Ōiwi CRT to guide our analysis of the MBTSSW journey.

An Indigenous Social Work Pedagogy

Although scholars have not yet applied an ‘ŌiwiCRT model to the process of Indigenizing social work curriculum, there have been other important attempts to delineate the process of decolonization or Indigenization of social work education and practice that help to contextualize our use of ‘Ōiwi CRT to guide our analysis of the MBTSSW journey. Gair et al. (2005) defined Indigenization of their social work curriculum as a process “to move further away from Western, Eurocentric approaches to teaching and learning in social work education, toward one where Indigenous Australians are more visible...[with] active efforts to render more visible Indigenous people in the North Queensland and Australian context” (pp. 179–180). Weaver (2016) acknowledged that social work across the world is “grounded in a Eurocentric world view and value system,” and thus any Indigenization process could be seen as fraught with the complex history of social workers “intervening” with Indigenous families. The inability to separate our education and social work training from a desire to “Indigenize” social work curriculum can also be problematic, yet it does not mean that academics and practitioners should not move toward culturally grounded work (Weaver, 2016).

Tamburro (2013) suggested post-colonial theory as a theoretical home “for Indigenous voices, space, and credibility in the academy and in Social Work practice” (p. 7), a theoretical framework that “supports the credibility, voices,

cosmovisions, multiple knowledges, histories, skills, stories, and values of Indigenous peoples” (p. 7). By focusing on the consequences of colonization while centring the voices and experiences of Indigenous people, a post-colonial theoretical approach is helpful for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous social work faculty. Perhaps the most important process of this theoretical framework is critical thinking and self-reflection on the part of faculty, as well as with students in training (Yeun-Tsang & Ku, 2016).

Decolonization of the MBTSSW was broadly described as “defining an identity and mission relative to the community to which the academy is accountable and is an important process in decolonizing the curriculum” (Morelli et al., 2016, p. 2). The vision was that the MBTSSW faculty would engage in

meaningful efforts to decolonize and critique dominant western approaches to social work and to encourage Indigenous approaches that draw from the convergence of all knowledge sources with the aim of producing new concepts, theories, forms of analysis, and methods of practice. (p. 3)

Our writing serves to elaborate on how this intention for meaningful efforts toward decolonization was realized over the past ten years.

Native Hawaiian scholars have proposed an ŌiwiCRT model that considers the unique context of the Indigenous people of Hawai‘i, hereinafter referred to as Kānaka Maoli or Kanaka ‘Ōiwi to remain consistent with the literature (Reyes, 2018; Salis Reyes, 2017; Wright & Balutski, 2015). This relatively new direction in the literature recognizes the key features of CRT, along with different streams of CRT such as Asian American and Native American or Tribal CRT, as applicable to the Kanaka ‘Ōiwi context. Articulating new territory, ŌiwiCRT first recognizes the centrality of the political status of Hawai‘i as an occupied and colonized space and further articulates other tenets that centre Indigenous voices and knowledge. Intersectionality; social justice through liberation of individual selves and nation (sovereignty); respect for traditional mo‘olelo (knowledge-infused stories) related to environment, history, and genealogy; and the importance of experiential knowledge are integral to this perspective. Engagement with this model is necessary for what Salis Reyes (2017) called “continued survivance,” which s/he/they defined as an active sense of presence, a continuance of Indigenous stories that are purposeful and aspiring, all of which preserve nationhood and social justice. The concept of *survivance* as well as *ea*, or sovereignty, are both living, ongoing processes that seem crucial for consideration in social work education.

Wright and Balutski (2015) provided key tenets to a Kanaka ‘Ōiwi CRT. Three are especially relevant for an Indigenous social work curriculum and are summarized here as: (a) centring the consequences of colonialism and occupation; (b) Aloha Āina (a deep and abiding love, protection, and stewardship for the land and nation); and (c) kuleana (right, responsibility, privilege, concern, authority). Although these three tenets can guide social work across the spectrum, they can also be directly translated to macro, mezzo, and micro social work practice. For instance, understanding the history of Hawai‘i through an Indigenous perspective on colonialism and occupation can serve to align social work policy advocates with macro perspectives that address

the deleterious effects of colonization, tourism, and militarism on homelessness, cultural dissonance, and poverty. Connecting with global Indigenous decolonization and liberation movements is another macro application of ‘ŌiwiCRT. Practising Aloha ‘Āina can translate to mezzo interventions, by supporting social work practitioners in their local communities on issues ranging from environmental justice to Indigenous healing practices that incorporate connections to the land, ocean, space, living beings, and Hawaiian cosmology. On a micro level, cultivating one’s kuleana can mean investing time in self-critique and reflexive practice, along with special care in utilizing expertise to guide individual clients and their families.

Analyzing the MBTSSW pathway to an Indigenized curriculum through a Kanaka CRT lens can provide insight about its successes and challenges. It has been ten years since the official declaration to Indigenize the MBTSSW at a 2008 faculty retreat, although one could argue that the process began in 2002 and occurred within the context of the University of Hawai‘i system’s efforts to transform the university into a Hawaiian Place of Learning.

A Hawaiian Place of Learning

Since 2002, the University has promoted its unique identity as a Hawaiian Place of Learning through its strategic plans (2002–2010, 2011–2015, and 2015–2021). Embedded into the University’s mission are the concepts of kuleana, ‘ohana, and ahupua‘a, which are further described below (University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa Model Indigenous-Serving University Task Force, 2012).

Background and History of UH System Policy

Defining Our Destiny, the 2002–2010 UHM Strategic Plan, envisions the University a Hawaiian Place of Learning. In the extended planning period, the Social, Cultural, Spiritual Working Group suggested strategies for integrating Hawaiian values and practices into UHM academic praxis. Much like the preceding plan, *Achieving Our Destiny*, the 2011–2015 UHM Strategic Plan, stepped forward with a stronger mission statement:

Taking as its historic trust the Native Hawaiian values embedded in the concepts of kuleana, ‘ohana, and ahupua‘a that serve to remind us of our responsibilities to family, community, and the environment, Mānoa’s hallmark is a culture of community engagement that extends far beyond the classroom to bridge theory and practice, fostering creative and critical thinking, and promoting students’ intellectual growth and success as contributing members of society. (p. 4)

The Native Hawaiian Place of Learning Task Force was subsequently appointed to further develop goals and an implementation plan that focused on how to better serve Native Hawaiians and create a Hawaiian place of learning across the UH system and at UHM. Their report entitled *Ka Ho‘okō Kuleana* in 2016, provided detailed logic models and suggested action plans.

The initiative continues in the 2015–2021 strategic plan. Current working groups aspire to transform the University as an Indigenous-serving institution. Often,

the metrics used to measure the success of the implementation of the initiative are the percentage of Native Hawaiian students, faculty, and administrators and Native Hawaiian representation in programs. Responsibility for the planning and implementation of the initiative lies with the Native Hawaiian Advancement Task Force and Kualī'i Council, an advisory board to the Chancellor and the Dean of the Hawai'i inuiākea School of Hawaiian Knowledge (UHM, 2015). Although increased representation of Native Hawaiian students and faculty is important to the process, the Indigenization process of MBTSSW has also focused on decolonizing the implicit and explicit curriculum. Discussion of the implicit curriculum, which can include the program's culture, policies, and processes, requires a brief description of the origins of the School's context related to Indigenization.

Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work

Although measuring equity and social justice merely in terms of diversity in enrolment can be problematic, Indigenous representation in the student body and faculty does matter. In terms of the metric of enrolment of Native Hawaiian students, MBTSSW has consistently been successful in maintaining student numbers that are proportionate to the statewide population of Native Hawaiians. When compared with other departments on the UHM campus, MBTSSW is second only to Hawaiian Studies in Native Hawaiian student ratios within their respective programs. In terms of diversity in faculty and administration, MBTSSW has also had some success. Although the overall number of Indigenous faculty has recently waned, the School's first Native Hawaiian dean, Dr. Noreen Mokuau, has led the School since 2010 and has continuously represented and advocated for the inclusion of Native Hawaiian perspectives within the field of social work education, research, and the larger University strategic planning. The Indigenization journey for MBTSSW then, must continue to focus on hiring Native Hawaiian faculty as well as on transforming the curriculum.

The process leading up to the formal agreement on Indigenizing the School is detailed in Morelli et al.'s (2016) previous writing and thus is not the focus of this article. Leading up to the agreement, the School was successful in launching several early initiatives in alignment with the University's 2002 mission and vision to embed Native Hawaiian culture, values, and knowledge into its educational tenets. Notably, the School was renamed in honour of Master of Social Work (MSW) alumnus Myron B. Thompson, a renowned Native Hawaiian leader and social worker who was an early proponent for culturally based health and social services for Native Hawaiian families, and a leading advocate for the preservation and perpetuation of Hawaiian knowledge. Additionally, the School engaged a Kūpuna Council that included community elders and faculty to discuss and influence curriculum and re-established the Hawaiian Learning Program. Finally, faculty initiated the International Indigenous Voices in Social Work conference and created the online *Journal of Indigenous Voices in Social Work* (Morelli et al., 2016).

The formal agreement to Indigenize MBTSSW was developed over three years of lengthy, and often contentious, debate over the meaning of *Indigenization* and questions about whether privileging Indigeneity leads to excluding the unique

multicultural milieu of Hawai‘i. In other words, some faculty members were concerned that an increased focus on Indigeneity might result in marginalizing the strengths and needs of Hawai‘i’s other ethnocultural groups. The final MBTSSW Indigenization policy, agreed upon at a faculty retreat in 2008 and ratified in 2009 after consultation with the School’s Kūpuna Council, stated that:

Indigenization speaks to our commitment as a School to enhance social justice, equity and wellbeing for all under-represented, under-served, and marginalized people in Hawai‘i, and throughout Asia and the Pacific. It honors our profession and challenges us to engage in efforts to (re)center professional social work education, training and research to align to Native Hawaiians values, principles and knowledge; to local customary ways; to traditional healing practices; and to developing a greater appreciation of our connectedness, as people, to the land and our environment. (Morelli et al., 2016, p. 2)

Perhaps the most important initiative in direct connection to curriculum change was the establishment of the “10th Competency.” In 2008, the Council on Social Work Education launched their Education and Policy Accreditation Standards (EPAS) which, for the first time, focused on a competency-based (rather than content-based) curriculum and established nine core competencies for social work students. After much passionate discussion, MBTSSW added a competency for all students to demonstrate by graduation known as the *10th Competency* (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. MBTSSW “10th Competency”

Engage, honor, and respect Indigenous culture towards decolonized professional practice: Fairness and justice for Indigenous people and respect for traditional ways of knowing requires understanding processes that actively seek to decolonize dominant cultural hegemony.

Social workers are informed about institutional barriers and cultural intolerance; strive to eliminate all forms of injustice; and, acknowledge the inalienable rights of Indigenous people to self-determine.

Social Workers should be able to:

- understand the impact of inhabitation and occupation of Indigenous lands and the effects of historic cultural trauma on the lives and experiences of Indigenous people;
- recognize the significance of place in developing and communicating culturally resonant practice;
- respect host traditions, protocols, ceremony, guesthood, and spirituality as central to decolonized professional practice;
- demonstrate knowledge of their own culture and associated beliefs, values and practices.

Source: Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work (2018)

This 10th Competency provides the institutional support for changes in field and explicit curriculum. To date, it is perhaps the strongest tool to support Indigenization efforts, as it provides justification for bolder moves in classroom content and for faculty and field instructor training in this area. For example, all MSW specialization courses have content and assignments that focus on Native Hawaiian culture, values, and specialized interventions.

Faculty scholarship on Native Hawaiian social work issues during this 10-year period has been consistent and is one indication of a strong commitment to Indigenous issues (Braun, Browne, Ka'opua, Kim, & Mokuau, 2014; Browne, Ka'opua, Jervis, Alboroto, & Trockman, 2016; Diaz, Ka'opua, & Nakaoka, 2019; Ka'opua, Braun, Browne, Mokuau, & Park, 2011; Mokuau, 2011).

In 2013, MBTSSW further articulated its process by establishing strategic initiatives based on three core values: (a) Mālama i ke Kanaka Apau (Diversity): Honouring both local and global perspectives that lead to just and creative processes for problem and solution discovery; (b) Ulu Pono (Well-Being): A state of thriving that reflects the meaningful connections of humanity with other individuals, the community, the environment, and transcendent realms; and (c) Ho'okaulike (Social Justice): A world in which the inherent dignity of all is recognized, valued, and restored with particular attention given to those in greatest need (DeMattos, 2013). The 2016–2021 Strategic Plan reaffirmed a commitment to a Hawaiian Place of Learning. This is defined in the Kākou MBTSSW Strategic Plan Report A.Y. 2016–2021 as follows:

The Myron B. Thompson School of Social Work promotes the “lived values” of our Native Hawaiian Homeland to enhance practice, policy, and research that best serves people. A Hawaiian Place of Learning is an inherently inclusive environment that integrates diverse ways of knowing, bringing together the past and present to create a future of possibilities. (p. 11)

The plan further identified initiatives related to integrating Kanaka Ōiwi values and practices throughout the curriculum and developing a common understanding about Hawai'i's history of colonization, occupation, and historical trauma. Attending to the concerns of some faculty members about alienating non-Indigenous faculty, new language included the mention of diversity (local and global perspectives) and cultural exchange. It is important to note, however, that attending to all “diversity,” may detract from centring Indigenous voices, and thus, the new direction of this plan may dilute an Indigenization process; this concern is further addressed in our conclusion.

In alignment with the University's goal to become a model Indigenous-serving institution, our social work school is home to Hā Kūpuna, the National Resource Center for Native Hawaiian Elders—one of three National Resource Centers for Native Elders funded by the U.S. Administration on Aging, Department of Health and Human Services (Choy, Mokuau, Braun, & Browne, 2008). Through technical assistance to elder-serving agencies and faculty research and scholarship, Hā Kūpuna seeks to improve health and increase life expectancy of kūpuna (Native Hawaiian

elders). Since its inception in 2006, Hā Kūpuna has developed and disseminated scholarship that includes but is not limited to: (a) de-colonizing research methodologies and community-based participatory approaches (Braun et al., 2014; Ka'opua et al., 2016; Ka'opua, Tamang, Dillard, & Kekauoha, 2017); (b) social determinants of health among Hawai'i's elder population (Ka'opua et al., 2011); and (c) Alzheimer's disease and other dementia in Indigenous communities and other emerging concerns (Browne et al., 2016).

Over these same years following the 2008 commitment to Indigenization, there were Indigenous initiatives that ended due to a lack of resources or faculty involvement. For example, the *Journal of Indigenous Voices in Social Work* (now named the *Journal of Indigenous Social Development*) was transitioned to the University of Manitoba. Private funding for the Hawaiian Learning Program ended in 2016. Currently, one course serves specifically as an avenue for students to learn a Native Hawaiian perspective on social work. When funding and faculty time is not allocated for these projects, faculty are left to re-examine the commitment to, and prioritization of, Indigenization efforts.

Our Mo'olelo

In reflecting over the past 10 years, we have identified four mo'olelo (narrative or stories) to illustrate the complexity of Indigenizing social work education in the MBTSSW. It is important to note that the mo'olelo reflect our own perspectives and may not be illustrative of the entire faculty's thinking on these issues. However, as faculty members who have been engaged in the Indigenization process, and as members of the Indigenous Affairs Committee (IAC), we feel close enough to the process to appropriately report on these stories. The first two mo'olelo are related to the implicit curriculum, or the learning environment of the School. Subsequent mo'olelo focus on the courses and field education, or the explicit curriculum.

Faculty Search

Having a racially diverse faculty can be an important indicator of a school's commitment to racial diversity and Indigenization. Since the process for faculty searches is dictated by university, school, and department policy, it can be perceived as overly bureaucratic. Policies on advertising openings often prevent directed recruitment of individuals from specific racial or ethnic groups and limit attempts to recruit for Indigenous faculty. Perceived limits to the extent to which faculty feedback can be considered on searches are, on the one hand, important in protecting against discrimination, while at the same time restrictive to considerations of diversity in evaluation.

At the university level, two advisory entities, Pūko'a Council (system-wide) and Kualī'i Council (Mānoa-based), report to the Chancellor; and their purpose is to "increase the number of Native Hawaiian students, faculty, staff, and administrators in the university system to 23%, which mirrors the percentage of Hawaiians in Hawai'i's general population" (Pūko'a Council, n.d.). Kualī'i Council

is allotted designated time with each candidate and provides a summary to the hiring authority, the Chancellor/President (Lawrence Keali‘i‘olu‘olu Gora, personal communication, August 7, 2018). In our example, the IAC replicated this broader university process with the same goal to provide information to the hiring authority with regard to a candidate’s commitment to providing a Hawaiian Place of Learning within the MBTSSW.

Due to some faculty resignations, as well as funding issues that ended the Hawaiian Learning Program, the MBTSSW was left with only three Native Hawaiian full-time faculty. During 2016–2017, MBTSSW embarked on a faculty search for two assistant professors. Unfortunately, there were several missed opportunities for a proactive search for Indigenous faculty. First, the positions were advertised as requiring an MSW from a Council on Social Work Education-accredited program, something not mandated by the School but still included in the job description. This requirement limited the international applicant pool, which could be more inclusive of Indigenous scholars. Second, although the IAC was allowed to meet with each candidate to ask questions specific to the candidate’s interest and expertise in Indigenous issues, there was no existing process for including their report in hiring recommendations to the Dean. Third, there was no funding or outreach that would specifically attract or target Indigenous candidates. Although the search did bring six qualified candidates to campus for on-site interviews, there were no candidates that identified as Indigenous or Native Hawaiian. Unfortunately, a 2017–2018 faculty search was also completed without the addition of an Indigenous faculty member.

Members of the IAC felt that the decision to exclude committee feedback related to Indigenous issues was problematic. Since they were allowed to meet with each candidate to ask pertinent questions (e.g., “What is your experience in working with Indigenous communities?”; “How would you approach community engagement in Hawai‘i?”; “What is your familiarity with Native Hawaiian culture?”), it was confusing to then not be allowed to submit a committee report on these meetings to the Dean for her consideration in the hiring decision. Faculty who were opposed to accepting the committee feedback stated that their opposition was related to the lack of established policy on how to accept feedback from a committee as opposed to individual faculty members (claiming that committee feedback would mean some individuals would have multiple opportunities to provide feedback). One IAC committee member felt betrayed by the process, stating that “it was as if they were providing us with an opportunity to meet with each candidate in order to provide us with a voice in the decision, then they quickly silenced that voice.” Although the search ended with no resolution to the issue of committee feedback, the following year, the faculty passed a motion (after several contentious faculty discussions) that would allow the School committee’s collective input to be considered in future searches. Currently, there is only one faculty member and three research staff who identify as Native Hawaiian at the MBTSSW, showing that this issue of faculty representation is still a crucial area for development in the Indigenization process.

Cultural Protocols

The MBTSSW has sought to incorporate Native Hawaiian cultural protocols sporadically throughout its history. Since 2009, as part of the Indigenization process, a concerted effort by Native Hawaiian faculty, ‘Anakē (Aunty) Lynette Paglinawan, ‘Anakala (Uncle) Likeke Paglinawan, ‘Anakē Malina Kaulukukui, Dean Noreen Mokuau, our second author Lana Ka‘opua, and ‘Anakē Puakina Paul and others, have led efforts to institutionalize these practices within the School. Our third author, as Director of Student Services, for instance, has worked on weekends and evenings to ensure students have access to campus and community resources to implement cultural protocols. A succinct definition of Native Hawaiian protocol has been shared by Sam Gon III, PhD, Senior Scientist and Cultural Advisor at the Nature Conservancy of Hawai‘i: “It is the right behavior, conducted at the appropriate time, by the proper people, presented to the correct recipients, toward a positive and significant end” (shared with author Ono in conversation). Dr. Gon further explained that protocol implies continuous training and practice, and a foundation of fundamental shared values such as “respect for others and for the land, an attitude of sharing and responsibility for maintaining a balance between self and society and between human beings and the rest of the universe” (Pacific American Foundation, 2008, pp. 1–2).

In this regard, our School was gifted two oli (chants) written by two students of the Hawaiian Learning Program to honour our School and its namesake, Myron B. Thompson. Students from the Hawaiian Learning Program, along with their kumu (teachers) Richard and Lynette Paglinawan, Malina Kaulukukui, and Puakina Paul, incorporated the oli, creating and wearing kīhei (symbolic ceremonial clothing) and gifting lei at formal School functions such as orientations and the end-of-year graduation convocations. However, incorporating these cultural protocols has been met with some resistance. There have been a number of attempts to develop student and faculty protocols of welcoming guests utilizing these gifted chants. While many students are willing to try and learn these oli, it has proven to be far more challenging to garner faculty buy-in. While it has been understandably uncomfortable for most faculty unfamiliar with the Hawaiian language and chant, some felt “forced” to learn and appeared disinterested in practising together, or on their own. Oli practice sessions leading up to a graduation convocation, for example, were sparsely attended, and by the same few individuals. Some also questioned the religiosity of oli, since spiritual connections can exist within this form of expression. Faculty who are trained to identify a strict sense of separation between church and state, raised concerns about chanting as a form of prayer. Efforts in 2017–2018 included a cultural advisor who volunteered to assist participating faculty with easy-to-follow practice sessions on the School mele and oli. This approach reduced some stress and fostered more feelings of inclusion to the process of learning the School’s oli.

Providing flower lei and food has strong cultural ties in Hawai‘i. While Western and non-Indigenous institutions commonly view these cultural practices as frivolous expenses, Hawaiians and other Indigenous communities regard the absence of lei giving and offering of food as a fundamental cultural faux pas or even

disrespectful. Food is equated to offering sustenance and care to others, a value held by many cultures but often not supported in institutional funding. In our School, it has become standard practice to provide lei to our guests, and to those who may be celebrating special achievements and transitions. Likewise, the presence of food at gatherings including faculty meetings, student orientations, and in classroom activities extends this sense of bonding and honouring the care of relationships. Although there has been increased funding for these types of cultural practices, individual faculty often self-fund these offerings in their classrooms.

Faculty Training and Huaka‘i

Although the mo‘olelo above refer to our implicit curriculum, efforts to transform the explicit curriculum have also seen some successes and challenges. The IAC has led efforts to provide resources and training for faculty in order to address a wide range of expertise on instruction on Indigenous issues. In describing the manner in which Indigenous issues are typically integrated into the classroom, one of us (Nakaoka) noted,

For the most part, it consists of providing statistics on disproportionate Native Hawaiian representation in human services and public safety, along with a Native Hawaiian guest speaker. This could serve as an instructor’s sole attempt at implementing the 10th competency.

Often faculty and adjunct instructors provide one of the following reasons for the lack of Indigenous content in social work courses: “It’s not my area of expertise”; “I don’t know enough, so I’ll leave it to others to teach it”; “I’m not Indigenous and therefore wouldn’t feel comfortable talking about it”; “I don’t want to offend anyone”; and “My students know more than I do.” This tepid approach to integrating more meaningful Indigenous content into curriculum or challenging oneself to step outside one’s comfort level has not gone unnoticed by students. One student representative on the IAC was genuinely confounded when they heard of our School’s efforts to represent a Hawaiian Place of Learning. The student stated that for the most part, they did not feel or see how this was demonstrated in most of their classes or within the curriculum.

In the academic year, 2015–2016, the IAC facilitated initial experiential training that was focussed on educating faculty and staff about their “sense of place” from a Native Hawaiian perspective of identity. The coordinator of these activities (one of our authors, Ono) explained,

Land division utilized the ahupua‘a system which followed natural waterways that ran from mountain, through the valleys to the sea, and was maintained as a sustainable, balanced ecosystem by the ancient Hawaiians. In this sense, one’s sense of purpose and livelihood was intricately tied to the land and its care. Borrowing from a Hawaiian, place-based curriculum for elementary school students developed through the University of Hawai‘i, we coordinated three site visits, or huaka‘i, for faculty and staff to learn about the aspects of the ahupua‘a that the University of Hawai‘i is situated within. This included the Mānoa Heritage Center, the Lo‘i o Kānewai (taro garden), and the Waikīkī Aquarium.

Initially, the faculty strongly supported these experiential field trips, and the first two huaka‘i were well attended. Despite efforts to convene huaka‘i at times convenient to faculty, it was observed that there was a substantial decrease in attendance. Hence, the committee modified offerings. A greater emphasis was placed on in-house training, which was scheduled during the work day. An example of in-house faculty training was hosted by the IAC and sponsored by the UHM Office of Student Equity, Excellence & Diversity.

Faculty expressed an interest in learning additional methods to assist in their incorporation of the 10th Competency into their courses. Additionally, adjunct faculty, including lecturers and field instructors, expressed challenges to integrating Indigenous perspectives into practice experiences. Kapono Ciotti, a respected practitioner and consultant in culturally responsive learning, instruction, assessment, and curriculum design, provided two training sessions to faculty, one in 2017 and one in 2018. Mr. Ciotti posited questions to the faculty, such as “What are systems of oppression?” and “How do we define decolonization?” He provided pedagogical frameworks for historical trauma and culturally relevant practice for curriculum and anti-racist organizational structures as foundations for the department. He encouraged faculty to analyze the curriculum in regard to how it addressed Native Hawaiian students and to take a critical lens to the system in which we work to determine whether it honours the goals. Both training sessions directly supported the School’s mission, which emphasizes an inherently inclusive environment with integration of diverse ways of knowing, bringing together the past and present to create a future of possibilities, and contributes toward the University’s goal to be a model Indigenous-serving institution. Faculty feedback on the training was positive; however, some faculty lamented that those in attendance tended to be among those already in support of Indigenization.

Resource Repository

Another effort to address the explicit curriculum was the IAC’s resource repository, which is a collection of books, readings, videos, websites, experiential activities, community service projects, and consultant lists for faculty use. The repository is available to faculty online through the University online platform, and there are plans to make it available to field instructors. The intention of building the repository is to assist faculty in increasing their knowledge and use of Indigenous resources within their course planning. It has been a useful tool for faculty instruction on Indigenous issues; for example, faculty have incorporated ‘āina-based activities in the community that create opportunities to work with the land while understanding how culture, mind, body, and spirit are connected to overall well-being. One critique of the repository is that it is difficult to know which classes are using specific resources, and thus students sometimes complain of duplicative material in courses. The IAC has discussed taking leadership in tracking the use of this content, but an appropriate online tool that is accessible to all faculty has yet to be developed.

The repository is another passive strategy, as it depends on individual initiative. As with other Indigenization efforts on classroom instruction, the

repository only impacts those who are motivated to use it. These instructors tend to be the same allies year after year, while other faculty express familiar reasons why they cannot incorporate more Indigenous content. It has also been challenging to consistently update and supplement the repository, since this is done by the IAC members themselves, who have different skill levels in utilizing technology. One solution would be for the School to take ownership of the repository, assigning a faculty or staff member to regularly monitor, update, and expand the materials in the repository.

Lessons Learned

I ka nānā no a ‘ike

By observing, one learns.

— Pukui (1983, p. 129)

In this section, we apply an ŌiwiCRT analysis to the four mo‘olelo shared above to identify and articulate three key lessons that can guide future Indigenization efforts.

Lesson 1: Acknowledge the Complexity of Fitting Indigenous Protocols and Values into a Western Institution, and Work Through It

In all four of our mo‘olelo, we experienced frustration about the barriers to implementing new practices that were grounded in Indigeneity. The Eurocentric structures and systems of academia (not unique to UH) provided some expected and unexpected challenges to decolonization. Perhaps the most difficult barriers to surmount were those seemingly upheld by well-meaning faculty who were trying to maintain “professional” or “academic” standards. Because Hawaiian ways of knowing, as well as cultural practices, include spirituality and cosmology, which are not always recognized within a state institution, it is difficult to incorporate them into implicit and explicit curriculum. Thus, the power remains within the dominant culture to define knowledge, academic value, and professionalism. This complexity is part of the consequences of colonization.

The importance of pushing through these challenges to chart new territory is in line with ŌiwiCRT, which guides us to recognize the function of the state university as a consequence of colonization and occupation. For tenure-track faculty, the issue of academic survival versus Indigenous and cultural survivance are often at odds, even for scholars with a high commitment to Indigenization. Here, no‘ono‘o or self-reflection, becomes an important technique for faculty who are reconciling these realities. This is similar to what ŌiwiCRT suggests, described as a Kanaka Ōiwi critical consciousness, which pushes us to examine the “applicability to examine theory and practice of sovereignty and self-determination in multiple contexts.” This critical consciousness is also important in our next lesson, which asks scholars to work on their essence.

Lesson 2: Understanding the Distinction Between Form (Technical Knowledge) and Essence (Embodiment of Values)

Kupuna Lynette Paglinawan, a respected elder, esteemed social worker, and kumu (instructor) of the School’s Hawaiian Learning Program, distinguishes *form* from *essence*. In *nā mea hawai‘i* (Hawaiian ways), there is an attention to both form, or technical knowledge, and essence, or the embodiment of values. In our *mo‘olelo* about cultural protocols, some faculty were concerned with the process of learning words, pronouncing them correctly, and chanting in proper cadence and voice intonation. They were concerned with form, or technical knowledge. Other colleagues were concerned that they would not embody the correct essence—particularly, if they were not of Native Hawaiian ethnicity and/or felt unfamiliar with Hawaiian language and cultural practices. It was the IAC’s hope that faculty would work toward both. However, this proved to be too difficult. While faculty training sessions and the resource repository might assist faculty in learning about the history and culture of Kanaka Ōiwi, the embodiment of Indigenous values and knowledge is a longer journey that is not easily achieved with these activities alone. ŌiwiCRT identifies *kuleana* as associated with privilege and responsibility. Faculty sit in a privileged space in the University, and due to their position they have responsibility to seek Indigenous knowledge to enhance their ability to decolonize education. The incorporation of *Aloha Āina*, another ŌiwiCRT tenet, is also embedded within *kuleana*. Faculty resistance to *huaka‘i* that were created to cultivate a relationship with the local community or *ahupua‘a*, can reflect a conflicted commitment to *Aloha ‘Āina*. ŌiwiCRT suggests that this commitment can be reflected in the meaning and importance of personal genealogies related to the land and place, environmentalism, demilitarization, and sovereignty.

Lesson 3: Co-learning Is Important; There Must Be a Willingness to Learn from Students and Practitioners

Although not explicitly stated in our *mo‘olelo*, the value of student and community knowledge must be respected in the social work curriculum and is reflected in the ŌiwiCRT tenet of *kuleana*. This includes recognizing the importance of *he alo ā alo* (face-to-face contact) and *ho‘olauna* (friendly interaction) as preliminary to *kūkakūka* (discussion on matters of importance). This practice of relating and knowing extends beyond the convenience of technology. For example, in Hawaiian culture, individuals may greet each other with an exchange of *hā* (breath, life force) known as *honi*, which is an honourific and intimate custom of connecting spiritually with each other.

Although field instructors provide an avenue by which to elicit community practitioner knowledge in the classroom (e.g., through guest lectures and site visits), more concerted efforts to include community input may yield amazing results, as it has in the past. Taking the classroom to culture- and *‘āina*-based programs for experiential activities and including more Indigenous organizations as field sites has also proved fruitful, according to student and instructor feedback.

Indigenous students and non-Indigenous students who are equipped with former training in Indigenous ways of knowing are untapped resources in this journey. Although the IAC was recently successful in adding a student and community representative to the committee, this action was not without controversy. For example, some faculty expressed concern about the ability of these members to influence policy on faculty tenure, among other issues. Thus, although there are attempts to reinforce the validity of student and community knowledge, there is still work to be done in appreciating collective effort on the continuous journey of decolonization and Indigenization. We see all of this as a part of our collective kuleana—the responsibility to incorporate all voices on our journey. ŌiwiCRT speaks to “continuous deep reflection” to assess how our kuleana may change over time. It also informs us that being an active learner is part of our kuleana.

Conclusions and Implications for Social Work Education

E kuhikuhi pono i na au iki a me na au nui o ka ‘ike

Instruct well in the little and the large currents of knowledge.

— Pukui (1983, p. 40)

In developing and tailoring ŌiwiCRT for use in decolonizing our own perspectives and advancing the Indigenization of curriculum, we propose discussion that elevates decolonization and Indigenization at the highest level of priority, with articulation of a plan for action (Morelli et al., 2016). This framework would include acknowledgement of the following five themes and critical questions to ask of ourselves and to discuss with faculty. The ŌiwiCRT tenets that point to the importance of colonization and occupation, Aloha Āina, and kuleana inform these themes; with each theme, we propose questions for faculty and students to guide teaching and learning. As mentioned earlier, our mo‘olelo narratives, which reflect our unique positionalities within the School, guide our recommendations and analysis.

Large Currents

Large currents include historic (neo)colonization; systematic erasure or exoticizing of Indigenous language and culture; expurgating Hawaiian resistance from conventional, Western mainstream education; and other pernicious systemic subversion that have led to misunderstanding and minimizing the significant concerns of na po‘e ‘oiwi (Native Hawaiians). An ŌiwiCRT lens teaches us that the diversification of student body and faculty is important, yet it is not a complete approach to addressing the consequences of colonization and occupation. In addition to ramping up faculty recruitment of Indigenous people, then, we need to address the meta-narratives that are embedded in social work academia. Do we teach the history of Hawai‘i using a ŌiwiCRT lens? How do we, as social work educators, integrate historical circumstances using an Indigenous lens with social work lessons on social justice, self-determination, and health equity? Do we recognize Kanaka Ōiwi social work models and pioneers?

Small Currents

Small currents refers to the influence of neo-colonial structures on everyday life, socio-economic status, and health disparities across the life cycle. ŌiwiCRT can help us to understand how our individual relationship with the land and community, one that embraces Aloha Āina and kuleana in form and essence, is integral to our pedagogy. By understanding these concepts, we internalize our connection between history, community, and people. Do we make concrete connections on how incarceration, houselessness, substance abuse, and other social problems are consequences of colonization of Indigenous people? Do we investigate how social workers can be complicit in replicating systems that are harmful to Native peoples?

‘Olelo No‘eau, Mo‘olelo, Kaona, No‘ono, Wili

These concepts are related to honouring Indigenous knowledge within our pedagogy. Our implicit and explicit curriculum should embrace policies and practices that are inclusive of Kanaka Ōiwi ways of knowing. Do we recognize the importance of honouring ‘ways no‘eau (ancestral wisdoms), mo‘olelo (stories), and their kaona (deep, multi-layered, and frequently, obscured meanings)? Do we as faculty learners practise no‘ono (deep reflection, reflexivity) on our instructional positionality? How do we wili (weave) Indigenous ways of being and knowing into a curriculum already jam-packed with essential social work content? Have we processes for culturally safe discussions with each other? Do we practise reflexivity in our teaching, our practice, and our relationships with each other? What do we need to engage in meaningful kūkakūka (sensitive, possibly contentious discussions)?

Ola Pono or Holistic Health Is Influenced by Ensuring Lōkahi (Harmony with All That Lives, Including Land, as Imbued with Great Spirituality)

Although this concept is closely aligned with Aloha ‘Āina, we identify this as a theme related to kuleana. Working with a school of social work in a state institution, as academics we are not required to reflect upon our relationship with spirituality. The spirituality that we refer to here is less about religion and more about ola pono within ourselves, students, and community. Do we recognize the connections between community, students, and our school? How might we improve our kuleana (responsibility) as kumu (sources of knowledge, teachers, educators) and kahu (stewards) of progressive social work in Hawai‘i? How do we embody both form and essence when teaching about health and self-care? How do we take care of our own health and well-being? We view this article and our co-writing endeavour as part of our commitment in all of these areas. By working and writing together as scholars engaged with Indigenous social work, we practise self-care through feeling connected through this article and our other work.

Aloha ‘Āina and Mālama ‘Āina or Love and Care for Land and All that Lives, with ‘Āina Viewed as Mother

Although the Western institution does not require it, a Hawaiian Place of Learning and ŌiwiCRT instructs us to understand how we are integrally connected

to land, place, and space. What might we do to continuously improve our seeding and nurturing of Aloha ‘Ānd in our implicit and explicit curriculum? Into our professional lives as members of the social work community? Into our personal lives as members of the greater human community of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people?

As an ongoing and dynamic journey of learning, Indigenizing social work education might be viewed as a fluid process with evolving outcomes consistent with the value of continuous learning and improvement. As those involved in an avowedly value-laden profession, social work educators and students have a unique awareness of the importance of social justice, equity, and diversity in their practice. In line with Kanaka ‘Ōiwi CRT, we have proposed five value-based themes that might guide future work in Indigenization projects. When applied to educational praxis, these values can serve to undergird the decolonization of implicit and explicit social work curriculum. E kanu i ka huli ‘oi hā‘ūle ka ua. Let us plant the taro stalks while there is rain.

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