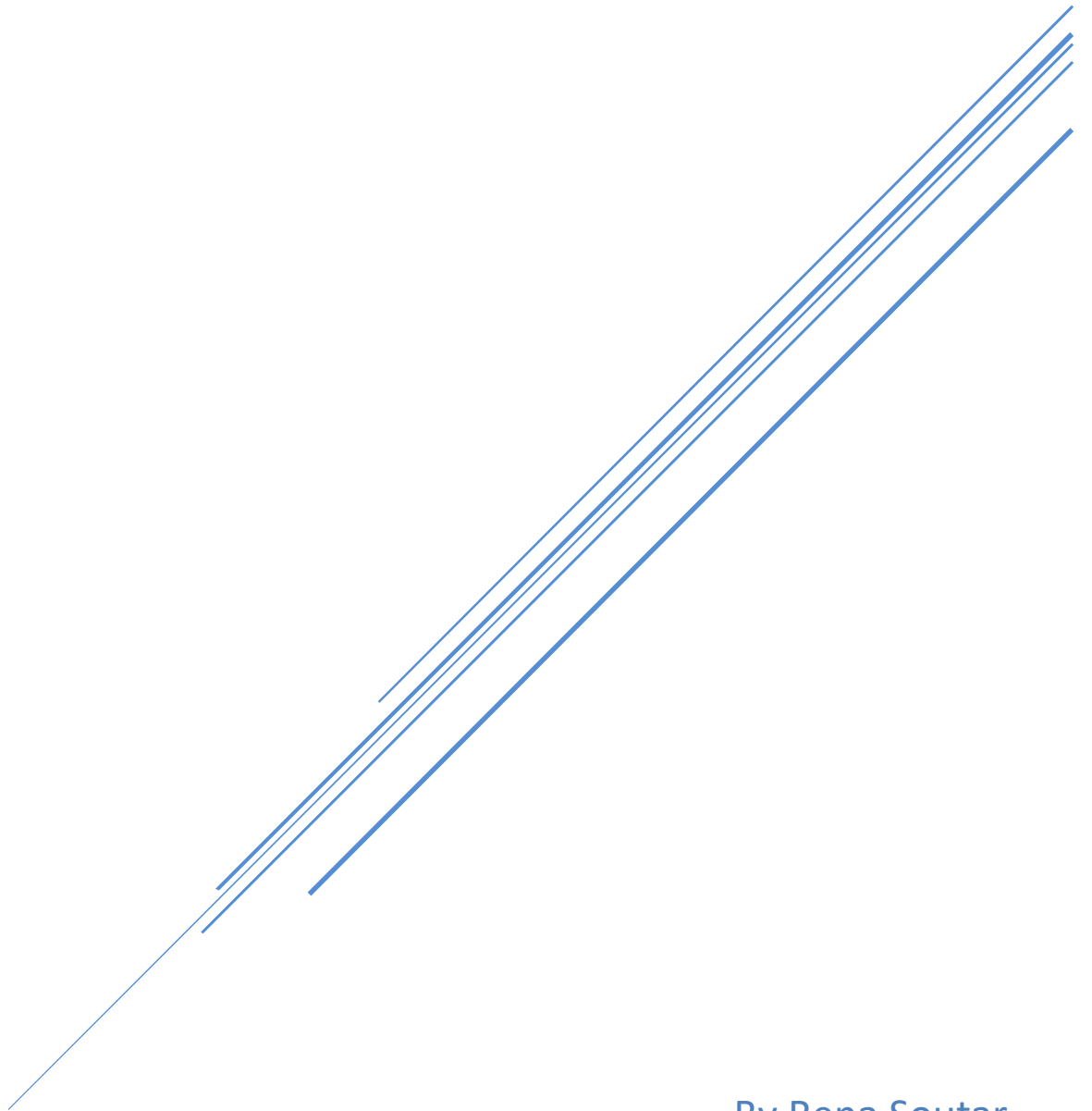


# COLONIAL AUDIT FRAMEWORK

Emily Carr University of Art + Design



By Rena Soutar  
February 1, 2021

## Contents

Introduction .....	2
In-House vs. Outsourcing .....	3
Definitions .....	3
Purpose of Colonial Audit .....	5
Limitations and Context of Colonial Audit .....	5
Decolonial Process .....	6
Caution and Philosophical Approach .....	7
Culture.....	9
Cultural Authority.....	10
Identity.....	10
Note on External Constraints.....	12
Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.....	13
Curriculum .....	15
Wellness Services .....	15
Aboriginal Gathering Place + Indigenous Policies .....	16
Corporate .....	17
Environmental Sustainability .....	17
Finance.....	18
Strategic Planning .....	19
Silos .....	20
Human Resources, Tenure, Promotion .....	20
Dispossession.....	21
Land Possession .....	21
Naming.....	22
Physical Assets .....	22
Conclusion .....	23
Bibliography and Reference Materials .....	24

# Background

## Introduction

[My grandfather] said, ‘They’re not going anywhere. We’re not going anywhere. We need to find a way to co-exist. We need to find a way to get along.’ We have to work together.”

Carleen Thomas, Tsleil-Waututh Nation

Many Indigenous people have stated their willingness to work together with others in their lands. Have non Indigenous people done the work to understand the history Indigenous people already know? Are non-Indigenous people prepared to enter into the conversation with the background knowledge needed for real understanding and communication?

Reconciliation means not having to say sorry a second time.

Cindy Blackstock  
First Nations Child and Family Caring Society

This document constitutes a framework for a colonial audit. It is intended to outline the purpose, components, and context of a colonial audit, with recommendations for conducting the audit in a good way that cares for those most affected by colonialism, as well as those participating in and conducting the audit.

Colonialism pervades all institutions in Canada. Any organization wishing to undertake meaningful Reconciliation<sup>1</sup> work should first undertake an audit to determine what colonial impact the organization has had, and what aspects of the organization continue to uphold colonialism.

The framework and recommendations provided here are non-exhaustive. Other ideas may arise for inclusion in the audit, particularly from subject matter experts throughout the organization. Any additions should follow the general principles outlined in this report.

---

<sup>1</sup> See “Definitions”

## In-House vs. Outsourcing

It is important that much of the work for the audit be done internally by staff and faculty. The act of self reflection ensures an effective and authentic approach to the audit and subsequent decolonization efforts. Outsourcing the audit to a third party, especially an Indigenous person, is counter to the spirit of decolonizing. Unlike a financial audit, a colonial audit is more like institutional therapy. A therapist does not “fix” your problems, but provides a framework to understand your situation and provides insights to help you do the work to identify your problems. This colonial audit framework is functioning as the therapist.

Some elements of the audit may be difficult to resource internally. Some historical research, data gathering, etc. can be contracted to external parties.

As well, accounts from people who have experienced and been harmed by the colonialism of the institution can and should be given the opportunity to tell their side of the story. These people should be appropriately resourced to document their experience with ECUAD. Naturally this isn't work that can be sourced in-house. However, the work of reflecting on the feedback and producing the audit itself should be an internal process.

## Definitions

**Colonialism** - Colonialism is a system of political and social exertion of power to replace the existing laws and epistemologies of the land. The purpose of this replacement of systems is to seize control of land and resources for the building of wealth.

Other elements of colonialism are in place to *support* its core function of wealth-building via control of the land and resources. These other elements include racism, economic inequity, tangible and intangible heritage, and cultural narratives.

For ECUAD, the construction and ongoing support of cultural narratives are a large component of the institution's colonial role in society. Cultural expressions that are supported and encouraged usually confirm or establish the supremacy of the settler colonial state and whiteness. Other cultural narratives denigrate and delegitimize Indigenous Rights and Title. Cultural expressions that support settler colonialism are those that either support or simply fail to challenge the primacy of settler colonial control of land and resources. By centring whiteness, all other expressions are “other”, and in particular Indigenous perspectives and worldviews are inherently a challenge to settler colonial “right” to its own supremacy and control.

**Colonial goals** – As above, the primary goal of colonialism is to establish and maintain control over land and resources.

**White supremacy** – White supremacy is a key tool in supporting colonialism. If the white-centred settler state knows best, has the expertise, and has needs that take priority over Indigenous Rights and Title, then decisions can be made that alter the land and its ownership with those values at their core.

White supremacy underlies social and cultural spaces. White supremacy is inseparable from colonialism in that it drives colonial actions and exists as the justification for colonial violence.

**Western European** – Western European is not synonymous with colonialism. Many western European countries have committed acts of colonialism, and legacy systems of their colonization continue to commit colonial acts. However, that does not mean that all aspects of western European cultures are bad or negative.

This distinction is a critical one to remember as an audit is performed. Be clear about where western European perspectives and values are centred and considered “neutral” (and therefore supreme), but the presence of western European cultures does not in itself constitute colonialism. Properly contextualized as sitting on unceded Indigenous territory, narratives about western Europeans in Canada are critical to understanding and telling the history of this place.

**Indigenous (people)** – Several documents and political commitments outline the support of Indigenous Rights and Title. These include the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Delgamuukw decision, the Tsilhqot’in decision, and others.

In Canada there are many Indigenous peoples with histories and territory that may overlap. While Indigenous peoples do not claim Rights and Title outside of their territories, what unites all Indigenous peoples throughout Canada is that they claim Rights and Title somewhere, and are all affected by local, regional, and national laws and policies regarding Indigenous people. These issues are *different and separate* from the oppression that other groups face. Indigenous issues (local Rights-holders and “urban Indigenous” people) should not be conflated with other equity-deserving groups.

**Equity** – Equity-denied groups are not the same as Indigenous people. They have their own home-relationships to somewhere on earth, but not here in Canada. Their relationship to this land is dictated by colonial imposition of Western European laws, social structures, and worldviews on the land. In an alternative history, if people were allowed to immigrate to uncolonized Indigenous societies, other equity-deserving groups could very well have had equity in local Indigenous systems. Their relationship with local Indigenous peoples has been interrupted by the colonial government’s existence and assertion of its primacy.

The issues faced by equity-denied groups have a place in the colonial audit. Colonial forces constructed narratives around these groups of people to determine their status within settler colonial society. These can be addressed in the audit in order to highlight the impacts of colonialism on others.

**Reconciliation** – For the purposes of this framework, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s definition of “Reconciliation” is used.

“. . . Reconciliation is about establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in this country. In order for that to happen, there has to be awareness of the past, an acknowledgement of the harm that has been inflicted, atonement for the causes, and action to change behaviour.”

## Purpose of Colonial Audit

A colonial audit's purpose is two-fold:

- To tell ECUAD's part of the "truth" in Truth and Reconciliation; ie. the truth of the institution's colonial past and present
- To function as a diagnostic tool. By laying out the colonial aspects of ECUAD's history and present, staff and faculty can see plainly what role the institution plays in society and how. By reflecting on findings of the audit, staff and faculty can intentionally choose what to change, and see clearly what is in the jurisdiction and ability of ECUAD to change, and what is outside its ability. But even for factors outside ECUAD's ability to control, there is always the option of exerting influence and leveraging the voice and authority of the institution to speak up for broader change.

The primary focus on a colonial audit is to articulate the role and function of the organization within colonial society. A few key questions must be explored and answered for the purposes of the audit<sup>2</sup>.

1. What key function does the organization perform? What is its purpose for existing?
2. How does that function relate to colonial goals?
3. Who are the beneficiaries of that purpose?
4. Who are the users of the organization?
5. Who represents the organization and how do they contribute to the organization's purpose?

There are no shortcuts, and the first step is a commitment to completing the audit. By doing the work of examining the component parts of an institution, its role in society, and the ways in which the institution actively and historically supports colonialism, staff can intentionally make choices about what to do about their learnings. But first comes writing down the colonial issues.

## Limitations and Context of Colonial Audit

The audit is a current state analysis only. Historical sources and current practices can come under scrutiny in this process, but it should not get tangled up with pressure to produce solutions to perceived problems. A decolonial process is fulsome and takes time. The audit forms one key part of this process.

*An audit is not decolonization; it is one tool in decolonization.*

---

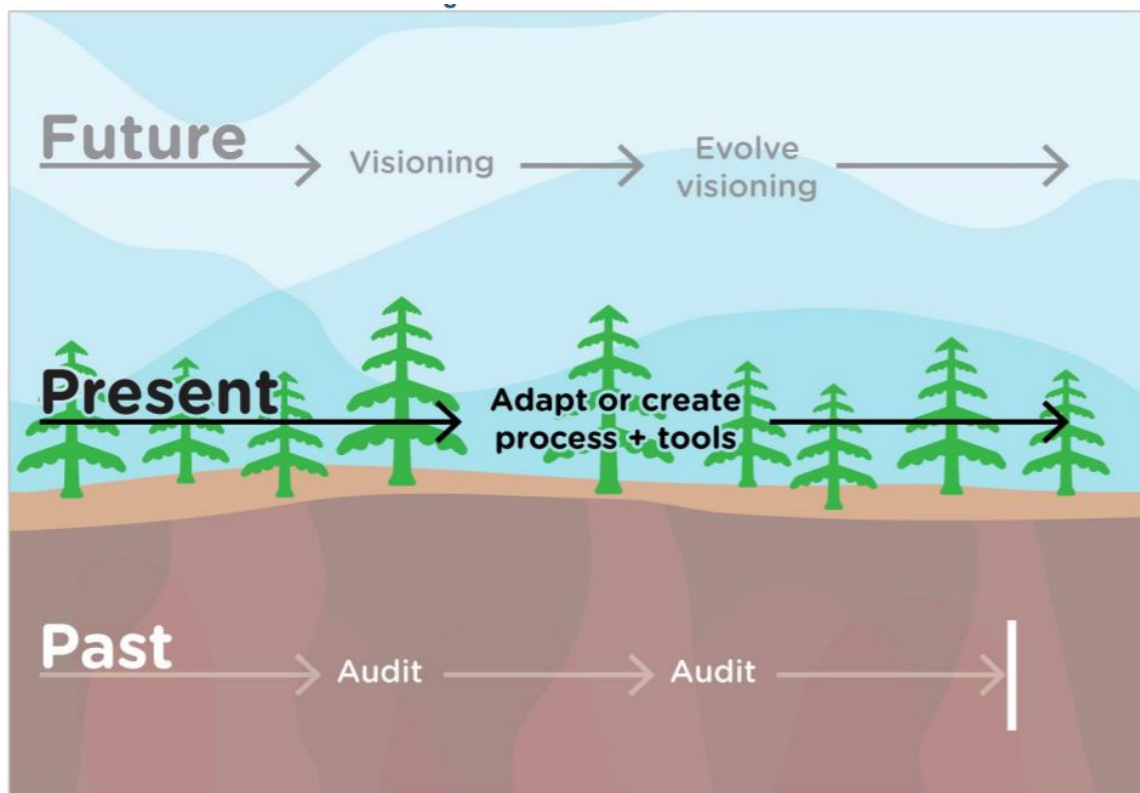
<sup>2</sup> See "Identity" for further exploration of the 5 questions

## Decolonial Process

One model for a full decolonial process is listed here.

A holistic decolonial process can be conceived of as containing 3 work flows.

1. Future – Blue sky visioning work, long term and aspirational goals
2. Present – On the ground process and tools that are adapted on an ad hoc basis throughout the organization, intended to respond to Reconciliation and decolonization principles
3. Past – Audit, or the ground upon which all of our current structures and processes are built



On a more practical level, decolonization can be approached in five functional areas that are interrelated.

1. The Learning Ground: “Reconciliation projects” & Indigenous engagement
  - This includes the work of the Aboriginal Gathering Place and any other Indigenous engagement work that is done. Examining how this work is supported within the organization is invaluable in determining the ways in which colonial structures hinder Reconciliation
2. Applied Learnings: Ongoing work (projects, programming) that would exist in the absence of Reconciliation goals but which are adapted in light of Reconciliation and decolonization learnings
  - This might include programming, internal support services, HR practices, etc.

3. The Values Anchor: Mission, Vision, Values
  - Should ECUAD wish to use or adapt them, an example set of Reconciliation mission, vision, and values are attached to this report
  - Any work undertaken specifically to address the mission, vision, and values falls into this category. For example, some cross-departmental teams at the City of Vancouver and Vancouver Park Board developed a collaboration agreement for an inter-departmental project. This agreement went through the 5 values to articulate the ways in which the team would commit to them throughout the project.
4. The Diagnosis: Audit
  - As outlined in this framework
5. Whole Systems Thinking: Cross-department coordination
  - This area of work is challenging in typical corporate structures. Active efforts, time, and resources would need to be allocated to ensure staff from different departments have it in their workplans to collaborate and confer with other departments.
  - Dedicated cross-departmental task teams can be assembled for particular goals. For example, an internal team from various departments can lead the audit work itself.



**Figure 2: Five Work Types**

## Caution and Philosophical Approach

Despite best intentions, the process of unearthing colonial roots and practices is sometimes not a neutral, dispassionate process. Discomfort and conflict can arise as people react to the unearthing of uncomfortable truths. It is critical that a plan be laid



out to support staff and others during the colonial audit work and subsequent analysis and review.

Examples of reactions range from blame to guilt to evangelism. Issues of identity within unceded territory, identity within the workplace, and identity in a racialized world complicate this work considerably. White fragility, impostor syndrome, a lack of validity and belonging also arise when people undertake this work. Creating guidelines for all participants to act with care and kindness can help counteract the foundational issue: we all operate within a colonial system resistant to challenges to its own authority. Undertaking decolonial work in that context means that supports don't automatically exist, although there are existing institutional tools that can be adapted.

It's best to work with existing support systems within your institution, but some possible supports are listed below.

1. Shared values and philosophical agreement
  - a. The people undertaking the work of the audit should commit to the attached "Reconciliation Mission, Vision, and Values"
    - i. A printed version for prominent display can help keep it top of mind
    - ii. A statement made from senior leadership can make the adoption of these values system-wide. This would also require a commitment from senior leadership to adhere to the same values in order to ensure trust.
  - b. Draft an agreement that lay out ground rules for engaging each other in conversation about the audit. This can be based on the Mission, Vision, and Values, or build on other therapeutic or social justice facilitated spaces.
2. Working Groups
  - a. *Project Group*: A group focused on audit content can help to reflect and share learnings and observations across departments.
  - b. *Emotional Support Group*: A group focused on emotional support can help staff to process feelings that arise as a result of the work. This group's discussions can also help to daylight some colonial practices that should be included in the audit, as they often reveal the ways in which the system is causing harm or failing to support people in taking care of themselves and each other.
3. Encourage use of counseling and therapy resources

# Writing the Audit

## Culture

The legacy [of residential schools] can be seen in the myths, misunderstandings, and lack of empathy many Canadians openly display about Indigenous people, their history, and their place in society. Canadians have been educated to believe in the inferiority of Indigenous peoples and in the superiority of European nations. This history and its aftermath, therefore, should not be seen as an Aboriginal problem; it's a Canadian one.

Justice Murray Sinclair, TRC Final Report

As an educational institution, ECUAD is guilty of upholding colonial narratives by failing to contextualize itself as existing on Indigenous territory.

Colonialism is both rooted in and supported by narratives around cultural supremacy. Colonial attitudes say that the colonizer's culture is at the centre and all other cultures are either to be suppressed, or added as colour to the core western European aesthetic. The suppression and attempted erasure of Indigenous cultures via the Indian Act and residential schools was and continues to be about delegitimizing Indigenous rights and title. When relegated to "minority group" status, and conflating all minority groups as "equity seeking", we continue to centre white western European colonizer supremacy and primacy.

A core aspect of ECUAD's colonial audit must focus on the ways in which ECUAD has throughout its history, and currently, upholds colonialism through culture. ECUAD holds a place of cultural authority and plays a function in colonial society. These are mutable states, and when daylit, the colonial aspects of the institution are shown to be choices that can be changed.

"In the long hundred years since the white man came, I have seen my freedom disappear like the salmon going mysteriously out to sea," he said.  
"The white man's strange customs, which I did not understand, pressed down upon me until I could no longer breathe.  
When I fought to protect my land and home, I was called a savage.  
When I neither understood nor welcomed this way of life,  
I was called lazy."

Chief Dan George at Empire Stadium, 1967

## Cultural Authority

Who gets to determine “legitimate and accredited” art practice? Who gets to determine what components are necessary to achieve that accreditation? What made the founders recognized authorities? Why was their perspective accepted and allowed to flourish into the internationally recognized institution ECUAD is today?

---

### TO DO

1. *History telling: what were the founders’ credentials; what made them authorities with educational value? Were there Indigenous practitioners who were their contemporaries?*
  2. *Inventory the degree streams, types of degrees, and required curriculum. As much as possible, articulate which cultures and traditions those are rooted in.*
  3. *Curriculum: Don’t look at Indigenous content, look at the proportion of non-Indigenous content by comparison. Inventory offered classes; create comparative graphs on cultural content.*
  4. *Examine the weighting of credits and credentials. How is Indigenous cultural knowledge, or other cultural knowledge, valued as compared conventional credentials?*
- 

## Identity

Identity is at the core of understanding an organization’s colonial impact. An institution is not a person, but it does represent a shared purpose and function within broader society. This section focuses on why ECUAD was created, what values it has held to, and what role it currently plays.

As Chief, I know that every decision I make today has to be carefully thought out because I want my grandchildren to look back decades from now and be proud of the choices we are making today.

Chief Maureen Thomas, Tseil-Waututh annual report 2017/18

Without a deliberate and thoughtful will for reconciliation, and the sustained action that manifests that will in meaningful, measurable change, we will not achieve the task the Survivors have given all the people in Canada: to repair the damage done to the relationship that was promised as far back as the Royal Proclamation of 1763.

Justice Murray Sinclair, TRC Final Report

In order for ECUAD to intentionally craft its 7<sup>th</sup> generation legacy and the role it will play in Reconciliation, it must first understand its roots and current role.

---

### *TO DO*

- 1. A brief history of ECUAD's founding, including researching any source material from that time*
  - 2. Past and current vision statements, value statements, etc. collected and listed in the audit*
  - 3. Internal reflection to flesh out the above historical research with a lens of understanding the organization in the context of colonial occupation of the land. This can be done in a workshop, outlined below.*
- 

#### *Identity Workshop (suggest 1-2 workshops max, 1-2 hrs each)*

A workshop around identity is best undertaken by those working within the organization who have some familiarity and history with the organization, mixed with some people with more recently added perspectives. A brainstorm-style workshop would be effective in putting all ideas on the table. The facilitator and/or staff lead can collect all the ideas and sift through them to produce the statement.

Ideally this work should result in a concise statement about what the organization exists to do. This can be distilled into a few key sentences. A follow-up paragraph can identify how the organization contributes to colonial goals.

#### Guidance for questions:

1. What key function does the ECUAD perform? What is its purpose for existing?

Review established mandates and vision statements. Reflect on those statements from a historical perspective. Has the purpose of the organization always been the same? Articulate what the original purpose of the university was, if different from the current vision statement or mandate.

2. How does that function relate to colonial goals?

Colonial control means replacing existing laws and seizing control of the land for wealth purposes. If the population is to continue to uphold that power structure, it's essential that the cultural narrative reinforce non-local-Indigenous perspectives to dilute and delegitimize local ways of being and knowing. Discuss the perspectives and artistic practices ECUAD has traditionally supported. Discuss the impact this has had on Vancouver's and Canada's cultural landscape.

3. Who are the beneficiaries of that purpose?

What populations in Vancouver are allowed visibility and support? What physical and cultural legacies has ECUAD created in the city and country? Who gets to be seen and respected for their artistic contributions? Which demographics get to see themselves reflected?

4. Who are the users of the organization?

For ECUAD, the users are pretty straightforward: the students. What is the entry criteria? What are they expected to know and what should they know how to do by the time they are finished their education there? How many people have gone through this process, compared to other cultural institutions? What proportion of the artistic output in Canada is ECUAD responsible for?

5. Who represents the ECUAD and how do they contribute to the organization's purpose?

A separate issue from the end users are the myriad people who make up the organization. Those people have an impact on the outcomes of the students, and the cultural narrative in society. This initial "Identity Workshop" is a good place to identify the component parts of the ECUAD organization and articulate the role they play and the areas of impact they can have.

For example:

Human Resources - Centres whiteness and patriarchy in ways reflective of society at large. Articulate how.

Faculty - Teaches history, techniques and perspectives grounded in particular cultures.

Leadership - Determines degree streams that reflect and imply expertise in particular areas, rooted in cultural traditions.

### ***Note on External Constraints***

The "Identity Workshop" a good place to identify what aspects of ECUAD's service delivery are constrained by other organizations. For example, what conditions do the Provincial government place on the organization? What is outside ECUAD's jurisdiction to control? Note that other external factors can be identified throughout the audit process. For example, Human Resources is affected by regulatory bodies that also fail to recognize Indigenous expertise. Even if ECUAD can't change those conditions, it is important to identify them in the audit.

## Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Colonialism begins by impacting local Indigenous peoples. Other groups of people also experience oppression from colonizers, and while the core cause of both inequitable treatment of people (either through sexual orientation, racialization, disability, age, etc.) is colonialism, these types of oppression are separate from issues of Indigenous rights, title, and sovereignty.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) initiatives are an important part of addressing existing inequities in an institution. The positioning of EDI within the organization, and its relation to Indigenous and Reconciliation work can point to how EDI is conceptualized. In some organizations EDI and Reconciliation are separate entities. In some, they are conflated as being solely issues of equity.

An alternative model is to view EDI as a subset of Decolonization work. The need for Reconciliation and EDI are both tied to the same root cause. And while they should not be conflated, addressing the root cause of colonialism can shed light on the issues of EDI and Reconciliation.

For the purposes of the audit, it's useful to examine some EDI statistics and data to daylight some of the effects of colonial harm. While the results may not seem overtly to do with colonialism, the broader process of decolonization can show how intentionally rooting out colonial values and practices can have innate positive effects on EDI. And so the collection of this data is important baseline information to include in the audit for later analysis.

### *A few notes on EDI initiatives and policies, and common pitfalls*

Society is at (yet another) critical point in racial history. During the Civil Rights era, people of all races came to realize the racial injustices of North America and fight against them. And while these struggles have never gone away, there has been a recent resurgence of urgency and a tipping point of number of people invested in correcting racial injustice.

*Emily Carr University condemns violence against Black people, Indigenous people and People of Colour. We stand in solidarity with Black Lives Matter. Deliberate and thoughtful action is needed as we address these issues through meaningful dialogue, informed input and contributions from all stakeholders within our institution. ~ Kim Peacock & Dr. Gillian Siddall, ECUAD Plan and Report, 2020*

Political and leadership statements in support of racial justice are key pieces in the efforts to address racial injustice. However, those statements are merely springboards for the real work.

A common pitfall leaders make when racial injustice becomes a focus is to commit to “engagement” or “town halls” or “dialogue”. However, as mentioned above, the struggle never went away for racialized people. Many have written and spoken on these issues. A better initial phase would be to assemble and study existing literature on this topic to reduce the burden on racialized people to engage and repeat things they’ve already said.

*In support of our continuing commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion at the university, and in direct response to our community's calls for action, we launched ECU's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan outlining immediate commitments and priority actions we are taking to address racism and inclusion for lasting and significant change. ~Kim Peacock & Dr. Gillian Siddall, ECUAD Plan and Report, 2020*

Another common pitfall of EDI initiatives is the goal of creating a safe environment for people impacted by inequitable systems. This does not correct the inequitable system. A safe environment in which to obtain an education that prioritizes western European cultures and their heirs (countries colonized by western Europeans) is still an education that devalues the impacted students' cultures. A safe environment is sometimes assisted assimilation.

To address systemic racism, you must first understand it. This is why EDI's inclusion in the audit is so important: if you don't examine what racism existed, and why it was racist, there can be no hope of improving.

---

### TO DO

1. *3rd Party Accounts*
    - a. *Resource a research paper or consultation process to speak to past and present racialized students or groups to tell their experience working within or with ECUAD*
  2. *Statistics gathering*
    - a. *ECUAD staff – demographic stats*
    - b. *ECUAD students – demographic stats as compared to regional pop.*
    - c. *ECUAD curriculum – cultural demographic profiles/stats*
    - d. *Reflect on why racialized students may not be organically opting into an education at ECUAD, if that is the case*
  3. *Curriculum*
    - a. *Compare cultural roots of the curriculum with the demographic makeup of the student body*
  4. *Case studies*
    - a. *Ex. Internal attempts to create Indigenous Cultural Practice degree stream*
-

## Curriculum

"When I'm sometimes asked 'When will there be enough [women on the Supreme Court]?' and I say 'When there are nine,' people are shocked. But there'd been nine men, and nobody's ever raised a question about that."

Ruth Bader Ginsburg

When the university is rooted entirely in Indigenous teachings for the length of time that it has currently existed, then it will have achieved a fully decolonized curriculum. This may not be the goal of the university, and such a goal would not reflect all of the cultures of all students in attendance. But it must be acknowledged that no one has questioned an entirely colonial curriculum thus far.

The university has stated that it values diversity. However, if the curriculum is majority culturally western European, then “diversity” just means people of other cultures assimilating into the system through their education. A fully decolonized curriculum would contextualize western European cultural expressions as being expressed in and on Indigenous territory, and representing just one of many cultures of those participating.

The curriculum reflects the goals of the institution by shaping and driving the outcomes for the students. The ramifications of this are broad-reaching. The number of students who have emerged from ECUAD since its inception, and their influence in the art and cultural practice world, have vast influence on the cultural and artistic output in the world.

---

### *TO DO*

- 1. Internal working groups or workshops dedicated to examining curriculum for the audit*
  - 2. Historical research on the evolving curriculum: ECUAD is accountable for the educational shaping of its students throughout its history*
  - 3. Examination of the educational paradigms/models/pedagogical theories and their cultural roots and assumptions*
- 

## Wellness Services

Wellness programming and services are provided in the spirit of decolonized practice. However, their necessity stems from the system's inability to care for the people in it to begin with.



Examining wellness services reveals the stresses and difficulties people face which are often symptoms of a larger system that fails or harms them: either the institution itself or society at large.

Cataloguing those stressors and harms contributes to the audit in highlighting the range of issues without judgement about their cause. Examination of the audit afterwards, as part of the decolonial process, reveals what is within and outside of the ECUAD's ability to influence or change.

---

### TO DO

1. *Identify the range of issues addressed by wellness services*
  2. *Identify the institutional and social contributors to those issues and stressors*
  3. *Reflect on the creation of the area of service, and whether it was addressing longstanding, original conditions, and/or emerging issues*
  4. *Identify whether the existing services are sufficiently resourced to meet demand*
  5. *Reflect on culture of wellness and whether the social culture both locally and socially support wellness practice*
  6. *Examine whether wellness services offered are rooted in other cultures: specifically Indigenous cultures*
- 

## Aboriginal Gathering Place + Indigenous Policies

The Aboriginal Gathering Place (AGP) and Indigenous initiatives such as the Aboriginal Admissions Policy fall under traditional “Reconciliation” actions and services. As part of a broader approach to Reconciliation, they are critical in addressing some of the barriers put up against Indigenous peoples’ success in the academic world.

The AGP is of principal benefit to Indigenous students and those who wish to “opt into” Indigenous cultural teachings. It is important to provide a culturally safe space for Indigenous students and staff to learn, process experiences, and find support. The value of such a space far exceeds its monetary needs.

However, the existence of such spaces can sometimes give others the mistaken impression that all Indigenous issues and content are the sole concern of the AGP and Indigenous-specific initiatives. In fact, the issue of decolonization is for everyone.

Indigenous content should be included in the audit for two reasons. First, successes are important for the record, as well as to demonstrate replicable ideas in other institutions who may reference the audit. Second, activities conducted in the AGP should be examined for any systemic barriers the staff there may have encountered, as those barriers can point to systemic colonial ways of operating.

---

## TO DO

1. *Case studies*
    - a. *Examples in which the AGP has encountered systemic barriers to activities*
  2. *Budget*
    - a. *Either in this section or under “Finance”, the budget for the AGP should be compared to other services and departments throughout the organization*
  3. *Informative lessons from AGP staff*
    - a. *After working within the ECUAD, have staff identify pre-existing colonial issues that necessitated the AGP’s creation and that the AGP works to counteract*
  4. *3rd Party Contracts*
    - a. *Resource a research paper or consultation process to speak to past and present Indigenous students to tell their experience within ECUAD*
  5. *Reflection and data on how much the AGP supports vs. how it is resourced compared to other ECUAD services*
- 

## Corporate

Colonialism is an invasive species: it springs up everywhere and any attempts to clear it out are thwarted by its volume, ubiquity, and tenacity.

Corporate structures have been refined over time to adapt perfectly to the colonial capitalist society it functions within. With so many intertwined and interdependent systems, it can be challenging to address Reconciliation, decolonization, and equity without encountering barriers throughout the system.

## Environmental Sustainability

The Musqueam people have always known the great value of our environment, and we understand the importance of caring for the lands and waters that make up our territory.

From Musqueam: A living culture

Any movement on environmentalism, sustainability, or climate action should be rooted in decolonization. Siloing climate action as separate and distinct from Reconciliation, decolonization, and EDI makes for an incomplete and hampered effort.

## Content Generation

1. Inventory the funding initiatives
    - a. Reflect on who is considered “experts”
    - b. Examine whether leadership has been sought among local Indigenous peoples and research done on the works, products, and philosophies they’ve modeled
  2. Examine funding, represent comparative data for initiatives funded
- 

### TO DO

1. *Inventory the funding initiatives*
    - a. *Reflect on who is considered “experts”*
    - b. *Examine whether leadership has been sought among local Indigenous peoples and research done on the works, products, and philosophies they’ve modeled*
  2. *Examine funding, represent comparative data for initiatives funded*
- 

## Finance

“Don’t tell me where your priorities are.  
Show me where you spend your money  
and I’ll tell you what they are.”

James W. Frick

An organization’s financial records are a key diagnostic tool for daylighting that organization’s priorities. In addition to the dollar values, financial processes are designed to facilitate expected, precedented types of transactions and relationships.

One way to audit financial systems is to look at case studies for how well the financial processes support or facilitate Reconciliation, decolonization, and EDI projects. Further details are in the AGP section of this document for inclusion of case studies.

---

*TO DO*

1. *Collaboration between Reconciliation (or AGP) and EDI staff and Finance to review organizational budget for priorities and alignment with ECUAD values and goals.*
    - a. *Workshop ideas for data graphing for inclusion in the audit.*
    - b. *Include comparative analysis of support for Indigenous students vs. comparable services*
    - c. *Include examination of “line items” or separate budgets for their siloing of interdependent areas; ex. Wellness vs. Cultural Practice*
  2. *Case studies (as in AGP section or here)*
    - a. *Ex. Barriers to AGP’s ways of doing business with Indigenous people*
  3. *Examine reporting requirements*
    - a. *Reflect on effects of reporting requirements, including lobbying*
  4. *Examine grants system*
- 

### **Strategic Planning**

The forward planning of ECUAD plays a strong role in determining the conditions, goals, and direction of the institution. The method, traditions, and standards of strategic planning have lasting effects, and when undertaken without examination of their colonial roots, will ensure colonial practices continue.

Ideally strategic visioning should be undertaken with all staff who also contribute to the colonial audit efforts. After the audit is completed, visioning would ideally be informed by the audit findings.

This section can either stand on its own or be a subset of “Identity’.

---

*TO DO*

1. *Review previous strategic plans*
    - a. *Examine content*
    - b. *Examine form and organization*
-

## Silos

“We are incredibly intertwined as a community. The actions of one can have tremendous effects on another. We cannot lose sight of that. Our ancestors knew how to live together. They knew how to share with others, even when they had nothing.

Chief Maureen Thomas  
Tsleil-Waututh annual report 2017/18

The nature of corporate structures is that they silo functional areas, departments, and people. The necessity for this is usually rooted in the size of the tasks associated, the number of people to serve, and the need for specialized expertise. Regardless of its necessity or origins, the result of this siloing is often an ideological shift in the understanding of the interdependencies of all areas of the organization.

Silos have profound impacts on the people in the system and the people being served by it. However, it can be difficult to pinpoint exact data that is of use for colonial audit purposes. As such, this section is necessarily a qualitative analysis.

---

### TO DO

1. *Workshop or collaborative document on the specific challenges faced by people across the organization as a result of silos*
  2. *Reflection on the division and naming of functional areas and departments, and decolonial alternatives to conceiving of those areas. For example, wellness (mental health services, medical services) and cultural art practice are not usually tied to each other. However, in Indigenous communities, they would be intimately related. Examples need not be rooted in Indigenous ways of viewing the world, but by holding up one area with another to see how and if they are related can highlight harmful disassociations between potentially related areas.*
- 

## Human Resources, Tenure, Promotion

The hiring and advancement of people within the system is heavily affected by issues of racism, patriarchy, and colonialism. While efforts for visible diversity have improved in recent years, often the qualities associated with whiteness, western European ideals, and maleness are rewarded over qualities associated with femininity and/or other cultures.

Beyond affecting an individual's ability to advance, these practices also ensure that a rigid set of values remains embedded throughout the system, affecting policy, procedures, and work culture.

---

*TO DO*

1. *Demographic profile of staff and faculty, stratified by position in the organization*
  2. *Examine accepted research activities, reflect on what is considered “valid” or given priority*
  3. *Reflect on relationship with union with particular attention to power structures and areas of authority*
  4. *Reflect on the treatment of “innovation”*
  5. *Reflect on the qualities of leadership, use existing job descriptions and job postings to identify which qualities are sought and rewarded*
- 

## Dispossession

Dispossession of people from their lands is the first and core harm of colonialism. Occupation of the land, as well as decisions made about the land and the physical features on it contribute to the erasure of Indigenous peoples in their own territories.

All non-Indigenous occupants of Canada are contributors to Indigenous dispossession in some capacity. Examining and naming that dispossession is part of the “truth” in “Truth and Reconciliation”.

## Land Possession

ECUAD occupies lands traditionally held by Indigenous peoples. The purchase and acquisition of land in unceded territory has a huge impact on local Indigenous peoples and their ability to thrive and support their own communities.

---

*TO DO*

1. *Reflection on the impact of dispossession on local Indigenous rights holders. This can be assigned to someone for background research, and reflections made in an internal workshop.*
  2. *Inventory of lands historically and currently held by ECUAD*
    - a. *Square footage*
    - b. *If known and not extractive of local Indigenous knowledge, list the significance of these places to the local Indigenous peoples*
-

1. Reflection on the impact of dispossession on local Indigenous rights holders. This can be assigned to someone for background research, and reflections made in an internal workshop.
2. Inventory of lands historically and currently held by ECUAD
  - Square footage
  - If known and not extractive of local Indigenous knowledge, list the significance of these places to the local Indigenous peoples

## Naming

How things are named does much to shape the way people relate to places. In the Vancouver area, Hənq̓əminəm and Skwxwú?mesh speaking peoples often named places according to how they were used, or what happens in that place. In western European traditions places are named for a variety of reasons, but especially in Vancouver, not often related to the history or significance of a place. Names can either strengthen peoples' connection to place, or weaken it.

Everyone who names a place in Canada does so over top of existing names or known places, usually to the erasure of the pre-existing names. Which means that naming contributes to cultural colonialism, and affects everyone's relationship to both the place they're in, and the people with ancestral connections to those places.

---

### TO DO

1. *Inventory of the names of all ECUAD places: buildings, plazas, gathering spaces, rooms, etc.*
  2. *Inventory the source of those names*
  3. *Data analysis displaying types of names/their origins (pie graph or similar)*
- 

## Physical Assets

*The current campus at Great Northern Way is a 26,600 square-metre facility designed by leading Canadian architectural firm, Diamond Schmitt Architects. ~ECUAD Plan and Report, 2020*

There is no culturally neutral space that has been touched by human hands. One of the cues to the population as to who is valued, who is represented, who is welcome, comes in the form of physical features on the land. This can include architecture, landscape architecture, art, monuments, and memorials.

---

### TO DO

1. *Inventory all physical assets*
  2. *Catalogue the demographic of the creators and cultural roots of those assets*
-

## Conclusion

The framework presented here offers an outline for the component parts of the audit. A phased approach to completing the sections would work well. The act of turning focus to conducting a colonial audit has been shown to increase staff skills in identifying and evaluating colonial behaviours. As such, the audit work itself evolves over the course of its creation. With that evolution and learning curve in mind, it's a good idea to begin with resourcing third party accounts of working with ECUAD. Such feedback can be a good place to reflect on systemic issues to include in the audit.

A colonial audit is a considerable undertaking. Understanding colonial impacts can (and should) be a lifetime's work. However, efforts to collect and reflect on the substantial body of impacts for which a colonial institution is complicit is both possible and necessary.

Given the extensive and ongoing nature of colonial impacts, it's unlikely a single colonial audit can be exhaustive. This should not be a deterrent. So many aspects of colonialism are a choice that is continually made, the system upheld by a thousand daily acts on the part of everyone in it. Efforts to unpack the ways we all continue to uphold colonialism, and where and how we were conditioned to do so, are efforts that are worthy and have tremendous potential to be of benefit to everyone.



## Bibliography and Reference Materials

### Other Voices on Colonialism and White Supremacy in Academia:

- Zoe S. Todd
- Dr. Kim TallBear
- Dr. Chanda Prescod-Weinstein

Decolonize First Workbook – Michelle Nahanee

The Inconvenient Indian – Thomas King

On This Patch of Grass: City Parks on Occupied Land – Daisy Couture, Sadie Couture, Selena Couture, and Matt Hearn

The works of Ijeoma Oluo

The Hidden Journals: Captain Vancouver and His Mapmaker – Wade Baker & Mary Tasi

The work of Sierra Tasi Baker