

Sylliboy, John R.

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Summary Report for NAISA Conference

Session Title: Gender and Sexuality Across Time, Space, and Place

Paper Title: Using L'nuwey (Mi'kmaw) Worldview to Conceptualize Two-Spirit Identity

Link: <https://www.naisa.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Program-UPDATED-2019-06-24.pdf>

Description of the conference/training event:

The Native American Indigenous Student Association (NAISA) is the largest Indigenous student scholarly-building event that hosts knowledge sharing for evolving Indigenous scholars with knowledge holders in various fields. See more information here: <https://www.naisa.org/about/>

The Native American and Indigenous Studies Association (NAISA) is an interdisciplinary, international membership-based organization, comprised of scholars working in the fields of Native American and Indigenous Studies, broadly defined...NAISA hosts an annual meeting that welcomes faculty and students in colleges, universities, and tribal colleges; community-based scholars and elders; and independent professionals working in the field.

The conference hosted a record number of 2000+ Indigenous scholars and students from all over the world. It was the first time that it was held outside of the political/geographical map of North America. NAISA is often held in the USA and Canada, but its mandate is growing to represent the interests of world Indigenous groups. The conference will be held in Toronto in 2020. For more information, see link: <https://www.naisa.org/annual-meeting/conference-information/>

Relevance of the conference/training to the research area:

Attending the conference/meeting is part of a process in developing capacities as a Ph.D. student and as an evolving "Indigenous scholar." Part of McGill's recommended portfolio-building expectation is to attend national and international scholarly events, and if so, present at them. The presentation of my paper at the NAISA was clearly to achieve that milestone by presenting original work that is directly related to my studies. It was also to learn from peer Indigenous scholars about the perspectives in gender, sexuality and sex, which is directly linked to my current research in my doctoral studies.

Realized/expected outcomes of attending the conference/training event:

The realized outcome was to present at the conference and to network with Indigenous scholars in my field of studies. The overarching theme of building relationships is significant as an Indigenous student researcher. The unexpected outcome was to meet Indigenous scholars who I have referenced in my master's thesis and various writings in my Ph.D. coursework. One such meeting was with Shawn Wilson, whose book, *Research is Ceremony*, is a must-read for Indigenous student researchers, especially about decolonizing methodologies. I had the opportunity to accidentally meet Shawn Wilson while we were registering for the conference. I had not known that it was him until a couple of fans ran up to him to get a photo. I played it cool by mentioning to him that his sister, Dr. Alex Wilson, is on my Ph.D. Committee, of which he was totally fascinated. He graciously agreed to take a selfie together to share it with his sister. Awesome!



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Next steps (1-2 tasks you plan to undertake within the next year)

The next steps involve immersing myself in preparing the Candidacy Papers and my proposal by June 2020. Candidacy papers are the requirements equivalent to the “Comps” in other Ph.D. programs. The objective is to complete the two documents as publishable content to be included as the first two chapters of the dissertation about theory or concepts and methodology. Once achieving the milestone as Ph.D. Candidate, I will present my proposal to Mi’kmaq Ethics Watch and McGill ethics over the summer with the hope of collecting data by fall 2020.