“Education is what got us into this mess…and education is what will get us out of this [mess].” Senator Murray Sinclair (former Truth and Reconciliation Commissioner)

As a Métis educator who firmly believes in the power and promise of education to ignite positive societal change, I strive to invoke transformative learning with my students. As a post-secondary educator who works with education students, I recognize that I am in a position of influence whereby the calls to action issued by the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada* (2015), which repeatedly reference education as key to awakening a collective Canadian consciousness, can be forefronted as an educational movement. To spark this work, I adopt an ethos of transformative learning and leadership, guided by an ethos of social justice, and fuelled by a growing and collective will to do better (Brown, 2004; Shields, 2012). In wishing to “give back” (Kovach, 2009; Silver, 2013) through the privilege of my education, my teaching philosophy is driven by a strong sense of social justice grounded in praxis (Freire, 1970), and an ongoing belief in the good of others. I believe my collaborative approach to teaching and learning stems from a collective orientation grounded in Indigenous ways of knowing, and it is heartening to see this type of approach to knowledge sharing increasingly validated by education scholars and through a number of institutional policies and practices (Mattos, 2015; Sawyer, 2008; *University of Calgary Eyes High Strategy*, 2017-22; *University of Calgary Journey Towards an Indigenous Strategy (Indigenous Framework)*, 2016; Wenger, 2000; *Werklund School of Education Indigenous Education Taskforce Report and Recommendations,* 2015).

Scholars working within transformative leadership remind us we have a responsibility to move beyond the current hegemonic model of education (Brown, 2004; Shields, 2012). As the pace of global change accelerates, so too is our need to successfully navigate a “volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous” world (Shields, 2012). In my time at Werklund, I have had the privilege of witnessing profound yet intensely personal transformations in both colleagues and students I have worked with, and mentored, as they moved through “difficult” learning. As a transformative educator who not only believes in praxis but also models this way of knowing, being, and doing, I have initiated and realized a number of initiatives designed to prompt an ethos of social change in collaboration with students, colleagues, professionals, and other change leaders. In seeking to entrench significant and long term impact, I look to Kathleen Brown (2004) who counsels *truly* transformative leaders to instigate “ground-breaking, pragmatic approaches” (p. 77). Inspired by Maxine Greene (2004), the power of the arts is central to my leadership philosophy and telling evidence of aesthetic impact was shared with the over 250 attendees at the *Eyes Open, Eyes High* event that showcased the learning accomplishments of 60 education students along with the *New Blood* performers. To ensure sustainability, I worked with the president of the Education Students’ Association last fall on a 2016 *Students’ Union Quality Money* grant application and we were awarded $18,000 in spring 2017 to continue these initiatives. My peers, along with my students, have recognized my teaching efforts by nominating me for a number of awards. In 2016, I received the *Werklund Teaching Excellence Award* at the same time that my students nominated me for the *Students’ Union Teaching Excellence Award* which I was awarded in June 2017.

Since joining Werklund, I have spearheaded other ground-breaking initiatives designed to transform how others view, and interact with, Indigenous people. These include: an Indigenous service-learning program for pre-service teachers; the creation and curricular development of “Indigenous education: A call to action” graduate program; Brain Architecture Game sessions in my role as a University of Calgary 2016 *Teaching* Scholar; and, the recent formation of the Alberta Metis Education Council. These initiatives have propelled life-changing moments, both large and small, in my classes, with colleagues, at the university level, and extending out to provincial impact. They also represent the possibility that one more mind will be changed, one more ally may be inspired, one more Indigenous person will see hope for the future, and one more leader may support this movement. By infusing a sense of excitement, hopefulness, and collective responsibility into otherwise daunting tasks, my vision is to inspire others who can generate positive social change in their own circles of influence. In truth, these activities surpass the typical duties of a faculty member engaged in teaching, research, and service, yet they also propel the traditional domains of teaching and learning into exciting new directions. Just as importantly, these initiatives hold the potential to motivate others to move forward in their own awareness, acknowledgement, and actions as together we seek solutions to a future of “complex dilemmas” (Shields, 2012, p. 4).

My belief in collaboration, where the idea that together we are more than we are individually (Sawyer, 2007) is evident throughout my professional practice. In keeping with this philosophy, I regularly share evidence-driven insights into effective pedagogical practices with fellow faculty and instructors, education students, and university leadership through publications and presentations. As an Indigenous scholar, I broaden the dissemination of this teaching expertise to a wider community level as an academic member of the Bow Valley College Aboriginal Advisory Council; as a community member-at-large of the Rupertsland Centre for Metis Research Executive Council; and as a founding and active member of the Alberta Métis Education Council. I believe that if we are to realize authentic and lasting change, we must inspire others to join in these proactive efforts. My pedagogy is grounded in strategies meant to inspire colleagues and students to critically evaluate their own approaches to teaching and learning. The Indigenous principle of “giving back” also means that I have a responsibility to pass on insights I have gained along the way. By mentoring colleagues new to the academy and by sharing insights with more experienced colleagues, I am keenly aware that I must model in the present moment the positive change I aspire to bring forward to the future.

Building from the present momentum towards the future, I am keenly aware of the inevitable missteps that accompany bold teaching and learning; thus, I continually endeavour to improve myself through critical reflection (Brookfield, 1995), informal and formal student feedback, and a rigorous research agenda whereby evidence-based data is helping to improve my teaching. Amidst this difficult learning, the even greater challenge of how to keep my spirit energized along with the momentous task of social change is ever present. As an educator who believes in transformative learning, I am reminded to draw inspiration from other change leaders during these difficult times and to recognize that a strong sense of identity and integrity forms the basis of excellent teaching (Palmer, 1998; Taylor, 2005).