

GOVERNING CIRCLE

Exciting Announcement:

TRANSITION TO A CO-CHAIR MODEL

The conversation about transitioning to a co-chair model at The Circle has been brewing for a few months. Upon reflection, the seeds were probably sown during the recruitment of new board members last spring. Throughout that process, the existing board expressed a strong preference to see a re-balancing between Indigenous and non-Indigenous leadership at the governance level, wanting to see at least 50% of our board, more than our by-laws require, identify as Indigenous. And at the same time, we received a large number of very compelling self-nominations from amazing Indigenous people from across the country.

Into the summer and fall, and with a renewed and mostly Indigenous board in place, the culture and the voice of the organization shifted. As the white Chair, I'd be lying if I said it's always easy to feel responsible for holding the space and setting the tone for the board, and also feel like it is NOT my role to do so. What an important and productive discomfort this is and it brings new creativity, understandings, passions and directions for our organization that I, and the rest of the Board and staff, want to keep leaning into. This is the intersection and conversation in the philanthropic sector that we want to advance.

And so, in December 2018, at the suggestion of myself and our Executive Director, Kris Archie, and through our Governance Committee, the Board made a unanimous decision to create a second Chair role and to ask Tim Fox if he would offer his wisdom, energy and leadership to it. In only a few months since joining our Board in June, Tim has shown himself to be a grounded, strategic and energetic voice around the table, whose role at the Calgary Foundation provides him with great insight into the work of The Circle. He accepted the role and I am so looking forward to learning from him and working together to support the leadership of our staff team.

Tim and I shared a moment of connection and of "seeing" in our early winter Board retreat in which each of us reflected on what brings us to this work. He and I spoke, as he has publicly in [a recent Ted Talk](#), about our young daughters of similar ages and our perspectives on their futures, fears about their safety and how much they "matter" in Canada. As parents, the gap in our feelings and our fears, about children that live in the same moment in time, in the same country, is a small proxy for a massive change that is needed. With strengthened governance, The Circle hopes to continue to provide leadership and support toward that shift.

It is with great excitement that I, on behalf of the Governing Circle, officially announce the election of Tim Fox as Governing Circle co-chair!

Warmly,



Sara Lyons

CO-CHAIR, GOVERNING CIRCLE

THE CIRCLE ON PHILANTHROPY AND ABORIGINAL PEOPLES IN CANADA

Q & A WITH...

TIM FOX



@TIMOTHYCFox

Where are you from? Where do you live work and play? What you feel called to do in the world?

I am a proud member of the Kainai Nation within the Blackfoot Confederacy located on the Blood Reserve. My family comes from the Akaiipohkaiiks (Many Childrens) clan.

I've been living and working in Calgary for the last 15 years with and for various organizations/programs that have a specific focus on supporting the urban Indigenous population. I've always remained close to home and in the surrounding area of Treaty 7 territory.

I find that the natural path my journey has led me down seems to be in the direction of my people. I hold a level of lived experience and my story is a story of challenge and overcoming adversity. That being said, I feel compelled and called to give back to my community in some way. I mean the broader Indigenous community. I am also extremely motivated by younger generations and specifically by my 7-year-old daughter - the biggest accomplishment of my life!

Where does your work and the work of The Circle intersect?

Within the world of philanthropy, relationship building, understanding and facilitating systems change between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities for sure.

In my role, I am working to find ways to create change at the Calgary Foundation, shift the internal culture so that we can do our work better that includes a lens of reconciliation.

I have been encouraged and supported by the work of The Circle as there are strong connections to the world of philanthropy and relationship building for both my role and the governing circle.

What called you to join the Governing Circle?

Selfishly the opportunity to enhance my efforts at the Calgary Foundation.

The bonus to this role are the opportunities, I think I'll be afforded, to impact the larger Indigenous serving communities and in a way that is rooted in cultural paradigms and practice while simultaneously influencing change for the broader philanthropic community.

What role do you see The Circle as playing in shifting systems and practices of the philanthropic sector?

I'm a huge advocate of the truth-telling movement as a crucial first step in providing context and then for folks to understand why this work is needed in the first place.

I feel that many sectors have begun to discuss, explore and ask questions on ways they can begin to mobilize reconciliation. This is an important question to ask when you get into this space of change or wanting to entertain change, for your sector/area of work. But there is often a level of knowledge that is missing. In most cases, I find folks don't even realize, have a weak understanding, of why the work of reconciliation is needed. Instead were conditioned from a western paradigm and thought to identify a problem or issue and then quickly find a solution and answer. It's not that black and white when it comes to changing systems within the reconciliation process. It's much more and there is not a clear cut path, as of right now, but we are creating it. The Circle is creating it!

I believe work of The Circle has the knowledge and expertise to parallel Indigenous ways of knowing and western ways of practice. I'm reminded of a quote by one of my heroes, who I have yet to meet in person, Senator Murray Sinclair, that summarizes this thought, "Innovation isn't always about creating new things. Innovation, sometimes, involves looking back at our old ways and bringing them forward to this new situation."

What are you most excited to be a part of with The Circle in the year ahead?

The thing that excites me the most is the continued growth and learning I will receive and that I have already begun to realize in my short time with The Circle.

I'm also extremely excited to be part of a community of like-minded individuals through my fellow board members and staff of The Circle. When you are the only one tasked to facilitate change for your organization, it can feel daunting and sometimes isolating. Being part of The Circle family is motivating!

What questions do you think philanthropic organizations should be asking themselves as we enter a new year?

What is my understanding of reconciliation as an individual? And in my workplace? This question, once unpacked, can be so telling and useful when informing next steps.

The good thing about this question, that I have come to learn over the years within this space, is we know that everyone is on a different level of understanding when it comes to reconciliation. You will not be able to understand next steps until you take a deep dive into what knowledge you hold right now. This question should also imply that it is okay to step into the uncertainty and foster what could be!

Can you imagine what a true reconciled world could look like for Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities? If so, what does that look like? Now, make it happen!

THE CIRCLE'S GOVERNING CIRCLE

SARA LYONS | CO-CHAIR

TIM FOX | CO-CHAIR

JUSTIN WIEBE | COMMITTEE CHAIR: MEMBERSHIP & DEVELOPMENT

TODD HOSKIN | COMMITTEE CHAIR: FINANCE

ALEXIA MCKINNON

AMYN F. LALJI

ANDREW BEAR ROBE

ANNIE ANINGMIUQ

BRIELLE BEAUDIN-REIMER

BRODIE GUY

JENNIFER BRENNAN

SUSAN SMITTEN

 SIGN UP FOR THE CIRCLE'S SEASONAL NEWSLETTER!

 FOLLOW US ON TWITTER