Update: Initiatives Under the Indigenous Education Protocol

# BAckGROUND

On December 7th, 2015, Fleming College signed the Colleges and Institutes Canada’s (CICan) Indigenous Education Protocol (IEP). Signing of the IEP symbolized Fleming College’s commitment to fortifying relationships with Indigenous communities while embedding intellectual and cultural traditions, as understood by Indigenous peoples, into our curriculum, and activities.

When Fleming College was considering signing the Indigenous Education Protocol (IEP), lengthy discussions with Fleming’s Aboriginal Education Council (AEC) were undertaken. It was strongly felt that we needed to ensure that with the signing also came a sincere commitment to aspire to meet the principles. To ensure that we were committed to making Indigenous Education a priority, a working group and three-year action plan were developed. This included many senior leaders, an accountability framework, and a reporting mechanism to ensure that the Fleming community and the AEC were aware of the efforts and had an opportunity to give feedback.

The seven principles of the CICan’s Indigenous Education Protocol (IEP) are as follows:

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| 1. | Commit to making Indigenous education a priority. |
| 2. | Ensure governance structures recognize and respect Indigenous peoples. |
| 3. | Implement intellectual and cultural traditions of Indigenous peoples through curriculum and learning approaches relevant to learners and communities. |
| 4. | Support students and employees to increase understanding and reciprocity among Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. |
| 5. | Commit to increasing the number of Indigenous employees with ongoing appointments throughout the institution, including Indigenous senior administrators. |
| 6. | Establish Indigenous-centered holistic services and learning environments for learner success. |
| 7. | Build relationships and be accountable to Indigenous communities in support of self-determination through education, training and applied research. |

# Selected Highlights

Principle **#1** *Commit to making Indigenous education a priority.*

* At the signing of the IEP, there were two programs that met the Indigenous Perspectives Designation (IPD) requirements. In fall 2017 we have begun the process of adding two additional programs with the intention of having several more IPD designated.
* A number of programs have made GNED49 a required general education subject for all of their students, even though they may not meet the IPD requirements. GNED49 is the Introduction to Indigenous Studies course so provides a good fundamental grounding for students.
* We are working with the Schools, New Product Development, and the Learning Design and Support team to design new Indigenous focussed programing that is aligned with economic, social, and labour market needs of Indigenous communities.
* We have recently completed a research report, *Indigenous Student Outreach and Engagement at Fleming College,* which will inform the way forward in regards to outreach, engagement and recruitment.
* New employee orientation training included information about Fleming's commitment to the IEP and its meaning.

Principle #2 *Ensure governance structures recognize and respect Indigenous peoples.*

* Our current Aboriginal Education Council (AEC) membership includes the Fleming President, Vice-President Academic and Associate Vice-President Student Services. This year AEC and BOG met for an educational session and we have implemented a mechanism to increase communication between the two groups.
* Work is being done to ensure that Program Advisory Committee membership for (IPD) programs includes a member of First Nations, Metis or Inuit decent.

Principle #3 *Implement intellectual and cultural traditions of Indigenous peoples through curriculum and learning approaches relevant to learners and communities.*

* As our policies are being reviewed, consideration is given to how we can incorporate cultural traditions. Examples of this include adding a healing circle as a potential option for issue resolution in our Harassment and Discrimination Policy and adding restorative practices to our Student Appeal Policy.
* We have hired a researcher to complete a scan of how the College sector is incorporating cultural traditions into policies and practices. Through this research and the identification of best practices, we will be able to make will informed changes at Fleming.
* A new position (Indigenous Education Specialist) is being created to work with the Learning and Design Team to assist faculty to bring Indigenous knowledge into their courses in a variety of ways

Principle #4 *Support students and employees to increase understanding and reciprocity among Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.*

* A concerted effort has been made to acknowledge the territory in group meetings and events. This included our Athletics Banquet and our Student Leadership Awards Banquet. In addition, the acknowledgement was used in the employee orientation as a teaching tool. It provided an opportunity to introduce new staff to the protocol and our commitment as a community.
* Indigenous awareness training has been offered at several school and divisional meetings. As well, several programs have revised their curriculum to include awareness and/or Indigenous history and reparation.

Principle #5 *Commit to increasing the number of Indigenous employees with ongoing appointments throughout the institution, including Indigenous senior administrators*.

* As noted above, development of a new Indigenous Education Specialist (title to be determined) position is underway. This person will assist faculty to build content into their courses that embodies the learning approaches and the intellectual and cultural traditions of Indigenous persons as well as reviewing Academic Policies and procedures to ensure they align the values espoused in the IEP. The incumbent will maintain strong relationships with Aboriginal communities, agencies, and employers. They will contribute to business and strategic planning, identifying key Indigenous education institutional deliverables and milestones while ensuring Fleming College’s adherence to the vision articulated in (CICan) Indigenous Education Protocol.
* Fleming has increased its reach to Aboriginal Communities through social media. Examples of this include: Fleming and the Curve Lake Employment Officer have been retweeting each other's job postings and LinkedIn job ads are posted in specific groups such as Aboriginal Professional Network and Aboriginal Human Resources.
* As well, Fleming has added the following text under the section “A Diverse Workforce” on our Careers Page: "*Fleming is a signatory to the Colleges and Institutes Canada Indigenous Education Protocol. This historic document reaffirms Fleming’s commitment to Indigenous education, hiring, and employment practices and provides a vision of how the College will strive to improve and better serve Indigenous peoples. More information on this document and Fleming’s commitment is available here*".

Principle #6 *Establish Indigenous-centred holistic services and learning environments for learner success.*

* We continue to grow our Aboriginal Services as resources allow. This summer we piloted a transition program, Biishkaa, in partnership with Trent University.
* Aboriginal Student Services "Circle of Care" comprises a group of individuals fully invested in supporting our First Nation, Inuit and Métis students with their individual development and academic success. The "Circle of Care" strives to promote spiritual, physical, mental and emotional wellness, strengthening our connectedness and community.

Principle #7 *Build relationships and be accountable to Indigenous communities in support of self-determination through education, training and applied research.*

* As mentioned, under principle #1, a key part of signing the protocol was to ensure that we continue to aspire to the guidelines and principles. Our accountability framework and reporting mechanisms assist is in being accountable to our Indigenous communities and the Fleming community.
* Our Aboriginal Student Services Coordinators regularly liaise with Aboriginal communities, agencies, and employers in the interest of relationship building, deeper knowledge, and understanding.
* In the interest of building and maintaining relationships with Indigenous communitieswe have recently revised our honorarium for Elders and Traditional Knowledge procedure. Elders and Traditional Knowledge Holders will be recognized appropriately, and with the utmost regard for traditional practices.
* Fleming College signed an articulation agreement with Trent University so that Indigenous students from a variety of programs can transfer into the Indigenous Bachelor of Education program.

For additional information (including the three year work plan), please visit the AEC website at: <https://department.flemingcollege.ca/aec/indigenous-education-protocol/>

# Accountability



# Next Steps

The Indigenous Education Protocol (IEP) working group, which was originally formed to document our current state, identify future goals, and map out a three-year work plan, is now monitoring the work. Year two will come to a close in the summer of 2017 and planning for year three will be in the summer. Between now and September 2017, the remaining accountability measures noted above will be completed. To ensure that the Aboriginal Education Council (AEC) has every opportunity to provide feedback and advice on our progress we would like to continue with regular AEC updates as well as invite an AEC member to attend our IEP working group meetings.