

Indigenous Student Outreach and Engagement at Fleming College

Internal Report

Research Conducted and Report Written

by

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Disclaimer:

This report is intended for Fleming College's internal use only, and is not for publication or distribution.

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This report represents contributions from the Aboriginal Support Services Staff, Indigenous students, Indigenous community members, faculty, heads of schools, the Aboriginal Education Council, and Indigenous recruitment professionals at other colleges in Ontario.

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Executive Summary

This report provides several research-based recommendations intended to enhance Indigenous relations and Indigenous student recruitment practices at Fleming College. The seven overarching recommendations are:

- 1) Developing Indigenous Marketing Materials and Showcasing Indigenous Learners
- 2) Thinking Beyond Traditional Recruitment: Cultivating relationships; Hiring Outreach Staff; and Understanding Land-based relations
- 3) Partnering with Trent University and other Institutions with Good Indigenous Relations
- 4) Rethinking the Recruitment Trail: Considering Beyond the Aboriginal Postsecondary Information Program
- 5) Engaging Current and Past Students in Recruitment
- 6) Rethinking Curriculum: Broadening Indigenous Interests in Fleming Programs
- 7) Broadening Cultural Competency at Fleming: From Executive Leaders to Support Staff

Introduction

This report is the result of three months of research focused on Indigenous student experiences at the post-secondary level. What is included here is intended for the internal use of the Fleming community, and can guide the way forward for cultivating Indigenous relations. The recommendations that follow are guidelines based on institutional ethnographic research, and will be carried forward by an internal staff member. Reflected in this report is the perspective of an outside set of eyes evaluating the programming and opportunities within Fleming, to lead to better collaboration concerning Indigenous relations and recruitment. Increasing Aboriginal Support Staff is integral to the success of these recommendations, and an enhanced Aboriginal Support Team should be given the space and resources to implement these recommendations as they see fit.

The report is structured so as to capture the research process and provide recommendations in a cumulative way. Section 2 explains the methodology used to gather research and develop recommendations. In section 3, background information concerning Indigenous demographics, Postsecondary education in Ontario, and Fleming's Indigenous student recruitment history is captured. Moving on in section 4, some examples of best practices other institutions have applied in their work with the Indigenous community are described. Finally, section 5 details seven specific recommendations for Fleming College to implement.

Methodology

This research has been compiled in stages using an institutional ethnography (IE). Restoule et al write that IE's approach allows "emphasis on narrative and [the] ability to engage with ruling relationships in ways that have the potential to make concrete differences in how Aboriginal people experience post-secondary education" (2013, p. 2). This method was innovated by a feminist scholar, Dorothy Smith, in the 1990s in order to make connections between everyday life, operational/professional practice, and governing policies. IE draws on student experiences, and looks from the margins of the institution to the administrative and leadership center to inform policy that is relevant to student life.

Working from the margins of the institution inwards, this research began from the perspective of a student considering colleges by visiting different college websites and exploring Aboriginal Services and the general presence of Indigeneity at various colleges. Upon completion of this preliminary research, best practices were examined, with special attention to institutions that have strong Indigenous relations. This research has helped to inform the evaluation of Fleming's current offerings, and the resulting recommendations.

In order to better understand best practices in the field, phone interviews were conducted with community outreach staff at three colleges: Georgian, Loyalist, and St. Clair. Trent University was also included in discussions given their long-standing relationship with both the Indigenous community and Fleming College.

Then an internal scan of Fleming's Aboriginal Student Services, Aboriginal recruitment policies, and what Fleming has to offer to the Aboriginal community. This included evaluating past policies, curricula, and how Fleming currently engages in Aboriginal recruitment. Interviews were also conducted with heads of several different departments across the college in order to integrate the expertise of operational staff and their institutional memory into recommendations.

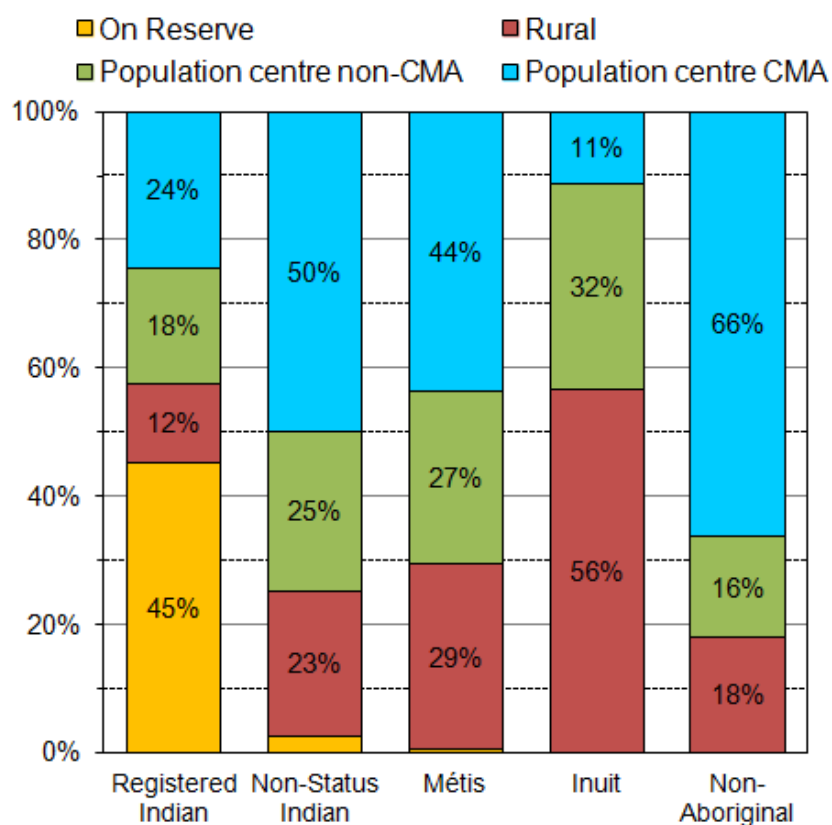
Once the internal scan was complete, informal interviews and discussion groups were conducted with students currently attending Fleming. Their experiences provide invaluable scope into what youth are looking for from their institutions, and have been drawn on extensively to develop the recommendations offered at the end of this report. Before providing the complete recommendations, the next section goes on to detail some of the background information on Indigenous/settler relationships working down in scale from the national level to the institutional level at Fleming College.

Background

Indigenous Peoples and Canadian Statistics

The relationship between Canada and Indigenous nations is fraught. Under the Canadian regime, Indigenous peoples have been subjugated to living in third world conditions. The segregation implemented through dispossession of Indigenous land, and sequestration on reserve lands has greatly impacted the wellbeing of nations in a variety of ways. As a result of the racist reserve system, many members of Indigenous communities have migrated from their reserve territories to live in cities where they hope for greater educational and economic opportunity. The widespread belief that many Canadians have that Indigenous peoples live on reserves is unfounded. **Figure 1** indicates that the majority of Indigenous peoples live off reserve. According to the 2011 census the majority of all self-identified members of the three Indigenous umbrella categories classified as “Aboriginal” under Canadian law live off reserve, including over half of status Indians, whom reserves were originally designated for.

Figure 1: Indigenous Peoples Distribution across Residency Type, Canada-wide



Source: Statistics Canada, 2011 National Household Survey, AANDC tabulations

In Ontario the number of off reserve Indigenous peoples is even higher. About 80% of people who self-identified as Aboriginal in the 2011 census live off reserve. These numbers will be useful in shaping how Fleming goes about recruitment from a geographical perspective. However, reserves continue to be the most underserved and under-resourced territories in the country, meaning that directing attention to on reserve members of the Indigenous community continues to be important beyond the broader story that the geographical population distribution tells.

Further, the Aboriginal population is both younger, and growing more rapidly than any other ethnic group in the country. Between 2006 and 2011, the Aboriginal population increased 20%, compared with 5.2% growth of the non-Aboriginal population. The median age of the Aboriginal population in 2006 was 26.6 years, while the median age for the non-Aboriginal population was 39.4 years. The projected numbers up to 2031 are even more compelling. While the Aboriginal population is aging, in any projected scenario the Aboriginal population is growing faster and remaining younger than the non-Aboriginal population (Statistics Canada, November 2015).

Also worth considering is the fact that Aboriginal students tend to be mature students. So while the population continues to be young, making the recruitment of youth to College important, there is also a large window within which Aboriginal students may be considering college.

[Indigenous/Canadian Relations and the Education System](#)

Knowledge of injustices committed by Canada, and the British Crown, against Indigenous peoples is growing daily. Many more Canadians are beginning to understand their own history and role in the subjugation of Indigenous peoples. Educational institutions have historically played a key role in the oppression of Indigenous peoples in Canada (i.e., Residential schools). While knowledge of this truth is growing, there is much to be done in terms of Canadian reparations to Indigenous nations. This report will not go into great detail about Canada's genocidal practices, and the role of educational institutions in cultural genocide (as referred to in the TRC report, 2015); however, it begins with acknowledging that this fraught history is the framework in which we find ourselves working. Those working with Indigenous students, and institutions that hope to attract more Indigenous students need to remember that this history has long lasting impacts that influence student's desire and willingness to attend post-secondary institutions, and their success while in school. A 2013 institutional ethnography conducted with Indigenous students showed that 57% of current or recently graduated post-secondary Indigenous

students “do not trust the education system” (Restoule et al., p. 5). The high level of mistrust among Indigenous students with respect to Canada’s westernized education system is important to contextualize how prospective Indigenous students might view institutions.

In recent years, Canada has been taking some small steps towards reconciliation with Indigenous nations and peoples. This was most prominently reflected in the recent Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which provided a public forum to speak truths about Residential schools. A final report was issued in 2015 that included some specific recommendations pertaining to educational institutions. Following this, many post-secondary institutions have been examining their policies, committing to hiring more Indigenous staff and faculty, and making curriculum changes. The particular commitments with respect to education are calls to action 6-12 in the legacy section and 62-65 in the reconciliation section of the final report. They are as follows (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015):

Calls to Action: Legacy

6. We call upon the Government of Canada to repeal Section 43 of the Criminal Code of Canada.

7. We call upon the federal government to develop with Aboriginal groups a joint strategy to eliminate educational and employment gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians.

8. We call upon the federal government to eliminate the discrepancy in federal education funding for First Nations children being educated on reserves and those First Nations children being educated off reserves.

9. We call upon the federal government to prepare and publish annual reports comparing funding for the education of First Nations children on and off reserves, as well as educational and income attainments of Aboriginal peoples in Canada compared with non-Aboriginal people.

10. We call on the federal government to draft new Aboriginal education legislation with the full participation and informed consent of Aboriginal peoples. The new legislation would include a commitment to sufficient funding and would incorporate the following principles:

i. Providing sufficient funding to close identified educational achievement gaps within one generation.

ii. Improving education attainment levels and success rates.

iii. Developing culturally appropriate curricula.

iv. Protecting the right to Aboriginal languages, including the teaching of Aboriginal languages as credit courses.

v. Enabling parental and community responsibility, control, and accountability, similar to what parents enjoy in public school systems.

vi. Enabling parents to fully participate in the education of their children.

vii. Respecting and honouring Treaty relationships.

11. We call upon the federal government to provide adequate funding to end the backlog of First Nations students seeking a post-secondary education.

12. We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to develop culturally appropriate early childhood education programs for Aboriginal families.

Calls to Action: Reconciliation

62. We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments, in consultation and collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal peoples, and educators, to:

i. Make age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal peoples' historical and contemporary contributions to Canada a mandatory education requirement for Kindergarten to Grade Twelve students.

ii. Provide the necessary funding to post-secondary institutions to educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms.

iii. Provide the necessary funding to Aboriginal schools to utilize Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods in classrooms.

iv. Establish senior-level positions in government at the assistant deputy minister level or higher dedicated to Aboriginal content in education.

63. We call upon the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada to maintain an annual commitment to

Aboriginal education issues, including:

i. Developing and implementing Kindergarten to Grade Twelve curriculum and learning resources

on Aboriginal peoples in Canadian history, and the history and legacy of residential schools.

ii. Sharing information and best practices on teaching curriculum related to residential schools and Aboriginal history.

iii. Building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect.

iv. Identifying teacher-training needs relating to the above.

64. We call upon all levels of government that provide public funds to denominational schools to require such schools to provide an education on comparative religious studies, which must include a segment on Aboriginal spiritual beliefs and practices developed in collaboration with Aboriginal Elders.

65. We call upon the federal government, through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, and in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, post-secondary institutions and educators, and the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation and its partner institutions, to establish a national research program with multi-year funding to advance understanding of reconciliation.

The above recommendations are directed towards the Canadian government; however, it is the responsibility of all Canadian citizens and institutions to put their efforts towards these conciliatory measures if the desire is for the relationship between Canada and Indigenous nations to improve. Education in Canada is both funded and regulated provincially, and publicly funded institutions are subject to provincial mandates. Meanwhile, commissions like the TRC are federally governed, and many of the calls to actions reflect the federal government's obligation to Indigenous peoples. Historically, the debate between the federal and provincial governments about who holds jurisdiction of Indigenous

peoples in Canada has led to major service gaps to Indigenous communities and peoples. Not because both were vying for control over the Indigenous population, but because neither wanted the responsibility of dealing with the Indigenous population. The most glaring example of this in the region that Fleming occupies is the Williams treaty, of which the negotiation and signing was deferred for decades while both levels of government attempted to evade responsibility to the Mississauga peoples (Lament for a First Nation, and the Archives). While many of the TRC calls to action are worded as if they are directed towards the government, it is worthwhile to say again that it is everyone's responsibility to work towards reconciliation, and this includes publicly funded institutions such as Fleming College. Many of the calls to action are relevant and should be taken by Fleming as guides from which to build not only a recruitment plan, but also develop curriculum and determine how to take reconciliatory action to be accountable to the local Indigenous community.

It is worth mentioning that two decades prior to the commencement of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples was conducted. They issued a final report in 1999, which also included specific recommendations concerning education for Indigenous peoples. Unfortunately, several of the recommendations from this original report remain unfulfilled two decades later. It is heartening that some institutions seem to be taking the TRC recommendations more seriously. The recommendations should be viewed as reparations that Canadian society is obliged to make in order for reconciliation to occur. Reconciliation did not end with the issuance of the final TRC report; rather, it had an opportunity to begin. It is through the recommendations that Canada has the opportunity to repair its relations with Indigenous nations and peoples. As the report reads:

“Getting to the truth was hard, but getting to reconciliation will be harder... Reconciliation is not an Aboriginal problem; it is a Canadian one. Virtually all aspects of Canadian society may need to be reconsidered” (TRC, preface).

This strategic plan is intended to help Fleming consider its own obligations as a Canadian institution on Indigenous land. Post-secondary institutions like Fleming have an important role to play in Canada's reconciliation to Indigenous peoples. Fleming in particular offers a wide array of courses and programs that have the potential to have great impacts on the rebuilding of Indigenous/Canadian relations and this report will explore this potential in greater detail as we move on. However, before discussing Fleming's particular Indigenous relations, in the next section, the broader state of Indigenous education in Ontario will be considered.

Indigenous Education in Ontario

Like Indigenous education nationwide, Ontario's investment in Indigenous education is reflective of the legacy of colonialism. According to one economist, Indigenous students receive 30% less funding than those under provincial jurisdiction (Drummond *et al.*). When it comes to post-secondary education, the development of relationships with Indigenous communities has been institution-specific, with varying successes. Throughout Ontario, many colleges have worked to develop Indigenous education programs in collaboration with communities (Hallmark and Reed, 2016). Some of the college successes will be showcased in the following "Best Practices" section, which Fleming can use as a model for developing Indigenous relations. This section will detail some of the Ontario-wide research that has been done on Indigenous education and draw out key recommendations that will be relevant to Fleming's task of moving forward developing Indigenous relations.

Of greatest importance, is the reality that, in spite of the empirical funding deficit experienced by First Nations and other Indigenous youth, many non-Indigenous students at Post-Secondary Institutions resent resources that are directed towards Indigenous students (R.A. Malatest, 2010). The hostility non-Indigenous students direct towards programs designed to increase Indigenous access is reflective of the lack of accurate information available to non-Indigenous students about the reality of Indigenous education. Animosity that grows amongst non-Indigenous students as a result of visible Indigenous support systems can greatly affect Indigenous students' success and wellbeing at College. As such, the investment of senior management in Indigenous education is of utmost importance to Indigenous students' positive experiences. As the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario has published (2010, p. 21): "stakeholders consistently indicated that obtaining support from top university management and different departments was crucial for Aboriginal student services and programs to be successful, whether in terms of obtaining resources or obtaining cultural support, acceptability and visibility on campus." What this means is that support for Indigenous students is a top-down project, necessitating the *visible* support and investment of senior management and executive leaders by being present at community events, making Indigenous funding allocations a top priority for the College, and working hand in hand with the Indigenous community to Indigenize the campus and College community. Ongoing campus hostility to Indigenous learners, both latent and active, represents the greatest barrier to Indigenous education in Ontario.

More specifically, research has also shown that Indigenous students experience certain service barriers at a greater rate than non-Indigenous students. For instance, “the lack of available and affordable childcare is an issue for many Aboriginal students: the burden of finding accessible and affordable childcare is one of the most frequently cited challenges” (Popovic, 2011, p. 4). Many Indigenous learners are also parents, and some organizations have already developed programs to account for this reality. For instance, the Ontario Native Women’s Association (ONWA) supports single parents in completing their Ontario Secondary Education through an Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training program (ASETS). This program allows parents to bring their children to the ONWA office in Thunder Bay, where their children are cared for and they can do their schoolwork. This mitigates both the financial stress and separation stress parents and children experience when childcare and school provision are separate projects (ONWA, February 24, 2017). However, this stress resumes when students want to continue on with formal postsecondary training, where there are no special childcare provisions.

Studies have also shown the importance of Aboriginal Student Services and an Aboriginal Student Lounge to student success. These services are viewed as necessary for student recruitment and retention (R.A. Malatest, 2010, p. 28). Of particular importance are mentorship and tutoring programs, as they offer a sense of belonging to students (R.A. Malatest, p. 28). The emotional and academic mentorship available to students through Aboriginal Student Services is indispensable to student success both before beginning college and during their time at college.

Additionally, the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario has indicated that one year programs tend to have a high success rate with Aboriginal students (R.A. Malatest, 2010, 31): “This short term success secures their long-term interest.” The value of short term transitional programs to gain skills and confidence in a postsecondary institution cannot be underestimated. In keeping with this Aboriginal access model, some programs have also set aside seats for Aboriginal students in particular programs (R.A. Malatest, 2010). Setting aside student seats is particularly used in medical programs like. Unfortunately institutions often fail to communicate the availability of these seats, and they sit empty (R.A. Malatest, 2010), leading to the false conclusion that Aboriginal students are not interested in these programs. In actuality, the lack of enrollment is the institutions failure to communicate that there are special seats set aside for Aboriginal learners. Given the perceived stigma students have surrounding self-identification (Restoule et al., 2013), without institutions’ communicating the benefit of self-declaring on an application students are unlikely to do so.

Ontario studies highlight the importance of relationship building and communication with Indigenous communities. Some innovative strategies are available to support student recruitment, transitions, and retention. In particular, The Ontario Native Education Counseling Association (ONECA) has highlighted the use of social media technology as an important way to build relationships. Some suggestions include using podcasts to provide students considering college with a scope into student life, or creating forums for students to make podcasts to communicate with their families back home what their student experience has been like (Macdonald, March 2011). Further, student blogs, or video blogs can be an exciting way for students to communicate about their college experience, and can also function as a useful recruiting strategy. Indigenous youth most want to hear from other Indigenous youth about their experiences in postsecondary, and as such, the importance of creating space for students to share their experience is important to increasing Indigenous student enrolment.

Finally, the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario highlights the importance of grounding the College services in the immediate needs of the local Aboriginal community (2010, 61). Historically, Fleming College has not done a great job working with the local Indigenous community, which is going to require a lot of work on Fleming's part to rectify. In the next section I will discuss what Fleming has done in terms of relating to the Indigenous community and supporting Indigenous education, and some areas for improvement.

[Fleming College and Indigenous Relations](#)

Over the years, Fleming has also been working to improve the curriculum it offers with respect to Indigenous issues in Canada. Following the defunct Aboriginal Emphasis Initiative, the Indigenous Perspectives Designation has been growing. The Community Health and Wellness School has been developing curriculum appropriate to the service areas students will engage in through their careers. Additionally, the Indigenous Education Designation (IED) has been growing. Currently the curriculum revolves around general education in Indigenous perspectives and knowledges. These are good introductory courses; however, students require specific education within their fields with respect to, not only Indigenous perspectives, but also Indigenous rights within the current Canadian context. For instance, those going into health fields need to understand what the First Nations Non-insured Health Benefits program is, and those going into environmental fields need to be well-schooled in the duty to consult, at all levels. The broader education about these treaty rights and Canada's responsibilities to Indigenous peoples is, the better relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples will be.

Indigenous students still feel that what is available to them is inadequate in terms of curriculum. There is a combination of lack of course options specific to careers, and professor ignorance about Indigenous experiences within Canada that creates a poor learning environment about Indigenous issues. In focus groups and informal interviews with students, many shared their experiences of being inappropriately called on in class to represent their ethnic group to the rest of the class. This kind of exposure makes Indigenous students vulnerable, and non-Indigenous professors underestimate the level of racism that this exposes Indigenous students to. Indigenous students come to college to learn, not to educate their non-Indigenous classmates about their life-experience. Additionally, negative classroom experiences were reflected in the long form responses students offered in the IEP survey conducted by Fleming Data Research in December 2016.

Negative classroom experiences are directly related to recruitment possibilities for Fleming. Students share their experiences with relatives and friends, which affects whether students will want to enroll in the future. Further, the lack of knowledge at the faculty level about Indigenous issues is reflective of a broader lack of engagement with the Indigenous community at an institutional level. Professors would not be able to engage in the **microaggressions** of calling out Indigenous students in class if there was a wide integration of Indigenous knowledges throughout the institution. The opportunity for such microaggressions would be eliminated because understanding throughout the institution, from the executive level to the operational level would be present.

Microaggressions

Defined as the casual degradation of a marginalized group. Chester M. Pierce came up with the term in the 1970s to describe the treatment of black folks in America by non-black folks.

Microaggressions continue to be a regular part of life for many different marginalized groups, including Indigenous peoples, through the objectification or romanticization of culture or individuals, or the dismissal of the experiences of marginalized groups (etc.). Microaggressions are common in white dominated institutions, like postsecondary schools.

It has come to light that Fleming College's relations with the local Indigenous community are not as strong as they could be. Local reserves are more likely to turn to colleges farther afield for special courses taught in community. For instance, a few years ago when Curve Lake First Nation ran a Personal Support Worker (PSW) Course, they commissioned Loyalist College to offer the course in community, in spite of the fact that Fleming offers a PSW course and is much closer geographically. Turning to other colleges is mostly due to the stronger relationships they have developed with the communities through

having dedicated outreach staff. The lack of outreach staff for Indigenous communities continues to affect Fleming's ability to provide appropriate services for Indigenous communities.

[Fleming College's Indigenous Recruitment History](#)

Fleming has historically not devoted a lot of attention to specifically attracting Indigenous learners.

While support services have grown, and curriculum has expanded and become more comprehensive, the translation of what is available to potential students has been spotty. Taking stock of what is available here has demonstrated that Fleming could put some energy into conveying to potential Indigenous students the benefits the institution can offer them.

Many conventional recruitment strategies rely upon staff that do in person recruiting visits in various communities. This is the model that Fleming has employed for mainstream recruitment. There has yet to be a full time recruiter at Fleming College devoted to Indigenous recruitment. In the Fall of 2010 and Fall of 2011 Fleming hired an Aboriginal recruiter on a short term contract to go on the APSIP tour, in a similar position to the short term recruiters that Fleming hires for mainstream recruitment tours in the fall. During these two contracts the Aboriginal recruiters were able to reach out to a number of prospective students through attending over 60 events. Fleming also has the opportunity to promote its programs in the broader communities by supporting Indigenous employees who have strong connections to First Nations communities.

After in-person recruiting the next most valuable resource in attracting future students is web presence. Currently the website does not adequately translate all Fleming has to offer Indigenous students to the public. While there is an Aboriginal Student Services section on the website, it is difficult to find. It can also be discouraging for students who are so frequently treated/categorized as marginal to not see themselves reflected in the mainstream of the institution. The current structure of the website does not reflect the work that Fleming has done to develop Indigenous curriculum, supports, and spaces on campus, as well as to bring Indigenous cultures and knowledge into the broader institution to inform celebrations, orientation, etc.

In September 2015, a funding proposal was submitted by Carrie Truman to implement a large scale, three-year Aboriginal recruitment plan. Though the proposal was rejected, the principals of the plan were sound. In more recent years Fleming staff have been asking to devote more time and resources towards building a comprehensive Indigenous student recruitment plan, though nothing has been formally or consistently implemented as of yet. This recommendations in this report build upon the work and ideas of proposals such as the one mentioned above.

Fleming College Today

In 2015 Fleming signed onto the Indigenous Education Protocol through Colleges and Institutes Canada (CICan). This protocol is intended to outline aspirations for the College's Indigenization process, and is reflective of the College's commitment to Indigenous learners and the broader Indigenous community. At the time of the authoring of this report, it has been just over a year since the report was signed. The following are the seven principles of the IEP (Gray, 2016):

- 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 Indigenous learners**
- 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.**

The College began to implement these principles in 2015/2016. In the fall of 2016 Fleming Data Research did a small survey with students to assess the success to date of the implementation. The report was based around student awareness of Indigenous presence on campus, and the student feedback offered has been important to envisioning the way forward in Indigenous student recruitment.

Students have made note of many of the efforts that Fleming has made to increase visible Indigenous presence on campus. They have also noted that much more could be done. Students notice most the presence of the Aboriginal lounge, though it is usually inaccurately perceived as a segregated space. Many Indigenous students have indicated that they would like to see their realities more integrated into the broader college community. In the IEP survey, many students responded saying they had not seen evidence of implementation of the protocols on campus. About 15% of the long form responses indicated that they had not seen a strong commitment to Indigenous education. Additionally, several students took the time to explicitly indicate that Indigenous education should not be a priority on the basis of racist principles. For instance, one student wrote that Indigenous education "shouldn't matter.

They [Indigenous peoples] get to go to school for free while I am going to be nearly \$25,000 in debt just to go here.” Comments like this are reflective of widespread ignorance and racism within the non-Indigenous student body. In addition to the unfounded idea that Indigenous students have unfair advantages over non-Indigenous students, some students perceive the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives as an infringement upon their education. One respondent sarcastically indicated that “[they] are not studying history to take it [Indigenous studies] beside our studies. In addition, let’s make religion compulsory at college.” This kind of comment is reflective of a dominant mindset, whereby the inclusion of any cultural perspectives that are not white, western, and mainstream, are viewed as an infringement upon the dominant person’s rights. These kinds of ignorant attitudes have real effects on Indigenous students’ experiences, and as appropriate education against these ideas is not taking place in public schools, it is up to the college to ensure that students are receiving accurate information to prevent the spread of the racist ideas cited above.

The most alarming response in the IEP survey was with respect to the Law and Justice Program. One student wrote “[They are] in law and justice and [they] have not seen anything done. Indigenous peoples are spoken about as a joke in the law and justice program.” This is particularly distressing because law and justice workers are likely to come into contact with Indigenous peoples (as they are with all populations) and the above feedback indicates that Indigenous peoples are treated as a joke amongst the faculty and students of the department. The way the comment is voiced, it appears that there is a general classroom dynamic which paints Indigenous peoples in a negative light in the law and justice department. This is unacceptable, and appropriate education amongst faculty members is necessary to successfully training effective community justice workers.

In addition to the overt racism present in the IEP survey, of which only a few examples have been offered above, there is also evidence of widespread ignorance about Indigenous cultures. Several respondents indicated that Fleming is hosting regular pow wows, which is untrue, and the reference to any gathering of Indigenous peoples as “pow wows” is a good example of the type of microaggression defined previously. Microaggressions occur in classrooms and in the broader college space, not only through curriculum, but also through general campus attitudes. Though students were citing these “pow wows” as a positive presence, their ignorance about Indigenous culture is ultimately harmful and alienating. Only through a more steady and integrated Indigenous presence throughout the college, can these ideas begin to change.

In tension with the racism of these responses in the IEP survey were the overwhelmingly positive responses about the increases in Indigenous presence on campus. Many respondents positively spoke of Aboriginal Awareness Week activities, and made note of the Aboriginal lounge and the availability of the tipi space. The disparity between positive and negative comments is reflective of the tension that continues to exist within the Fleming community when it comes to the acceptance of Indigenous presence. While many students wrote positively about the spaces that do exist, many also made note of the need for more. One student wrote that “other than the opening speech on orientation day I haven’t been aware of any efforts to recognize their rights to lands and sovereignty,” showing a firm understanding of Indigenous relationships to land and the important role the college community plays in supporting Indigenous sovereign land.

Currently the relationship between Fleming College and local First Nations is in need of some attention. Conversations within the college, and with other Aboriginal Services departments at other Colleges have shown that the regional Reserve communities (Curve Lake, Hiawatha, Alderville) are more likely to collaborate with and attend colleges further afield than Fleming. This gap is something several students made note of in the IEP survey as well. Additionally, Fleming could work more closely with Urban Indigenous Organizations to develop partnerships. How to go about this will be taken up in the recommendations section.

Best Practices

In order to highlight the best practices currently employed for Indigenous student recruitment, I had a phone conversation with Indigenous outreach staff at three Ontario Colleges comparable to Fleming. This section highlights the best strategies employed by Loyalist College, Georgian College, and St. Clair College, all of which have had dedicated Aboriginal Outreach Staff for at least the last seven years, if not longer. The first point of contact in the form of an in-person recruiter has proven time and again to be the most successful strategy employed by any postsecondary institution. This section details how these different institutions have used their outreach staff to support Aboriginal Students.

1 Georgian College,

Best Practice: Cultivating Long Term Relationships

Georgian has the longest standing Indigenous studies and Indigenous services programming of any Ontario college serving comparable regions and demographics to Fleming. In the 1990s when funding was allocated to support outreach and services development for Indigenous learners at College, Georgian secured the funding and has been a recipient of that program funding ever since. Over the

years the services and curricula Georgian offers for Indigenous students has expanded. Of utmost importance to effective Aboriginal student outreach and engagement is their fulltime Indigenous Community Liaison. Her role is to do outreach in communities and to connect with potential incoming students and support their transitions. In February April shared some information about her position and how she supports Indigenous students. The best and most important part of April's job is the opportunity she has to develop long term relationships with communities. She is well known within the community as someone who supports students as they try to get into college, and make their transitions to college life. The following story shows the importance of developing long term relationships within the Indigenous community:

Several years ago, April supported a youth that came straight from high school to college. The student had a positive experience with Georgian, in part due to the supports that were available to them through Indigenous student services. As the student was finishing up their diploma, April received a call from one of the student's aunts. The aunt wanted to come back to college, but needed some help getting there. April supported her for three years, in doing academic upgrading, picking a program, helping with applications, supporting transitions, and after three years she successfully became a student. Due to this success, that student's daughter wanted to come to school at Georgian when she finished high school. April then supported that student in making the transition to being a student at Georgian. When I emailed April to ask permission to tell this story, she shared that another relative of the aunt had contacted her wanting to attend Georgian.

April's story demonstrates the importance of cultivating long term, consistent relationships within the Indigenous community. The consistency of April's presence has allowed an entire extended family a positive experience with Georgian college over several years. The above story also shows how critical the informal community sharing between friends and relatives is within the Indigenous community. As each family member had a positive experience with Georgian, the relationship and reputation of Georgian within the community broadened and grew. The above story is evidence that when it comes to the Indigenous student population, the usual recruitment method of attending a recruitment fair and then expecting increased enrolment the following year may not be an accurate measure of recruitment success. When it comes to Indigenous recruitment, colleges need to think long term, and trust the informal process. Georgian's success within community is evidence that this relational strategy works.

2 Loyalist College

Best Practice: Experiential Recruitment

Loyalist also has a long term, full time Community Liaison who attends the Aboriginal Post-Secondary Information Program (APSIP) and does outreach in the local community around Belleville. Their best practice is to allow students to come to the college and experience a program in which they might be interested. Their “student for a day” program is facilitated by their Community Liaison, who becomes the students’ first point of contact for the college. By having the Community Liaison facilitate the day creates the consistency that students’ considering college benefit from. When they come back to apply, or when the Community Liaison goes out on recruitment visits, he is a recognizable face.

The “student for a day” program is coordinated in collaboration with various schools’ guidance counselors, or, depending on the role of the education manager or counsellor at a student’s band council, it may be coordinated through them. Students are able to pick a program that is suited to a career they think they are interested in. This could be in the trades, health and wellness, media arts and design experience; any of the programs Loyalist offers can host a student for a day. The program is available to students as early as grade 7 and as late as grade 12. On the day students visit the college, they usually coordinate to have the student attend a more experiential, active class, as opposed to a lecture. The student is also given a tour through Indigenous student services to become acquainted with the space. The college provides lunch, and the Community Liaison acts as a guide during their time on campus. This program has been successful both in showing Indigenous youth that college is a welcoming possibility for them, and in increasing Indigenous student enrolment. The current Community Liaison relayed to me that many of the students that have participated in “student for a day” have gone on to enroll at the college.

While Fleming College also hosts personalized “student for a day” opportunities, in a very similar format to those executed at Loyalist, there is currently no effort targeting Indigenous students specifically to participate in this program. The success of “student for a day” demonstrates the importance of introducing Indigenous students to the college experience with support. Through the support of guidance counselors, band employees, and college employees, students are able to learn at a young age that college is not only possible for them, but an exciting opportunity. The importance of these mentor figures is also reflected in the data gathered by Fleming’s recruitment department. Student feedback has shown that guidance counselors play a more important role in Indigenous students’ decisions about

college than non-Indigenous students (Truman, 2016). Creating relationships with schools and bands can lead to higher Indigenous student enrolment at Fleming.

3 St. Clair College

Best Practice: Collaborating with Urban Indigenous Service Providers

St. Clair College has the smallest Aboriginal Services department out of the three colleges at which I spoke to representatives. However, they still had a full time Community Liaison to do their relationship building and recruiting. Their current Community Liaison was one of the innovators of the APSIP tour, but no longer fully participates in the tour. To do recruitment for St. Clair, she goes to local places, like the Friendship Centre to visit and get to know potential students. Sometimes, when events are happening, the Friendship Centre calls her and invites her to come and represent St. Clair college.

By using local urban service agencies Fleming would have a similar opportunity to attract potential students that use the service, professionals that are already working, and also cultivate relationships that can open doors for current students to do placements, and secure post-graduation jobs. Though it seems like a small effort, service agency visits allow the college to maintain ongoing ties to the urban Indigenous community that would otherwise be lacking.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on evidence gathered through student feedback, consultation with Aboriginal Student Services staff, faculty, and administrators at the College. Data was also gathered from the marketing presence at comparable colleges within Ontario and recruiters and outreach staff at select colleges, most prominently: Loyalist, St. Clair, and Georgian Colleges. I also spoke to individuals at Trent about their recruitment strategies and the possibility of collaborating. These recommendations can be viewed as calls to action that are in keeping with and following the calls to action put forth by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. These calls to action reflect the obligations of post secondary institutions in moving towards reconciled relations with Indigenous peoples. These recommendations also take into account the Indigenous Education Protocol (IEP), signed in 2015.

This plan is structured and timed for a manageable roll-out. In terms of implementing an Indigenous engagement and recruitment strategy, it is important not to “think too big, too fast.” Fleming already has a lot of offer Indigenous learners, but needs to package that information to appeal to potential students. Much of the initial recommendations (to be implemented between April 2017, and September 2017) are inexpensive, and can be done in-house. Following this, recommendations become longer term and slightly more labour intensive, requiring new staff, curriculum and program development, and

college cultural change (for a full timeline of the recommendations see Appendix A). A wide array of suggestions of varying scales have been made by individuals and groups throughout the college. These suggestions have been assessed for visibility and continuity and are offered here as part of a cohesive plan. Outside notes of the total suggestions are stored on the Aboriginal Services server and can be made available. The report includes only recommendations that I have assessed for viability of immediate implementation. If these suggestions are implemented within the timeline provided, then the college will be well situated to undertake larger strategies, like corporate partnerships for programs, or in-person northern recruitment. These recommendations take a holistic approach to recruitment, based on the knowledge that college is usually much more than an academic experience.

Recommendation 1: New Marketing Materials: Showcasing Indigenous Learners and Student Success Stories

1.1 Using Free Web Platforms (facebook, twitter, and Instagram)

Traditional marketing strategies often depend upon paid advertisements. However, when it comes to postsecondary institutions, the website is one of the key advertising opportunities. Indigenous learners are big social media users, and will continue to learn about possible educational opportunities through evolving social media platforms, such as facebook, twitter, and instagram. However, youth are also increasingly moving away from using facebook, and are now more invested in apps like instagram and snapchat. This is not to say that facebook is a useless platform to use, but that it will be more useful to mature students of the millennial generation than it will be to generation z. Fleming will need to cater its different uses of social media platforms to different student demographics with the aid of the marketing department. By using these free platforms, Fleming can attract people to the website, as this is the most immediate point of reference that current students report as being important to aiding their decision to attend Fleming (as reported by Carrie Truman).

1.2 Updating Website to Reflect Indigenous Presence

1.2.1 Indigenous Students Tab on Website

Currently, the website does not showcase what Fleming has to offer Indigenous learners in an accessible or comprehensive way. The focus on the website is on Aboriginal Student Services, which is an important aspect of attracting Indigenous students, but it is not the only aspect that Fleming has to offer. While Fleming has a tab to guide International Students to information that is relevant to them, there is no such guide for Indigenous students. However, a guide beyond merely explaining Aboriginal Student Services is necessary to highlight Indigenous curriculum and its ongoing development, Aboriginal specific scholarships, the broader college culture and how Indigenous students are included,

housing opportunities in Nogojiwanong, information about adjusting to life in Nogojiwanong, and information about the local Indigenous community. These are all considerations that students may have that can be collected for accessibility, and would highlight that Fleming is making Indigenous student learning a priority. There are as many particular considerations for Indigenous students attending college as there are for International students, and it is important to compile this information to make students' transition easier. As such, the first way that Fleming can improve its marketing materials is by updating the website with an "Indigenous students" tab with the suggested information above included.

1.2.2 Showcase Indigenous Learners

In addition to making College

information more accessible for

Indigenous learners, Fleming needs to

showcase Indigenous learners and

success stories. There are several

students that would be interested in

participating in such a project. There are ways to do this in-house and inexpensively, and further down

the line, there are ways to develop new video and text materials as showcases. Some institutions have

excellent student showcase sites to give students an idea of how people made their choice to attend

that institution, what they like about it, and how they have adjusted to living in the region. The

University of British Columbia (UBC) has a "Meet our Students" site that can be viewed as a best practice in this area.

The UBC "Meet Our Students" site showcases graduate students, many of whom are only at UBC for 2 years, so the timeline is comparable to what Fleming would have to work with. Fleming could implement a site showcasing Indigenous learners and graduates that will have a "Meet our Students" link on the "Indigenous Students" page. The questions that UBC asks their students can be used as a model. Fleming could ask students "why Fleming?" and "what do you like about living in Peterborough?" and "how is (or how has) your diploma prepared you for your career?" These are all questions that potential students will be thinking about, that often get left behind in recruitment. The implementation would be quite simple, as the Aboriginal Student Services Coordinator could email the questions to the Aboriginal students listserv and whomever is interested could submit them back along with photos they have chosen. This is one of the fastest, easiest to implement, and most relatable marketing strategies to

Meet our Students Example

The University of British Columbia's "Meet our Students" site:

[University of British Columbia - Meet Our Students Site](#)

employ. It is feasible to complete a showcase of at least three students and three graduates (of any programs) before the next recruitment season begins in September 2017.

1.3 Update Text Marketing Materials

The stories submitted by students for the online marketing strategy can also be used to develop text marketing materials to send out with recruiters. There is already a process put in motion to create an Indigenous learners viewbook for Fleming. When potential students see people they recognize featured by the institution they are considering, they can imagine themselves in that position in the future. For this, Georgian College has the best practice. Their recruiter, April Jones, has a dozen different postcards, each featuring a different program, with a different Indigenous learner on the front that she takes with her on recruitment trips, in addition to the Georgian Indigenous Learning viewbook. Prior to engaging in any Indigenous specific recruitment trips, Fleming needs to develop text materials so students can recognize themselves within the institution, and imagine their future there. These materials can be in print prior to the next recruitment season in September 2017.

Recommendation 2: Beyond Recruitment; Cultivating Relationships through Outreach and Engagement

2.1 A Cultural Approach to Relationships

While Indigenous communities are much like any other community, and want the same access, and good life that is more readily available to mainstream, white Canada, there are some cultural differences the approach to achieving this kind of life. Relationships are of foremost importance, and we view relationships in a very particular way. This section draws upon student feedback, both within Fleming, and through broad surveys with Indigenous students, to explain how Fleming might go about cultivating better relations with local and distant Indigenous communities. This recommendation is multi-tiered over time and space, and will involve adding to the Aboriginal services team in order to cultivate relationships. In mainstream recruiting, relationships tend to begin with the individual student, through their first point of contact at a recruitment fair or school visit. When it comes to Indigenous students, relationships are much more embedded in community, and other institutions they may be a part of, and may be developed over much longer periods of time. Examples will be offered below, both of how community members view this, and best practices that have been undertaken. Going forward, Fleming should view its relations to Indigenous communities, not as a project to be held by one sole recruiter. Rather, relations need to be invested in by all levels of the college, from the Executive Leadership Team, to administrators, to support staff and faculty. While individual staff members will become the point of contact as students become interested in attending the college, that interest will be stronger, and better

developed if Fleming shows a willingness, and investment in cultivating holistic relationships with Indigenous communities. Fleming also has the opportunity to promote its programs in the broader communities by supporting Indigenous employees who have strong connections to First Nations communities. This recommendation should function as a loose guide for the college to develop relationships going forward.

2.1 Hiring Outreach and Engagement Staff

As discussed in the background section, there have intermittently been recruiters hired to attend the Aboriginal Post Secondary Information Program (APSIP) tour for Fleming, and recently there have been proposals put forth for either a part-time recruiting position to participate in the APSIP tour, or a full-time Aboriginal Recruiter position. However, best practices show a different position that will work closely with Aboriginal Student Services, and the Marketing and Recruitment departments to develop relationships with Indigenous communities may prove more effective. This would fall under the category of “Outreach and Engagement.” A role like this would be not only to attend recruitment events like trade fairs and/or APSIP, but to regularly attend community events and communicate to the college community events that are open for all to participate in.

This full time position would also be responsible for supporting the Aboriginal Transitions program that will replace/be the new bishkaa program. In this way, this person becomes the students first point of contact for community engagement prior to and while transitioning to the college. These relationships often take years to build, and while it may be thought that Fleming has held a long-time relationship with local First Nations, after receiving feedback from other college recruiters, community members, and Fleming department/school faculty members, it is clear that communities maintain stronger ties with both Georgian and Loyalist colleges, in spite of being further away from them than Fleming. These strong relationships are in part because Georgian and Loyalist have both had dedicated Outreach and Engagement Staff (April Jones, and Dustin Brant) for nearly the last decade. They each described the kind of Outreach that they do to maintain the colleges’ relationships with Indigenous communities, which includes attending events, maintaining frequent contact with potential students to give support prior to application, facilitating Student for a day events, and much more. Having a relationship requires maintaining the relationship in the above-mentioned ways, and is more than merely having many students or staff from a particular community.

2.2 Senior Investment in Relationship Building

At an institutional level, the college needs to show investment in community interests, and events consistently by having a presence there. This should not only fall to Indigenous members of the college, but all staff, administrators and especially the leadership team. So while a staff member is going to be integral to maintaining the day to day relations of outreach, attendance of events should be shared and welcomed by all staff to show Fleming's interest and engagement within the community. The importance of this kind of investment was summed up beautifully by students in a study on Indigenous student transition to postsecondary. One student notes that:

"They [universities] only speak to us in our last year when they want us to apply and they say you need to go and this is not helpful..."

While another student says:

"If they really wanted us, they would come to our pow wows, our community events, not just court us a day and leave." (as quoted by Restoule et. Al, 2013, p. 7)

These student demonstrates the importance of maintaining relationships through community and cultural events, and also signifies the strong emphasis on a reciprocal relationship between community and college. Students expect that if the college wants them to be a part of their campus community, then the college should make an effort to be a part of their cultural community.

There are many cultural and community events that happen in Nogojiwanong that are open to everybody. These events are the perfect opportunity for Fleming faculty, administrators, and especially the leadership team to show their investment in the Indigenous community simply by attending and supporting. There is no need to even engage in formal recruitment at these events; rather, it is sometimes better to attend and get to know community members, and through these ongoing relations Indigenous community members will begin to see Fleming as a place that is welcoming to Indigenous students.

2.3 Cultivating relationships within local schools

A Fleming survey underscored the importance of guidance counsellors to Indigenous students' decisions about college. Cultivating strong relationships with high schools can also provide another avenue to encouraging student interests in Fleming. Fleming College currently hosts personalized "student for a day" opportunities, in a very similar format to those executed at Loyalist. However, increased effort can be put behind encouraging Indigenous students to participate in this opportunity at Fleming. This would

allow more Aboriginal students to attend the college for a day to experiment with a program they are interested in. The Outreach and Engagement Coordinator would be the contact to facilitate the students' experience and would work in collaboration with the Student Recruitment department to plan and execute the day. This early collaboration with schools allows students time to prepare for what they can expect from Colleges.

Additionally, there is the option of collaborating with the Education Managers at the local reserves to determine how to attract students into the programs. There is also an important option for collaborating with communities to offer specialized programs. Curve Lake First Nation has collaborated with Loyalist College to provide an on-site PSW program in the past, and Fleming could be providing the same type of in-community learning.

2.4 Outreach to local First Nations: Giving Land Back

In December 2016, Fleming announced that the college would be donating a large tract of land to the Kawartha Conservation Authority. This tract of land lives along Nogie's Creek, a water system that leads to one of the few tracts of Crown Land within the Treaty 20 region on which the Mississauga and Chippewa nations of the area can practice hunting and harvesting rights. Additionally, the entirety of Nogie's Creek has a long history as a harvesting area for Mississauga peoples, which precedes both treaty and settlement (Doug Williams, 2015, personal communication). Land is rarely talked about in reconciliation efforts, even though dispossession from land is one of the primary outcomes of colonization. While many organizations are pouring money into programs, Fleming has an opportunity to be a leader by directing such land donations, not to settler-run conservation organizations, but to First Nations for land-based resurgence and education. Not only are conservation organizations a well-recognized part of the colonial project (Willems-Braun, 1997), but the need for access to land for Indigenous education is paramount, and the call to give land back has been echoed over and over again by academics and activists alike. Local Mississauga academic and activist Leanne Simpson has advocated repeatedly that land should be given back to Indigenous nations for resurgence projects. Eve Tuck and Wayne K. Yang have written that "decolonization is not a metaphor," advocating that access to land is the way to not dilute the meaning of decolonial actions. If Fleming wanted truly to take reconciliatory action to engage Indigenous nations, then giving land back should be at the top of the list.

Recommendation 3: Partnering with Trent, and other Institutions (immediate, and ongoing)

3.1 Partnering with Trent for Recruitment

A good model for community relations is Trent University's longstanding relationship with Curve Lake First Nation. The Chief, or an elder from the community is regularly invited to open Trent events, and in 2014, the longstanding relationship between Trent and Curve Lake was honoured at the Curve Lake Pow Wow. This is the kind of ongoing relationship Fleming needs to cultivate. Like any relationship, it requires constant and consistent investment, and the more effort Fleming puts into developing a relationship, the more likely students will be interested in attending the college.

I recommend beginning with cultivating relationships locally for two reasons. First, there is already a large Indigenous population in the Peterborough region, and Fleming has a lot to offer to help students develop skills locally to work within the community here. What Fleming has to offer is different from what Trent can offer; Fleming's programs are unique and students may come to see the separate value of both institutions. The second reason, is that as Fleming begins to widen its recruitment area, Indigenous students that come from farther away will notice the local relations, and if there is not a good relationship with local Indigenous peoples, then students may be less interested in coming. The closer the ties Fleming maintains with the Indigenous community locally, the easier the transition will be for Indigenous students coming from afar.

Fleming is fortunate to share territory with Trent University, which has longstanding relations with local First Nations, and the oldest Indigenous Studies program in the country. Trent has been a participant in the APSIP tour, and continues to send a recruiter on the APSIP trail each year. Sharing resources with the Trent recruiter and sharing the APSIP burden by trading weeks, or sharing accommodations might make participation in the tour more financially feasible. Mary Anne Hoggarth, the Trent Indigenous student recruiter, has shown interest in collaborating for recruitment. A loosely defined informal partnership has been in place with Trent for some time, with the Trent recruiter taking Fleming promotional materials with them when attending recruitment engagements. However, these materials are often ineffective with Indigenous students when they are not reflective of the Indigenous student population at Fleming. So the success of in-person recruitment partnerships is also dependent upon having sufficient recruitment materials.

3.2 Partnering with Trent for Indigenous Student Transitions

The partnership with Trent can supersede traditional recruitment methods. The bishkaa program is the best example of how a Trent partnership has transformed student experiences positively when attending Fleming. The community offered through bishkaa participation helps students to feel at home, and feel safe within the broader campus community. The bishkaa program has also improved student success. This has been reported both by students themselves, and by staff who provide frontline services to students. Kylie Fox reported that because students had mentorship and community, they felt comfortable asking for help when they needed it, and they were also aware of where they could get help. In previous years, without bishkaa, students often panicked around midterm when financial, academic, and social stress would reach a peak (February 24 2017). Students have also reported how bishkaa has helped them both as mentors and mentees. The importance of continuing a transitional program like this cannot be underscored. Additionally, it is helpful for students to have the broader community outside of the college through partnering with Trent. This accomplishes two important aspects of adjusting to college: one, introducing them to the broader community and people outside of Fleming college, and two, introducing them to further academic options beyond Fleming. The combined educational model between university and college is becoming increasingly important in today's job market. Additionally, for many Indigenous students, college can be the first time they have a positive academic experience, and it may be the avenue through which they come to believe that there are academic possibilities for them beyond college. Anecdotally, many students report that college opened their eyes to more postsecondary opportunities. Introducing them to the possibilities beyond Fleming will aid with their decision to attend Fleming, and inspire them to stay.

[Recommendation 4: Rethinking the recruitment trail, getting as much as possible out of APSIP, and considering beyond it.](#)

4.1 Making the Most of APSIP

Partnering with Trent for the APSIP tour may be one of the most financially efficient ways to get Fleming materials out on the tour. Mary Anne Hoggarth has been willing to take Fleming materials out with her on weeks that Fleming would not be able to attend. She herself does not attend every single week, and so it is possible that Fleming could attend weeks that Mary Anne is unable to attend.

4.2 Beyond APSIP: Using Mainstream Recruiting to the Fullest Extent

Much of the feedback focus within Fleming has been on getting someone out on the APSIP tour. While this is an important option, it is also the most expensive option, and there is a lot of recruitment that can happen outside of the APSIP tour as well. Statistics Canada has shown that 78% of self-identified

Aboriginal people within Ontario live off reserve. While the APSIP tour also makes off reserve visits, the focus is on Aboriginal specific recruitment. And yet, given the large population of Aboriginal peoples that live off reserve, there are likely many Aboriginal students that are attending mainstream recruitment events, looking to find institutions suited to them and rarely seeing themselves reflected. Fleming has an opportunity to engage in more inclusive recruitment, by training current mainstream recruiters comprehensively in what can be offered to Indigenous students, and sending Indigenous specific materials on all recruitment trips. Fleming could consider that recruiters are likely already coming in contact with many Indigenous students, but are unaware of it. Because of stereotypes about Indigenous peoples, it is likely that recruiters might not recognize Indigenous students when they are approached by them. As such, recruiters need to be well versed in what Fleming has to offer to Indigenous students and be able to talk about Indigenous services with any students. This reality is what makes text materials all the more important. When students see pictures of self-identified Indigenous students on promotional materials, and read their stories, they will be more likely to self-identify to the recruiter they are talking to, and will feel encouraged and welcomed by the Fleming community. There are a wide variety of ways to do recruitment outside of APSIP, which could include attending Pow Wows both locally and afar, making regular visits to the local friendship centre and other service agencies simply to talk about the college or to help community members become familiar with the college.

Recommendation 5: Student engagement in recruitment (student leadership program, mentorship programs)

5.1 Students Care About Their College

Feedback from students has shown that they have a vested interest in improving Fleming's recruitment efforts with Indigenous students. There are multiple reasons to engage students in recruitment efforts. The first being that students who are having a positive experience really want to share that experience with others. First Nations youth love to see each other being successful, and also love to share their successes with one another. This is why current Fleming students are one of the best access points to student recruitment. Additionally, the importance of informal relationships should not be underestimated when it comes to Indigenous student recruitment. The Indigenous community is closely interconnected in informal ways, not necessarily through institutions, so when potential students see current students they might recognize in promotional materials, or out talking about their schools, it is easier for them to imagine themselves in their position.

5.2 Emerging Student Leaders Program

There are a couple of ways that Fleming can use students formally in recruitment. The first, is through developing the student mentorship program that already exists through bishkaa. Students that are trained mentors learn a lot about public speaking, and become role models within their community. These skills can be used to promote the college as well, something that many mentors have indicated they would be interested in. The best option is to collaborate with the Emerging Student Leaders program to develop a more accessible program that many Indigenous students can participate in. The Emerging Student Leaders program offers a 4 workshop series and students receive a certificate upon completion. For the Indigenous Emerging Student Leaders program, Fleming could make completion contingent upon returning to their home community to give a presentation to community members about their Fleming experience. The trip home could be funded by Fleming and viewed as a recruitment opportunity, but by using a student who is already a member of that community, the accessibility of the college is increased for students in that community. Further research needs to be done to determine how Fleming would secure funding for the travel for students to go home, and how students could qualify for the funding. For instance: students come from varying distances so travel costs will vary depending on their community. How will this variance be accounted for and if communities are very far away/expensive to travel to, will Fleming cover a portion of the travel? Collaborate with bands or tribal councils to secure the rest of the funding? Develop an average cost per student so any student can secure total funding? Provide an option of presenting at a nearer friendship centre, or through a different youth program? These are all important considerations; however, the possibility for a program such as this is immense. It draws on the importance of informal and in-person relationships, uplifts current Fleming students, and continues to support the necessary relationships to community for successful Indigenous student recruitment.

5.3 Renewing Bishkaa and the Importance of Indigenous Student Transitions

The Aboriginal Student Transitions and Wellness Symposium at Trent on February 24th 2017 showed the importance of having support programs for Indigenous students coming from high school to college. The feedback about the bishkaa program has been overwhelmingly positive, and the program has been described by one student as “not a want, but a need.” With bishkaa, students see increased success academically, and socially while at college. Most importantly, bishkaa can be seen as a big draw for students considering attending a program. Bishkaa provides knowledge that they will not be the only Indigenous student in their classes or social circles, and as such college may seem much more appealing and less isolating.

The program does not have to be held on such a large scale as it has been in the past. A best practice would be somewhere in between the two weeks of bishkaa introduction that students had in the partnered Trent and Fleming program, and the one-day Aboriginal Student Move-in day at Queens university that was showcased at the Aboriginal Student Transitions and Wellness Symposium at Trent. For instance, a three day retreat where students can meet their mentors, get to know each other and then get settled into their new life in Nogojiwanong could be just enough to get students ready for their impending college experience. Probably the most important aspect of bishkaa is the ongoing support throughout the semester. Maintaining that support is far more important than having a long camp-like experience prior to school beginning. The study days and the retreats at Camp Kawartha have been invaluable in providing both social and academic support for students enrolled in the bishkaa program.

5.4 Hiring Students to Support Recruitment in the North

The typical recruitment model has been to hire recent grads to go on recruitment tours to promote the college. These tours are often expensive, and may not realize their full potential for some Indigenous communities due to the expense just to get there. However, providing recruitment opportunities for isolated communities is still important, as many of Fleming's programs are unique and could be of use in remote northern communities with resource industries, or who require in-community medical professionals. In order to make these programs accessible and relatable to communities in the north, Fleming needs to hire northern students to help design recruitment strategies and materials. For example, Fleming currently has a student from the north (e.g., Trina Qaqquq) who recognizes the potential Fleming has and can support relationship development with northern communities. It is integral when it comes to the north to have someone who is familiar with northern cultures to mediate relationships. Hiring a student on a part-time contract would allow an opportunity to develop these relationships.

Recommendation 6: Rethinking curriculum; broadening Indigenous interests in Fleming programs (Immediate, and ongoing)

6.1 Developing Relevant Curriculum and Hiring the Right Instructors

With Indigenous students, a key factor in recruitment is having programs that will be relevant to their interests and community needs. At Fleming there are many programs that students will find relevant to their communities. Many of the health programs are suited to educating students to fill positions that are often lacking in rural and reserve communities. Fleming has an opportunity to play a key role in helping to fill gaps that exist in services for Indigenous communities. While the mainstream, western content of health programs at Fleming is suited to filling some community gaps, culturally relevant

curriculum is often lacking. Further, a comprehensive understanding of the impacts of ongoing colonialism and being survivors of genocide is lacking within Fleming's faculties. In order to make programs truly relevant to students, this curriculum needs to be updated, and professors need to be educated so they are not continuing the misinformation that characterizes the elementary and secondary school systems. In order to do this Fleming needs to hire more Indigenous faculty to teach Indigenized courses. Indigenous students do not want to learn their history from non-Indigenous people. Further, the sharing of traditional knowledges by non-Indigenous people back to Indigenous youth is another form of cultural colonialism, whereby the colonizer takes it upon themselves to give back to the colonized what they originally took away. While it is possible for non-Indigenous peoples to decolonize, and come to understand their complicity in colonialism, and they may come to a place where they can teach effectively about these issues, this usually requires a lot of education and a lot of personal work. Professors need to be prepared to do this, and to be held accountable when they make mistakes. No one in the Indigenous community expects non-Indigenous people to be perfect, but there is the expectation of a willingness to learn, and understanding that Indigenous peoples are experts on their own oppression.

Additionally, if Fleming intends to hire Indigenous professors to teach in cross-cultural classrooms of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, they need to be prepared to support professors with the difficulties that arise teaching in what may be a **hostile classroom**. Many students have bought into settler Canadian myths about their right to our lands, and their right to be here unquestioned. While Indigenous people, and especially Indigenous educators are often prepared for this, it is still important for the college to provide appropriate supports for professors, and different supports for non-Indigenous and Indigenous

students that may be learning the truth of Canada's history for the first time. Fleming needs to develop a strong anti-racism framework to work from, whereby it becomes acceptable to hold people accountable. Fleming has a responsibility to its educators to ensure that they are teaching in a safe classroom, and that they will be supported as they teach what many will perceive as controversial material.

Hostile Classroom

When students bring preconceived racist stereotypes to the classroom and attempt to assert their right to these views on the basis of opinion or Canadian Multiculturalism.

Similarly, professors can create a hostile learning environment for racialized, LGBTQ, or immigrant students by reinforcing negative stereotypes in their teaching, or assuming the students know less than their white, straight classmates.

This often happens unconsciously, making awareness integral to improving learning safety.

6.2 A Focus on Developing Health Programs

There has already been an effort in the school of Health and Wellness to indigenize curriculum, Cristine Rego has been making an effort to redesign the curriculum in order to properly represent Indigenous experiences. While curriculum development needs to happen throughout all of Fleming's programs, there is also the potential of spreading energies too thin. Focussing in on schools that have the most to offer to Indigenous communities is of utmost importance. Within the community there is always a need for more healthcare professionals, and Fleming offers several programs to train healthcare professionals that are relevant to Indigenous community life. However, when programs lack information on the specifics of Indigenous communities, or misinform students based on racist stereotypes they do more harm to Indigenous communities than good. It discourages students from returning, and also students take their negative experiences home with them, and it further discourages students from attending. As Carol Kelsey has suggested, they want to offer the best learning environment possible before trying to attract students into their programs.

That said, the School of Health and Wellness is very interested in continuing to indigenize, and given the relevancy of their programs to Indigenous communities it is a worthwhile area to expand. One important strategy would be to set aside seats for Indigenous learners in programs like nursing. This strategy has been used to increase Indigenous student enrolment in medical schools and law schools to some success, and Fleming could follow a similar model. In order for set aside seats to work, Fleming needs to do a good job of advertising this as an option, and focus on the importance of students self identifying on their applications.

The best programs to focus on increasing Indigenous student enrolment are the General Arts and Sciences programs. These short, general programs offer the opportunity to experience college without committing to any particular field, and may give students what they need to transition to University, if that is the direction they want to go. A discussion about these programs has already been put in motion with Silvana McDonald and Sandra Dupret and can be followed up on with them by the new Outreach and Engagement Coordinator.

6.3 A Focus on Developing Trades Training

The dean of the Trades school, Maxine Mann has shown her interest and support in increasing Indigenous student enrolment in the trades. When it comes to trades training, there may be less of a focus on Indigenizing trades curriculum and more of a focus on teaching the politics of how trades impact and are impacted by Indigenous life. For instance, hydroelectricity has a huge impact on

Indigenous communities, or construction projects may be impacted by the duty to consult. The impact of Indigenous rights on trades may be important for tradespeople going forward in the age of reconciliation. In order to incorporate Indigenous political teachings into trades programs, the instructors are going to require some training as well. Training for instructors hoping to attract Indigenous students is important, not just for classroom learning, but also for countering racism in the trades. Students have reported racism and homophobia originating from the tradeschool (whose stories will remain anonymous to protect the safety of individuals), and it is important to teach trades teachers anti-racist interventions so they can train a more accepting and better informed generation of tradespeople.

Recommendation 7: Broadening cultural competency at Fleming; mandatory for ELT, Admin and Faculty. (Immediate, and ongoing)

7.1 Training for Staff from Top to Bottom

In order to help Indigenous students feel included the Fleming community needs to work on broadening its understanding of Indigenous culture, and incorporating Indigenous presence into the whole campus community. While there are people and organizations in Peterborough that can support the development of this kind of cultural competency, best practice would be to bring someone in from outside of the community. This is important for multiple reasons. Firstly, the Peterborough community is very small, and those that are doing cultural competency education will likely have other intersecting relations with Fleming college. This makes it difficult to truly hold a powerful organization such as Fleming accountable if one is concerned for their future employment, or relationship with people in the college community. It is not fair to burden Indigenous community members with the sole responsibility of educating non-Indigenous community members about their culture, history, and traumas; in the context of ongoing colonialism, this is inappropriate. Organizations have developed to bridge the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities by using well-educated non-Indigenous facilitators and Indigenous facilitators to model an allyship relationship and teach about how to go forward in a good way together. Canadian Roots is one such organization, a member of their board and a member of their operational team are interested in working with Fleming to make sure each member of the Fleming community gets the education they need to go forth in a positive way relating to Indigenous students, and teaching non-Indigenous students the truth of their history.

Additionally white people who have to teach about racialized and Indigenous populations should take the “healing from toxic whiteness” course through everyday feminism. This course is low-cost, and gives white people an opportunity to consider their role in ongoing white supremacy, racism, and colonialism,

and to work through any feelings they may have about this without burdening Indigenous folks, black folks, or people of colour who may be their colleagues or students. This course is designed specifically for white people to process their experiences with race, and while it is open to people of colour, and may be useful or interesting to some people of colour, the course is directed towards white people's unique experiences with race in a white supremacist society. Everyday Feminism offers other courses for people of colour, such as the "healing from marginalization" course. Canada was designed to be a white nation, and rose to power because of white supremacist practices. While we have all been raised in this racist, white supremacist society, the experiences of white people and people of colour are different. People of colour, black folks, and Indigenous people are continually confronted with the undeserved advantages (Kegler, July 2016) that white people experience, and usually do not realize they experience. As such, white people rarely have an opportunity to confront their privilege. The healing from toxic whiteness course is an opportunity to confront privilege and learn better classroom practices to support students who are racialized.

This kind of solidarity education is perhaps the most important recommendation of all. It is not fair, or ethical to ask Indigenous students to attend an institution where their position as an Indigenous person will be tokenized, or where they will be exploited for their knowledge as a member of the Indigenous community. Students, and some faculty and support staff have reported that students are frequently asked to speak for the Indigenous community in classrooms (whose identities will remain anonymous in order to protect their safety). Not only is this an unfair burden that non-Indigenous (white) people are never asked, it affects students' learning and comfort in the classroom. In a situation where a professor has much more power than a student, both in the context of the institution, and a colonial, white supremacist society, students do not always feel safe declining to speak, and calling on them in front of a room of people puts them at an extreme disadvantage to the rest of the class and to their professor. More than this, students may prefer to keep their identity private, as white racism against Indigenous peoples persists, and a professor calling out a student in class where the student has not voluntarily offered their perspective may make the student vulnerable to violence. Asking a student to speak for their community is not innocent, nor is it simply a well-meaning mistake. It can be dangerous for students in ways that white people never have to think about because they are shielded by their white dominance.

Cultural competency training should happen in a top-down way. Traditionally, institutions have only put effort into educating frontline workers, or workers that have to deal directly with the affected

population. However, this does not set a good example for inclusivity and the priority of Indigenous safety on campus. The IEP survey showed that racism is present and visible within Fleming, as several students took the time to fill it out to complain about special services allotted to Indigenous students. Students cited the myth of “free” education, and the liberal ideas that everyone should be treated the same, thus erasing the racism and colonialism against Indigenous people, and perpetuating it themselves. This should be very alarming to Fleming leaders, and it is everyone’s responsibility to learn the truth of their history by taking part in Canadian Roots workshops and programs like “healing from toxic whiteness.” The training can begin at the Executive Leadership retreat in June, with a workshop facilitated by Canadian Roots, which can then trickle down to the faculty and support staff. By developing an ongoing educational partnership with Canadian Roots, Fleming can integrate anti-racist and anti-colonial education throughout the college to create a healthy learning environment for Indigenous students.

Conclusions

The research contained in this report has shown that dedicated Indigenous recruitment is an important endeavour for Fleming College to undertake. Over the next three years, it is possible to shift the current relationship Fleming has with the Aboriginal community to one of a positive nature. Through outreach and engagement, the College has an opportunity to attract more Indigenous learners, and become a leader in Indigenous education. The college currently has a lot to offer to Indigenous students, but does not adequately communicate those offerings to the Indigenous community.

The recommendations offered in this report are intended to allow the college to increase their presence in the Indigenous community by beginning with communicating what is already available at the college and continuing to grow. The above suggestions are intended for review by an incumbent staff member who can undertake the suggested projects, such as supporting development of recruitment materials, and developing student leadership programs to engage students in recruitment. While general guidelines have been offered in terms of timeline of implementation, it will be up to an incumbent employee to determine exactly how to implement these recommendations. The timeline offered in Appendix A accounts for feasibility of implementation.

Appendix A: Timeframe for Recommendation Implementation

Recommendation	Immediate	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
1 Indigenous Marketing Materials				
a) make better use of the website				
b) showcase Indigenous learners				
c) update marketing materials				
2 Beyond Traditional Recruitment				
a) hiring outreach and engagement staff				
b) senior investment in community				
c) relationships with local schools				
d) giving land back (ongoing)				
3 Partnering with Trent University				
a) recruitment				
b) Indigenous student transitions				
4 Rethinking the Recruitment Trail				
a) making the most of APSIP				
b) beyond APSIP				
5 Engaging Students in Recruitment				
a) emerging student leaders program				
b) student transition programs (bishkaa)				
c) students recruiting in the north				
6 Rethinking Curriculum				
a) developing relevant programs				
b) developing health programs				
c) developing trades training				
7 Broadening Cultural Competency				
a) training for ELT				
b) training for administrators				
c) training for faculty and staff				

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