

Indigenous Program Pathways Inventory Project Roundtable Summary

Date: March 16, 2017, 8:30a.m.-2:15p.m.

Location: Simcoe Room, Marriott Downtown Centre, Toronto

Attendees: Shawn Chorney, Canadore College; Jeannette Miron, Canadore College; Mary Wabano, Canadore College; Dr. Joyce Helmer, First Nations Technical Institute; William Perrault, Seven Generations Education Institute; Carolyn Hepburn, Sault College; Dr. Caroline Langill, OCAD; Renay Dixon, Algonquin College; Harpreet Singh Sonu, Algonquin College; David Baker, Fleming College; Mark Gray, Fleming College; Don Duclos, Confederation College; Dr. Rick Ouellet, Cambrian College; Jessica Charette, Canadore College (Recorder); Dr. Lana Ray, Minowewe Consulting (Facilitator)

Agenda Item

1. Opening Remarks

Opening remarks were given by Shawn Chorney, Vice President, Enrolment Management, Indigenous and Student Services, Canadore College. Jeannette Miron, Registrar and Manager of Institutional Research, Canadore College announced that Canadore has received funding for Phase Two of the Indigenous Program Pathways Inventory project. Entitled, "Inventory of Indigenous Postsecondary Programs and Community Based Deliveries: A Longitudinal Study of the Student's Transfer Experience from Admission to Employment," Phase Two will examine student experiences within the context of Indigenous transfer and pathways for programs in Ontario.

2. Presentation of Phase One Results & Discussion

Dr. Lana Ray, Minowewe Consulting, provided an overview of the Indigenous Program Pathways Inventory Project (Phase One) methodology, results and recommendations. No comments or questions arose in relation to the methodology.

Utilizing the liberating structure exercise "1, 2, 4, All," roundtable participants examined the following sets of questions alone, in-pairs, in foursomes and lastly as a group:

- a) Are there findings that you think garner more weight (have more potential impact) than others? Do these findings receive adequate attention in the report? If not, are there any suggestions?
- b) Are the recommendations reflective of the report content? Are there additional recommendations that should be gleaned from the content? What recommendations should be prioritized? Are there additional areas of research and/or collaboration that have not been identified but would be beneficial to explore?

The following feedback was received in relation to the first set of questions (a):

- Terminology such as Indigenous and Aboriginal need to be defined and used consistently.
- The term “Indigenization” is problematic and should be replaced with a term that is more student-centered and promotes the agency of Indigenous peoples. Culturally responsive and decolonization were suggested.
- Ensure the report objectives are clear and the uniqueness and distinctiveness of Indigenous pathways is highlighted.
- Further reflect on the historical and current experiences of Indigenous peoples in the education system. E.g. Individuals are often doing “double duty” with limited capacity, need for more resources, systemic issues.
- Indigenous programs provide added value.
- Secondary education is important, you are “setting the stage.”
- Pathway discussions need to occur within a larger discussion on institutional commitment to Indigenous education.
- How do we offer relevant bridging programs? There are financial considerations. Communities are not supporting through sponsorship anymore.
- If we are going to identify a pathway, it must reflect learners and scaffold with faculty, policy, course work and curriculum, etc.
- The knowledge belongs to Indigenous peoples, so Indigenous peoples need to be the ones to impart the knowledge. There is a lack of Indigenous peoples delivering curriculum.
- There is the perception that Indigenous pathways and programs are of lesser quality and value. Students think they must be of Indigenous heritage to enroll, but that is not the case.
- Prior learning is an important piece. For example, if someone is fluent in the language they should be able to apply against a general education course.
- Learners are not completing their education sometimes to go out and raise families, etc. We need to take a good look at whether we recognize the work they’ve done to date when they come back. In some cases, it is trying to figure out how to provide credit for work when a learner has not finished their semester.
- The Aboriginal Institute Consortium are moving toward granting their own credentials. How do we make sure to include them in the discussion? What is the best way to engage with the AIs?
- Create an abstract or a short summary of the findings for community dissemination.

- There is a need to demonstrate the common outcomes between programs and how outcomes relate to the workplace. For example, the Indigenous Wellness and Addictions Program and Social Service Worker program have many similarities that are not widely recognized.
- Need to ensure Indigenous programs align with professional credentials. For example, graduates of the Native Child and Family Worker program can write the provincial challenge exam for Social Service Workers.
- Indigenous programs need to be easily identifiable. For example, programs could have a feather as a symbol or something of that nature.
- Data, or lack thereof, should be highlighted in the report. Can't justify funding till you know what is going on. How is success defined and how do we use and define the data? What is the role of the Ontario Education Number in this discussion? This could be used to move the conversation further. How do we extract information/engage with Indigenous peoples for the information versus how can we fit you in? What data is already available? What are the implications of OCAP for this work?
- Need to have a transfer guide across the system. In BC, any college course can be transferred across the province if there is a similar department, there is also a great degree of transferability in the United States.
- Who drives the pathways, the community or the institution?
- Viewing learners from Indigenous communities as individuals instead of always as a collective.
- We collaborate and we compete. We are not a college system, we are a system of colleges.

The following feedback was received in relation to the second set of questions (b):

- There can be different levels of recommendations (direct and indirect/supportive) within the plan.
- Seek out Aboriginal Institutes to engage in a discussion on findings and future directions.
- Clarify in the recommendations that pathways must be community driven.
- Expand focus from secondary to employment to elementary to employment.
- A focus on best practices in pathways and pathway development can overcome past challenges and inefficiencies. Groups, including the Confederation College ONCAT project table and the Northern Collaborative can be brought together to create a common vision and path forward.
- Define from an Indigenous perspective what a successful pathway is and pursue data projects that measure this success.
- Need to ensure there is a broader framework/commitment from institutions to support pathways including Indigenous knowledge training for faculty and staff. We need to be sure we are providing pathways for the right reasons. Training needs to be different between faculty and staff, there needs to be a greater commitment to hire Indigenous faculty. Indigenous employees need to feel cultural safe within our institutions. We need to have people delivering curriculum that our Elders are comfortable with, whether they be Indigenous or non-Indigenous.

- Collaboration must occur within and between institutions. For example, Aboriginal Education Councils can play a role in regards to data ownership and research/data agreements. Aboriginal Institutes are already doing some joint work on data collection.
- Learners returning to school are a subpopulation of Indigenous learners whose experiences we need to know more about. How long are credits valid for before learners are back to square one? What about learners who are midway through a course/semester, how do we help them transition back?

3. Recommendations Activity & Discussion

Individuals participated in the liberating structure exercise “25/10 Crowd Surfing” to develop a draft Indigenous Program Pathway Action Plan (Appendix A). Roundtable participants were asked to review and select two report recommendations. Once selected, participants identified one bold idea and an initial implementation step for each recommendation on an index card. The index cards were then circulated amongst the group and rated by participants on a scale of 1-5. The ratings were averaged and the ideas that received the highest scores were displayed and discussed as a group. Participants also had an opportunity to review and expand upon the highest rated ideas on an individual basis. The following ideas were put forth by roundtable participants. The highest rated ideas that were discussed in greater detail have been italicized:

- *Build new pathways based on best practices and strength-based approaches and not historical approaches.*
- *Remove secondary streaming and/or identify alternatives to current forms of equivalency testing that are community-based.*
- *Involve K-12 Institutions and learners in the creation of possible pathways.*
- *Provide Indigenous knowledges training in protocols, language use and cultural practices for faculty and employees.*
- *Create system-wide resources and supports to teach and embed Indigenous education.*
- *Build Indigenous knowledges and skills into current curriculum.*
- *General Education Courses provincially recognized for language and skill competency such as beadwork, drumming, leather work etc.*
- *Have the MAESD program standards creation branch embed Indigenous learning outcomes in all PSE programs as vocational learning outcomes.*
- *Work with a local community to design and pilot a K-12 to employment pathway model.*
- *Bring together groups who are already engaged in this work.*
- *Provide cultural sensitivity training in orientation activities for learners and include in mandatory employee and faculty orientations.*
- *Develop consistent engagement and evaluation pieces to support pathway development and assessment*
- *Enhanced collaboration with communities to facilitate a better/deeper understanding of data and subsequent pathway needs.*
- *Involve Aboriginal Education Councils and/or Elders, language speakers, and Indigenous knowledge keepers in the credit assessment process.*

- Create more bridging/transition programs.
- Build, in collaboration with communities, an alternative access program pathway from the ground up that does not have to fit into pre-established processes (e.g. GED).
- Standardize data collection processes/indicators for all post-secondary institutions.
- Examine operating funding for Indigenous programs in Aboriginal institutes, colleges and universities.
- Implement mandatory awareness training for all employees working in education.
- Meaningfully involve Indigenous learners in the pathway development process, beginning with an environmental scan of similar pathways.
- Rewrite the “Admissions Binding Policy” to create better access for Indigenous learners, including exploring non-grade based options and reserved seating.
- Develop pathways for Indigenous learners outside of Indigenous programming.
- Apply for funding collaboratively to carry out work identified in the Action Plan.

4. Wrap-Up & Forum Discussion

The roundtable meeting closed with a discussion on wrap-up activities for Phase One and initial steps for Phase Two. As a wrap-up to Phase One, an Indigenous Program Pathways Forum will take place. The purpose of the forum will be to discuss and finalize the draft Indigenous Program Pathways Action Plan. All institutions in attendance were invited to participate in the forum, as well as Phase Two of the project. An initial planning session for Phase Two will also take place at the Forum.

Appendix A: Draft Indigenous Program Pathways Action Plan

Indigenous Program Pathways Action Plan		
Recommendation	Activity	Initial Steps
Wholistic & Accessible Pathways		
Indigenous pathway development should be comprehensive, spanning from K-12-employment	<p>Work with a local community to design and pilot a K-12 to employment pathway model</p> <p>Involve K-12 institutions and learners in the creation of possible pathways</p>	Hold focus groups/meetings with communities and key stakeholders
An enhanced focus on academic upgrading and other initial entry points to PSE should occur	Remove secondary streaming and/or identify alternatives to current forms of equivalency testing that are community-based	Develop a position paper
Collaborative and Community-Driven Pathways		
Indigenous communities and learners must be meaningfully involved in the pathway development process	Enhanced collaboration with communities to facilitate a better/deeper understanding of data and subsequent pathway needs	Provide communities with data (i.e. community report) to support the discussion
Enhanced collaboration among and between institutions and relevant stakeholders	Bring together groups in the province who are already engaged in research and/or advocacy work	<p>Review work done to date in this area</p> <p>Meet with the Northern Collaborative and the Confederation College group to identify and discuss shared priorities</p> <p>Meet with Colleges Ontario to identify and discuss shared priorities</p>
Pathway Expansion		
Further pathway development in key areas (justice, environmental science, and art & design) should be explored	Build new pathways based on best practices and strength-based approaches and not historical approaches	Compile an inventory on approaches and best practices in PSE pathway development
Indigenous learners are spread		

across disciplines, requiring the development of pathways outside of Indigenous programs		
Enhanced Data		
Further planning at an institutional and systems level needs to occur to support data collection and analysis efforts	<p>Data collection to be guided by OCAP principles and Aboriginal Education Councils</p> <p>Standardize data collection across PSE</p> <p>Develop consistent engagement and evaluation pieces to support pathway development and assessment</p>	<p>Develop draft guidelines or overarching principles for institutions to adopt</p> <p>Develop Indigenous baseline data requirements</p> <p>Develop pathway standards based off Indigenous concepts of success</p>
Indigenous Approaches to Pathway Development		
A comprehensive review of institutional and system level policies is needed to identify barriers to alternative models of Indigenous program and pathway development	Revise the “Minister’s Binding Policy Directive”	Engage in discussions with the Ministry about barriers to Indigenous pathway development
PSE institutions should recognize the personal experience of Indigenous pathway learners upon entry	<p>General Education Courses provincially recognized for language and skill competency such as beadwork, drumming, leather work etc.</p> <p>Build Indigenous knowledges and skills into current curriculum</p>	<p>Examine the space to acknowledge Indigenous knowledges and skills within the current general education framework and PLAR policies and practices</p> <p>Create and implement training to support the assessment of Indigenous knowledges and skills through GE and PLAR</p> <p>If necessary, create guidelines for Indigenous knowledges and link to current framework and PLAR policies and practices</p>
Commitment to Indigenous Education		
PSE employees should be knowledgeable about Indigenous peoples and equipped to support	Develop and deliver mandatory cultural sensitivity training as part of employee and faculty orientation	Create a working group to oversee the creation of roll out messaging across the province and to carry

<p>Indigenous learners</p>	<p>Provide Indigenous knowledges training for faculty and employees in protocols, language use and cultural practices</p>	<p>out this work</p> <p>Engage senior leadership in planning and roll-out</p> <p>Create and/or adopt training on Canadian/Indigenous history</p>
<p>PSE learners should be knowledgeable about Indigenous peoples</p>	<p>Have the MAESD program standards creation branch embed Indigenous learning outcomes in all PSE programs as vocational learning outcomes</p> <p>Create system-wide resources and supports to teach and embed Indigenous education</p>	<p>Identify resources currently available (best practices, modules etc.)</p>