INDIGENOUS PROGRAM PATHWAYS INVENTORY PROJECT PHASE ONE

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FOREWORD

The Indigenous program pathways inventory project emerged from dialogue with our communities, colleagues and partners around the inherent need to inventory and document the tremendous network of Indigenous-based programming that exists within the Ontario postsecondary education system.

Aboriginal learner enrolment composition and program offerings vary among institutes and institutions -- a common barrier is the absence of a cohesive inventory of the mobility networks that exist among the Indigenous-based program offerings. Our province's 53 institutes, colleges and universities have significant capacity to directly impact Indigenous learner attainment by leveraging our collective tools, wisdom, program asset inventories, geographical reach and relationships.

Our networks and program offerings are more closely aligned between institutes and institutions, in some cases more so than others, with varying degrees of expertise and success in moving the yardstick on Indigenous education.

In spite of this, there still remains a lack of solid useable data that reaffirms our intuition and working knowledge of the gaps that nevertheless exists for the province's fastest growing and youngest population. This project brings another piece of the puzzle to the table and supports a rounding out of dialogue on Indigenous pathways and starts to shed light on some unique and niche based opportunities that the institutes, colleges and universities could address in our obligation to the Calls to Action as identified in the Truth and Reconciliation report.

Like any research of this nature, for every question answered is a question raised and more research, collaboration and action will be the key to ensuring that this good work improves access, pathways and outcomes for Indigenous learners and the people of Ontario.

Miigwetch, Nia:wen, thank you, to all who provided their guidance shared their knowledge and contributed to this project. We would like to also acknowledge and thank First Nations Technical Institute and Seven Generations Education Institute who began this journey with us as our primary project partners.

Miigwetch, Nia:wen, thank you,

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents Phase One of the Indigenous Program Pathways Inventory Project (herein referred to as the 'Indigenous Pathways' project). For the purposes of this project a pathway is defined as a route from one program to another program that contains specified eligibility requirements and awarded transfer credits and/or other benefits to be applied at the receiving institution (adapted from ONTransfer, online). An Indigenous program is defined as any program which is rooted in or directed toward Indigenous peoples' knowledges, practices and experiences.

In September 2016, Aboriginal institutes, colleges and universities in Ontario were sent an online survey containing 42 multiple choice and open-ended questions designed to provide a comprehensive snapshot of Indigenous pathways in Ontario. In total forty-six individuals participated in the survey, representing 30 institutions. Colleges had the highest response rate at 75%, followed by universities (41%) and Aboriginal institutes (33%).

In December 2016, survey respondents who had indicated in their survey response that they were willing to participate in a follow-up conversation were contacted. Twelve follow-up conversations took place between mid-December 2016 and early January 2017. The follow-up conversations allowed participants to expand upon their survey responses and to provide comment and reaction to the survey results.

These activities were followed by a roundtable discussion in March 2017 to substantiate the interpretation of findings. Fourteen individuals, representing 10 post-secondary institutions partook in the day long gathering to comment on the draft report and to craft an Indigenous program pathways action plan based off report recommendations.

This report provides a summary of survey results and the subsequent follow-up conversations and concludes with a series of recommendations to support wholistic and accessible pathways, collaborative and community-driven pathways, pathway expansion, enhanced data collection, Indigenous approaches to pathway development and commitment to Indigenous education. Key findings from the report are listed below:

- Sixty-seven percent (n=20) of participating institutions have Indigenous programs in place.
- The most widespread areas of study are social services (e.g. child welfare, social work, mental health and addictions), preparatory studies (e.g. bridging programs, general arts and science), and health (e.g. nursing, paramedic, pre-health).
- There are no reported Indigenous pathways developed in the disciplines of justice (e.g. police foundations, law, forensic psychology), hospitality and tourism (e.g. culinary arts, travel services, hotel management) and aviation.
- The most common credential learners hold entering an Indigenous pathway is a diploma and the most common credential learners hope to gain from an Indigenous pathway is an honours bachelors' degree.
- The most common amount of credit received was less than two years but more than one year.
- Five institutions indicated that they track learners who enter their institution through an Indigenous pathway. A need for better data on Indigenous pathways was identified.

- No significant relationship was found between the maximum number of credits awarded in a pathway in relation to: level of collaboration between the sending and receiving institution in the credit assessment process, involvement of certain groups/individuals in the institution (e.g. faculty, program coordinator, associate registrar/registrar, transfer coordinator, and academic leadership), or methodology used to assess credit transfers.
- Only one institution reported that Indigenous knowledges were factored into the assessment process between Indigenous and non-Indigenous programs.
- Multiple institutions shared that they are currently in the process of indigenizing their curriculum, adding Indigenous content and/or learning outcomes to all curriculum.
- Participants believed that there were more advantages than disadvantages associated with Indigenous pathways.
- Almost half of all institutions believed that there were challenges when creating, implementing and/or assessing Indigenous pathways.

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BACKGROUND

Indigenous peoples[1], particularly youth, are the fastest growing demographic in Canada. Within this year, it is anticipated that the population of Indigenous peoples between the ages of 20 and 29 will rise to 242,000, representing a 41.9 percent increase in a five-year period (Rosenbluth, 2011). When compared to the projected growth rate of 8.7 percent for the overall Canadian population (Rosenbluth, 2011) this increase is quite substantial. In fact, by 2026, it is expected that the Indigenous population will comprise 4.6 percent of the Canadian population (AFN, 2012).

This population growth signals an increasing need for post-secondary education that meets the needs of Indigenous peoples, as only one in 33 Indigenous peoples will obtain a post-secondary degree in comparison to one in five Canadians (Rosenbluth, 2011). Ontario is not exempt from this trend as Indigenous peoples are an under-represented group within our provincial post-secondary institutions (Sawyer et al., 2016).

The historical and ongoing systemic role of the education
system in the colonization of Indigenous peoples and knowledge systems has been well documented (e.g. RCAP, 1996, Milloy, 1999; Battiste, 2013), with a lack of culturally-responsive education being linked to lower rates of educational attainment for Indigenous peoples.

...effective transfer pathways between post-secondary institutions could support the facilitation of a more accessible and equitable education system overall.

Camman et al., 2014, p. 4

The lack of Indigenous perspectives, values, issues, and attention to the real-life context in which learners will use their knowledge and skills in post-secondary institutions provides an example of this unresponsiveness (FNESC, 2008). This is supported by the Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association (IAHLA) Data Collection Project which reported 80% course completion rates at Aboriginal institutes, which deliver programs designed for Indigenous peoples (FNESC, 2008).

Access, is also commonly cited as a causal factor for the disproportionate educational attainment rates of Indigenous peoples. For example, a study on best practices in Aboriginal post-secondary enrolment found that when access programs are in place, Indigenous learner success rates were improved (Malatest, 2002). Indigenous pathways are a mechanism to support the need for culturally-responsive education and access to post-secondary education. As suggested by Camman and colleagues (2014), "Ontario's post-secondary institutions are not equal in their capacity to attract students from under-represented groups, meaning that effective transfer pathways between post-secondary institutions could support the facilitation of a more accessible and equitable education system overall" (p. 4).

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[1] The term Indigenous refers to First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples within Canada and is used interchangeably with the term Aboriginal in this report.

Currently, there are more Indigenous programs than ever before. According to Universities Canada (2015), there has been a 33% increase in programs for Indigenous learners or on Indigenous issues, since 2013. There is also an increasing number of program pathways, with approximately 21 500 learners transferring within the province of Ontario annually via the 600+ pathways and 35000+ transfer opportunities available (ONCAT, online). Evidence also suggests that these pathways have been effective in addressing issues of access for learners, especially in relation to time requirements and financial constraints (Camman et al., 2014).

Overall, the current system transformation that is occurring in post-secondary institutions, which includes an increased recognition of the value of Indigenous knowledge systems and learner-centered approaches, provide a timely opportunity to engage in work that supports the development and enhancement of Indigenous pathways.

Through the "Indigenous Program Pathways Inventory" project, funded by the Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer (ONCAT), an extensive inventory of Indigenous program pathways in Ontario, including those pathways that exist within and between Aboriginal institutes, colleges, universities and community-based delivery agencies in the province was developed. The culminating goal of the project is to develop an Indigenous Program Pathways Action Plan that will support the enhancement and expansion of Indigenous pathways in Ontario.

This is currently being achieved through the four main activities listed below. To date, activities 1-3 have been completed. This report provides a summary of these results.

1. A province-wide survey that will be disseminated to admission leads, Indigenous leads and pathway/transfer leads, or their equivalents when present.
2. Follow-up phone calls with survey participants to discuss and interpret survey results and identify potential actionable items that support existing pathways and pathway expansion.
3. A roundtable with subject matter experts to present and discuss results, informing the development of the Indigenous Program Pathways Action Plan.
4. A one-day forum with participation from Aboriginal institutes, colleges, universities, community-based delivery agencies, and learners in the province to present and refine a draft Indigenous Program Pathways Action Plan.

This work is aligned and supported by various research and forum calls for action. Most notably are:

- ONCAT's (February 2016) "Workshop on Pathways for Small and Northern Institutions" which identified the need to focus on collaboration and ensure that northern students have access to educational opportunities, develop an inventory of northern pathways, develop common terms of reference on collaboration, and hold a more focused conversation on supporting Indigenous learners, including the development of a strategy to carry out this work.
- Malatest and Associates (2002) study, "Best Practices in Increasing Aboriginal Postsecondary Enrolment Rates" which identified the importance of access programs for Indigenous learners, relevant and accessible curriculum and programs, and working with Indigenous peoples, including Aboriginal-controlled institutions.
- Queens University's "Indigenous Issues in Post-Secondary Education: Building on Best Practices" Conference which urged for the formal and informal development of access routes to university and

college for Indigenous learners, including the creation of mechanisms that enable smooth transitions (Rosenbluth, 2011).

It is anticipated that through the course of the project, including project activities and creation of the Indigenous Pathways Action Plan the following efforts will be supported, answering the above calls for action:

- Identification of gaps and opportunities for post-secondary education pathways;
- Networking and discussion between post-secondary institutions and other relevant parties;
- Highlighting the uniqueness and distinctive nature of Indigenous program pathways;
- Creating awareness of Indigenous post-secondary programming in Ontario;
- Developing baseline data on Indigenous program pathways in the province;
- Standardizing credit transfers in Indigenous programming in Ontario;
- Partnerships between PSE institutions;
- Mobility and access to PSE for Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners;
- Access to Indigenous programming for Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners; and,
- Graduating learners that possess knowledge and skills that are relevant to Indigenous communities and organizations.

METHODOLOGY

This project utilized a mixed approach, specifically the dissemination of an online survey and follow-up phone conversations with survey participants. The objective of the survey was to provide a snap-shot of the current landscape of Indigenous pathways between and within universities, colleges and Aboriginal institutes in Ontario (e.g. breadth of programs and pathways, transfer credits awarded, pathway learner demographics, challenges and threats, and successes) to inform a discussion on Indigenous pathway enhancement and development.

With limited research conducted on Indigenous program pathways to date, this approach was ideal as the survey results provided the basis to engage in informed discussions on Indigenous pathways with survey participants at both an institutional and system-wide level.

Survey Design

Prior to constructing the Indigenous Pathways survey, an environmental scan of pathway survey instruments was conducted to inform survey question construction. The scan identified a limited number of surveys. None had the same objective as the Indigenous Pathways project, and only one survey was found that focused on obtaining a comprehensive view of pathways from an institutional level.

The American Society of Radiologic Technologists' (2008) Articulation Agreement Survey served useful in the development of general questions such as award granted and discipline of study that would be invaluable to any institutional focused pathway survey. The survey also contained two multiple choice questions related to the advantages and disadvantages of pathways, which served as the basis for questions 37 and 38 on the Indigenous Pathways survey.

In total the survey contained 42 multiple choice and open-ended questions (see Appendix A) designed to: identify current Indigenous post-secondary and training programs in Ontario, identify current Indigenous pathways in Ontario, understand the current usage of Indigenous pathways in Ontario, understand how pathways are developed (including how credits are assessed and the role of Indigenous knowledges in assessment processes), understand who is accessing Indigenous program pathways, and identify threats and areas of interest for Indigenous pathway development. To identify potential participants for follow-up phone interviews, the last question of the survey asked participants if they would be willing to participate in a follow-up phone call. If interested they were asked to provide contact information. Once complete, the survey was inputted into SurveyMonkey©. Skip logic was utilized so that participants were only asked questions that related to their institution. For example, if an institution specified that they did not have any Indigenous programs, they would skip past the related follow up questions. Prior to survey dissemination, the survey was also tested internally by three individuals.

Survey Implementation

Because the objective of the survey was to provide a comprehensive overview of Indigenous pathways in Ontario, all Aboriginal institutes, colleges and universities in the province were invited to participate. As a strategy to secure a high response rate and to allow for multiple perspectives from within institutions, surveys were sent to multiple contacts at each institution, when possible. In the end, surveys were sent to between one to four points of contact per institution.

Admission, pathway and Indigenous leads were identified at each institution. To identify admission leads, searches were conducted on the websites of post-secondary institutions for the institution's registrar and/or associate registrar. If no information was found, a search was conducted for a general email address related to admissions.

Pathway leads were identified for each institution from the ONTransfer website, where they are referred to as Transfer/Policy Advisors. To identify Indigenous leads, first a search for Indigenous academic programs was conducted. If Indigenous academic programming existed, a search for the academic lead of that program(s) was conducted. If none could be identified then a general search of Indigenous positions was conducted, identifying individuals primarily responsible for Indigenous relations and/or Indigenous support services.

Once the initial contact list was compiled, an introductory letter (Appendix B) was sent out. This was accompanied by a project backgrounder (Appendix C). Aside from introducing the project, the purpose of the letter was to validate individuals as the appropriate point of contact and notify potential participants that they would receive an online survey within 5-10 business days via email. In instances where the appropriate individual was not contacted, they were asked to provide the email address of the appropriate contact.

During this timeframe, a letter was also sent to senior academic leadership (Appendix D) informing them of the project; and employees at Canadore College reached out to colleagues through various tables and committees to inform them of the project.

Survey data was collected between September-October 2016 via the online program SurveyMonkey©. Two reminders were also sent to potential participants and the deadline was extended by one week to

secure a higher response rate. Surveys both partially and fully completed remained accessible to participants until the deadline. This was done to facilitate inter-departmental collaboration because it was anticipated that information requested in the survey would not be readily available. Hard copies of the survey were also sent to potential participants to support inter-departmental collaboration efforts.

Survey Data Preparation and Analysis

Survey data was entered into an excel spreadsheet. When possible categorical variables were established for open-ended questions and data was coded to support statistical analysis. For example, if participants replied police foundations and forensic psychology when asked to identify programs subject to an Indigenous pathway, a categorical variable of justice would be generated. A companion key was also created.

When multiple responses were received from one institution the responses were collated. The following procedures were utilized to guide data collation in instances where there were multiple answers to the same question:

- If the question allows for multiple responses, all answers will be included (e.g. what are the advantages of pathways? Please check all that apply)
- Definitive responses super cede non-definitive responses (e.g. yes would super cede I don't know)
- Affirmative responses super cede negative responses (e.g. when asked if learners are tracked and one individual said yes and one said no, the yes response would be recorded)
- Greater responses super cede lesser responses (e.g. if one respondent replied 100 and another 20 when asked how many learners are subject to an Indigenous pathway, the response of 100 would be recorded)

On one occasion an institution asked that a specific survey response super cede other responses from that institution and this request was granted.

Despite no issues emerging during the testing phase of the questionnaire, when asked to list and include award granted upon completion, completion time and associated credential of Indigenous programs and programs subject to an Indigenous pathway, multiple participants did not list the program name. Similarly, some participants indicated that they had Indigenous programs and/or Indigenous pathways but did not provide any information in regards to these programs and pathways. In instances where the presence of an Indigenous program and/or pathway was identified, a scan of the institution's website and ONTransfer was conducted to identify the program(s) and other relevant information.

Survey Data Collection Summary

- Forty-six individuals participated in the survey, representing 30 institutions (see Appendix E for a list of participating institutions).
- One survey was discarded because the institution from which the survey originated was not disclosed
- 1-3 responses were received from each participating institution
- The institution response rate was 55%

- Colleges had the highest response rate at 75%, followed by universities (41%) and Aboriginal institutes (33%)
- Sixty percent of all respondents were colleges, 30% universities and 10% Aboriginal institutes
- Twenty-nine percent of respondents were Indigenous leads, 24% were pathway leads and 16% were admission leads. Thirty-one percent of respondents occupied other positions at their respective institution
- The institutional response rate varied by question, ranging from 100%-3%. Questions pertaining to learner demographics had the lowest response rates. (see Appendix F for a breakdown of the response rate by question).

Follow-up Conversations with Survey Respondents

Twenty-two individuals from 19 institutions (14 colleges and 5 universities) indicated in their survey response that they would be willing to participate in a follow-up conversation. All individuals except one, whose identity could not be discerned, were contacted in December 2016 via email to participate. Upon initial contact, participants received a summary of the survey results (Appendix G) and a follow-up conversation discussion guide (Appendix H) to review prior to follow-up conversations. They were also given the option to email responses to the questions in the discussion guide if they were unable to participate via phone conversation.

In total, 12 follow-up conversations took place between mid-December 2016 and early January 2017. Twelve institutions (8 colleges and 4 universities), and 16 individuals participated in the follow-up conversations. No written responses were received. Appendix E provides a summary of institutional participation for follow-up conversations. Follow-up conversations were approximately 0.5 to 1.5 hours in duration. During the follow-up conversations, institutional representatives expanded upon their survey responses and shared their reactions to the survey result summary, particularly what they found reaffirming, surprising, and to identify gaps and areas in need of further discussion. The follow-up conversations also provided an opportunity to identify potential participants, themes, and structure for the one-day forum. Notes were taken during the conversations.

Roundtable Discussion

A one-day roundtable discussion was held March 16, 2017 to substantiate the interpretation of findings. Fourteen individuals, representing 10 post-secondary institutions (see Appendix E) partook in the day long gathering to comment on the draft report. Through a series of structured discussions and activities (see Appendix I) contextual and content revisions were identified and incorporated into the report. Further details are available in the Roundtable Discussion Meeting Summary (see Appendix J). In addition, roundtable participants identified actionable items to support recommendation implementation, resulting in the creation of a draft Indigenous Program Pathways Action Plan.

RESULTS

The section below summarizes the results of the Indigenous Pathways survey and follow-up conversations.
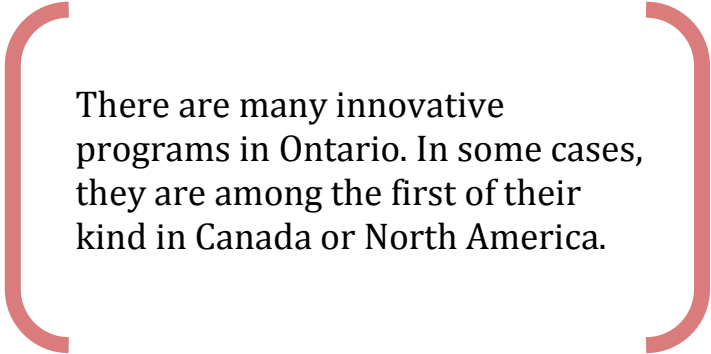
An Overview of Indigenous Programs

Sixty seven percent (n=20) of participating institutions indicated that they have Indigenous programs in place. By institution type, this includes one hundred percent of Aboriginal institutes, 61% of colleges and 67% of universities.

In follow-up conversations, some participants indicated that they were surprised by the expansiveness of Indigenous programming and pathways at universities in comparison to colleges. This could be explained by the fact that the expansion of Indigenous programs across universities is a more recent phenomenon (Universities Canada, 2015). In addition, with less than half of Ontario universities participating in the survey, it is also possible that the universities most engaged with Indigenous programming responded.

Areas of Study

Of no surprise to participants was the selection of Indigenous programs available. Within Ontario, Aboriginal institutes, colleges and universities are offering a wide array of programming in various disciplines, including art & design, aviation, business & administration, community development, education, environmental science, health, hospitality & tourism, Indigenous studies, justice, language, preparatory studies, science, social services, and trades & technology (See Table One).

The most widespread areas of study are social services (e.g. child welfare, social work, mental health and addictions), preparatory studies (e.g. bridging programs, general arts and science), and health (e.g. nursing, paramedic, pre-health). Science (e.g. biology, chemistry), environmental (e.g. ecosystems management, environmental science), and art and design (e.g. fine arts, fashion design) were the least ubiquitous disciplines of study.

> There are many innovative programs in Ontario. In some cases, they are among the first of their kind in Canada or North America.

There are many innovative Indigenous programs in Ontario. In some cases, they are among the first of their kind in Canada or North America. Algonquin College, for example, is the first college in Canada to offer a pre-apprenticeship Indigenous cook program (Carlberg, n.d.). The program fuses knowledge of traditional food preparation, stories, spirituality and culture with food processing, nutrition, business management and skill development. Trent University's Indigenous Environmental Studies program is another example. A blend of Indigenous knowledges and Western science, it was the first degree-granting program of its kind in North America (Sweeny, 2014).

While under-represented, art and design is an emergent area of study within the province. OCAD currently offers an Indigenous Visual Culture undergraduate program. Aside from direct access, learners can also enter the program in the second year through Six Nations Polytechnic's Indigenous Visual Arts program which was launched in 2015. Most recently, The University of Ontario Institute of Technology (UOIT) has begun offering an Indigenous Visual Art general education course. To date it has proven very popular.

In follow-up conversations, institutional representatives stressed the importance of the initial point of access for Indigenous learners. This was reflected in programming, with many institutions having preparatory programs in place.

> Before there was no visual art program at Six Nations Polytechnic, this despite the community being well known for its visual artists.
>
> OCAD University

At Nipissing University, the 8-month Aboriginal Advantage program which is comprised of 24 credits and 1 elective, provides a pathway to an undergraduate degree in arts and science or applied and professional studies for Indigenous learners. Employing a cohort model of learning, learners participate in workshops, orientations, tutoring, academic check-ins, tutoring, wellness workshops with counsellors and sharing circles and one on one sessions with Elders.

While not Indigenous specific, Centennial College's HYPE (Helping Youth Pursue Education) program is popular among Indigenous youth. It provides a six-week on-campus, tuition-free learning experience, including learning materials, transportation, and meals, to learners ages 17-29. For the program, learners choose a course from select areas of interest (e.g. automotive, hospitality, business) and spend the first three days of the week on coursework. The fourth day consists of motivational skills development workshops and the fifth day is an optional academic preparation course.

While learners do not receive a credit that is transferable into a PSE program they do receive a credential from Centennial College upon completion and may be eligible for a bursary. The value to learners is the relationships and confidence that they gain. The program has a graduation and a reception that members of the College's executive team attend. The general conversion rate of HYPE graduates into full-time programs of study is 35-55%.

A multitude of colleges shared their participation in the Dual Credit, School College Work Initiative. Through the Dual Credit program, secondary school students take college or apprenticeship courses that count towards both their high school diploma (OSSD) and a post-secondary certificate, diploma, or degree, or Apprenticeship certificate. The program has experienced success to date with 44% of learners who participated in the program in the 2011/12 school year, registering for university or college within a two-year period (SCWI, 2014). While not solely an Indigenous initiative, multiple colleges have had Indigenous-specific partnerships with Indigenous institutions or directly related to Indigenous learners to increase access to college for Indigenous learners.

In line with the AUCC's (2011) trend of Indigenous program development, many institutions (4 colleges, 1 Aboriginal institute and 1 university) are currently in the process of developing Indigenous programs in

the areas of business and administration, education, with a focus on early childhood, health, justice, and preparatory studies.

Award Granted

The type of award granted in Indigenous programming is diverse with universities having an equal number of bachelor and honours bachelor programs (n=4), colleges having an equal number of certificate and diploma programs (n=9) and Aboriginal institutes offering an equal number(n=3) of certificate and diploma programs. Other types of awards granted from participating institutions include a master's degree (n=2), doctorate of philosophy degree (n=1), graduate and post graduate certificates (n=3) and Board of Governor certificates (n=2). One college indicated that they have an Indigenous pre-apprenticeship program and universities also have programs that provide learners with a certificate upon successful completion.

> We have well over 700 graduates of the Summer Aboriginal Education Programs working in schools across Ontario.
>
> Nipissing University

Mode of Delivery

Most institutions offer Indigenous programming in-person, however, select Aboriginal institutes, colleges and universities offer programming online, in a blended format and in-community. For example, Nipissing University's Indigenous Education Programs, including the Native Classroom Assistant Diploma Program, are delivered on-campus in a low residency model for 5-6 weeks over the summer. Once complete, learners can finish their course work online and their subsequent placement within their home community.

An Overview of Indigenous Pathways

Sixty-nine percent of post-secondary institutions (n=20) who responded to the question "Does your institution currently have any pathways to or from Indigenous post-secondary and/or training programs?" reported having an Indigenous pathway in place. More specifically, 67% of Aboriginal institutes, 61% of colleges and 87.5% of universities indicated the presence of an Indigenous pathway.

Areas of Study

Table One provides a snap shot of the number of Aboriginal institutes, colleges and universities with Indigenous programming and pathways by discipline.

Table 1: Number of Aboriginal Institutes, Colleges and Universities with Indigenous   Programs (PGM) and Pathways (PWY) by Discipline

Discipline	# of Aboriginal Institutes		# of Colleges		# of Universities		Total	
	PGM	PWY	PGM	PWY	PGM	PWY	PGM	PWY
Art & Design	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	1
Aviation	1	-	1	-	-	-	2	-
Business & Administration	2	1	1	1	-	1	3	3
Community Development	-	-	4	3	-	-	4	3
Education	1	1	2	3	2	1	5	5
Environmental	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	1
Health	3	2	3	2	1	-	7	4
Hospitality & Tourism	1	-	1	-	-	-	2	-
Indigenous Studies	-	-	2	2	4	1	6	3
Justice	1	-	1	-	1	-	3	-
Language	-	-	3	1	2	1	5	2
Preparatory Studies	1	-	5	2	1	1	7	3
Science	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Social Services	3	1	4	7	1	1	8	9
Trades & Technology	1	1	1	-	-	-	2	1

By far, pathways are most prevalent in the social science disciplines with social services being the most popular discipline for pathway development. Specifically, social services pathways are being offered at almost double the number of institutions when compared to pathways in other areas of study. In comparison to the overall pathway landscape in Ontario we see that social science only comprises 7% of pathways with business pathways being the most popular (17%) (ONCAT, online).

To date, there have been no reported Indigenous pathways developed in the disciplines of justice (e.g. police foundations, law, forensic psychology), hospitality and tourism (e.g. culinary arts, travel services, hotel management) and aviation.

When discussing future pathway development, participants stressed the need to create pathways that are relevant to Indigenous peoples' lives and community need. For example, one respondent indicated that youth want to be in the professions they see in their communities such as nursing, teaching and policing. This was similar to findings of an Atlantic Canada study, which identified gaining skills and applying them at home as a reason why Aboriginal students attended post-secondary institutions (Timmons, 2009 as cited in Sawyer et al, 2016).

The need for enhanced capacity related to economic development, environmental science, and art & design was identified and seen as relevant and timely for Indigenous communities. Currently the latter two disciplines each have only one reported pathway to date.

A lack of pathways to and from justice programs was the most identified gap in follow-up conversations as institutions recognized the overrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in the justice system and the value Indigenous perspectives on justice could bring to Indigenous communities and society at large. One participant, envisioned learners having access to a justice program that partners with Aboriginal police services. The program would teach students about Indigenous principles of governance, build skills such as writing a Gladue Report, include wrap-around academic supports and include potential pathways into law school.

It was also important to identify what programs Indigenous learners are currently in, whether they be Indigenous or non-Indigenous programs, and create pathways based on this data. While there are no Indigenous pathways, there are currently diploma to degree pathways associated with the Criminology and Justice programs at the University of Ontario Institute of Technology. Many of their learners who self-identify as Aboriginal at the institution are enrolled within this cluster of programs. While discipline specific pathways were present there were also multiple generalized pathways and interdisciplinary pathways, with fluidity most prominent among the following areas of study: social services, Indigenous studies, and community development. Five institutions also reported that they were party to a pathway between an Indigenous and non-Indigenous program. These findings differ from those of Decock and colleagues (2011 as cited in Dick, 2013) who found that forty-four percent of pathway learners entered programs that were closely related to their former program.

This approach is aligned with an Indigenous wholistic view in which facets of knowledge are not compartmentalized to a specific discipline. Moreover, this approach was validated by follow-up conversations, as institutional representatives highlighted the need to ensure room for learners to explore their possibilities between and within institutions. For example, if learners were transferring programs internally it was important that learners be allowed to carry over at least some credits. At one institution, they spoke of a policy which allows learners to carry over credits received when entering their institution via a pathway, even if once at their institution the learner changes programs.

Pathway Direction

It was not uncommon for there to be multiple pathways from one or more institutions to the same receiving program. For example, Confederation College has pathways from social services and community development programming to an Indigenous studies program at Trent University. There were also multiple institutions that had pathways in place from their social service worker programs to Laurentian's Indigenous Social Work program.

While most pathways were vertical, there was also horizontal pathways. For example, if a learner completed a diploma program they could be granted entry into the second year of another diploma program. The survey identified no direct pathways at either a master's or doctoral level. The most common credential learners held to gain access to an Indigenous pathway was a diploma and the most common credential learners were pursuing due to an Indigenous pathway is an Honours Bachelors' degree. Table Two provides an overview of the number of institutions with pathways and associated credentials. It is important to note that if institutions subject to the same pathway responded to the survey the pathway could appear in multiple columns.

Table 2: Number of Aboriginal Institutes, Colleges and Universities with Indigenous Pathways by Earned and Pursuant Credential

Credential Type	# of Aboriginal Institutes		# of Colleges		# of Universities	
	Earned	Pursuant	Earned	Pursuant	Earned	Pursuant
Certificate	2	-	2	-	2	-
Diploma	1	1	10	2	4	-
Advanced Diploma/Degree	1	1	-	1	-	-
Bachelors	-		-	1	-	1
Honours Bachelors	-	2	-	10	-	5
Other	-	-	-	-	1	-

Learner Recruitment and Transition

The most common ways to notify learners about Indigenous pathway opportunities was through information on institution's websites (n=10), pamphlets (n=8), and classroom visits by recruiters (n=7). In addition, recruitment also occurred via partners, information sessions, community visits and by word of mouth.

All but two institutions shared that they utilize multiple forms of recruitment; however, those institutions that employed information sessions did not utilize any other recruitment methods. One participant noted a lack of promotion in Indigenous communities and was unsure of the extent in which Indigenous courses, programs and pathways are communicated to internal Indigenous offices, as well as if pathways were marketed more toward Indigenous or non-Indigenous learners.

It was mentioned by more than one institution that Indigenous learners may only enter or return to post-secondary studies years after high school or a preparatory program. This may have implications for recruitment success and supports the need for a broad recruitment strategy that includes community engagement.

To support Indigenous pathway learners in their transition, approximately ¼ of institutions reported bridging or transition programs in place. Transition program curriculum includes general academic skills, Indigenous knowledges, and often discipline-specific content. These programs are typically delivered in an in-person format, but in one instance was supplemented by online learning. Through the inclusion of Indigenous knowledges and discipline-specific content, these transition programs may also be helping to bridge the understanding between the sending and receiving programs, especially with several self-reported interdisciplinary pathways, including those between Indigenous and non-Indigenous programs.

One such program is the Bishkaa transition program. Bishkaa which means "rise up" in Anishinaabemowin is a summer Indigenous student transition program developed in partnership with Fleming College, Hiawatha First Nation, Curve Lake First Nation and Niijkiwendidaa Anishnaabekwewag Services Circle. The program takes place during the three weeks before the start of university and college classes. Through the program, at-risk Indigenous students from Trent University and Fleming College (starting in the second year of the project), build relationships with each other and with upper-year Indigenous student mentors. The program also features Indigenous knowledge, skills-building, individual success planning, Elders'

teachings, and living on the land (Trent University, 2015). One of the goals of the program is to help learners feel welcome and apart of the local community.

In this instance, the program is supported by an external funding source, so there is no tuition fee. Tuition fees for bridging and preparatory programs was identified as an additional barrier for Indigenous learners to access PSE. In some instances, these costs are not covered by community sponsorship agencies, due to concerns that it will alleviate the responsibility of K-12 to adequately prepare learners for PSE.

Institutional Impact of Indigenous Pathways

In the 2015/16 academic year, on average, 165 learners were enrolled in Indigenous programs at a post-secondary institution in Ontario, with a minimum of 9 learners and a maximum of 420 learners enrolled at a single institution. The mean enrolment number at Aboriginal institutes, colleges, and universities was 95, 184 and 183 learners respectively.

Very limited data was available on the application and enrollment counts of learners stemming from an Indigenous program pathway. One institution reported that in the 2015/16 academic year, two learners applied to an art and design program and were successful in their application, comprising 20% of current learners in that program. Another institution, while unable to provide the number of applicants, did communicate that 60% (n=19) of current learners in programs with Indigenous pathways came from a pathway option.

Indigenous pathways have the potential to be a viable source of income for post-secondary institutions moving forward. While not specific to Indigenous programs, Penner and Howieson (2016) suggest that pathways represent a growing percentage of income for post-secondary institutions that are fluid and often go untracked. They calculate that the revenue for a northern college solely from credit transfers is at minimum 1% of the aggregate 5-year average, and that although probably underreported due to a lack of institutional data, pathway learners comprise almost 20% of the average full time equivalent.

One institution reported a waitlist for their Indigenous child and family worker program in the 2015/16 academic year, and, while not yet an established trend, the program has seen steady growth. Other institutions have also expressed a high level of interest in their Indigenous programs, including Canadore College's Indigenous preparatory programming that ladders into their Indigenous Wellness and Addictions Prevention program and subsequently Laurentian's Social Work program.

Who is Accessing Indigenous Pathways?

At a system level, it is difficult to discern who is the average learner(s) accessing Indigenous pathways. Only five institutions indicated that they track pathway learner demographic information such as age, gender and geographic location. Zero institutions provided information on the common age range(s) of Indigenous pathway students, supporting the need identified by one survey respondent for better data on Indigenous pathways.

In terms of gender, one institution shared that 87% of learners who enter their institution through an Indigenous pathway are female. With most Indigenous pathways in the fields of social science, this is expected and consistent with other findings. One study suggests that women comprise the majority of
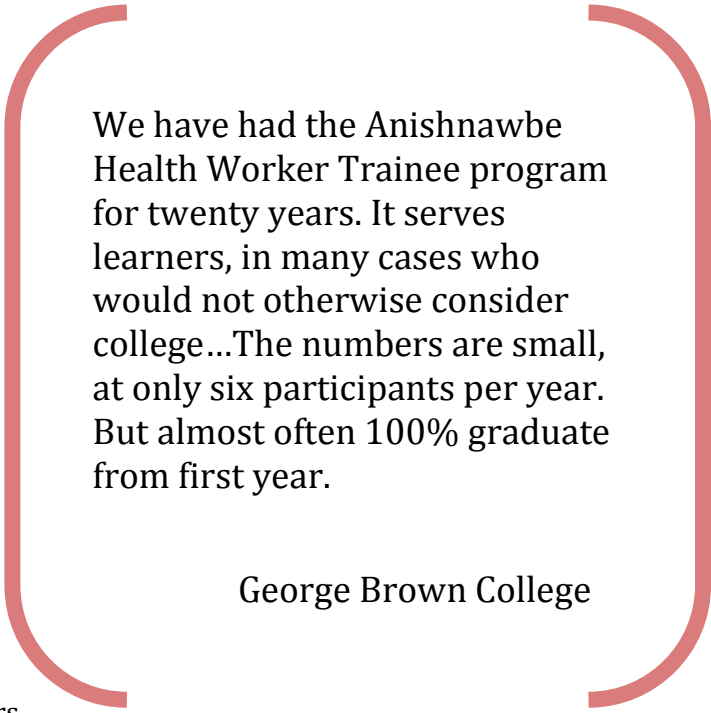
young graduates, especially in areas unrelated to science, technology, engineering, mathematics and computer science (STEM) (Hango, 2013). For example, women dominate enrolment in education, representing 77% of undergraduate learners (AUCC, 2011).

Only three respondents, disclosed information related to the geographic region from which Indigenous pathway learners came from to attend their post-secondary institution. Two institutions relayed that most of the learners originated from Northern Ontario, which was also the region in which the institutions were located. For another institution, Southern Ontario was cited as the area where most of their Indigenous pathway learners come from, and while not in the same region, the institution was not too far away, residing in the Greater Toronto Area.

In these instances, it is unclear if shorter pathway distances are a result of learner preference or institution pathway preferences as Dick (2013) notes, geographic proximity and available transfers are closely related. In follow-up conversations, no institutions found the lack of mobility surprising with one individual noting that learners tend to stay close to home where they are comfortable. Moreover, a survey of Indspire recipients found that most Indigenous learners attending university listed close proximity to home as an influential factor in deciding what institution to attend (Indspire 2013 as cited in Sawyer et al., 2016).

> We have had the Anishnawbe Health Worker Trainee program for twenty years. It serves learners, in many cases who would not otherwise consider college...The numbers are small, at only six participants per year. But almost often 100% graduate from first year.
>
> George Brown College

Survey results found that the distribution of Indigenous learners in Indigenous pathway programs is alike the overall distribution of Indigenous learners in Indigenous programs (see Table 3).

As illustrated in Table Three, pathways that involve Indigenous programs do not always translate to access for Indigenous learners. Follow-up conversations affirmed this finding, with some respondents indicating that generally it is non-Indigenous learners and/or Indigenous learners from urban areas who are second or third generation learners that are accessing Indigenous programs and pathways. For example, one institution shared that approximately 40% of students in their Indigenous programs are non-Indigenous, while another institution shared that of the Indigenous learners present, most were from an urban area. Additionally, some institutions shared that most Indigenous learners are not clustered in any specific program area, including Indigenous programs, but instead, are spread across the institution.

Table 3: Percentage of Indigenous Pathway Learners with Aboriginal Ancestry by Overall % of Aboriginal Learners in Indigenous Programs

% of Pathway Learners with Aboriginal Ancestry

% of learners in Indigenous programs with Aboriginal Ancestry	Less than 5%	5-25%	25-50%	50-75%	More than 75%	Unknown
Less than 5%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%	50%
5-25%	0%	0%	0%	0%	50%	50%
25-50%	0%	0%	50%	0%	0%	50%
50-75%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
More than 75%	0%	0%	0%	0%	37.5%	62.5%
Unknown	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%

The need for reserved seating for Indigenous learners in programs was one method utilized to increase access for Indigenous learners. For example, Trent University's Indigenous Bachelor of Education program requires learners to self-identify as Aboriginal to be eligible for admission through an Indigenous pathway.

In addition to the above characteristics, the roundtable discussion shared that adult learners may have unique experiences which also need to be understood and accounted for within pathway development and assessment. In some instances, adult learners may have attended PSE but left due to family commitments or other reasons, sometimes leaving part way through a semester and/or returning to PSE many years later. Questions that arose were, on average, how many credits are transferable? And, how can we recognize their prior learning within the institution if they have left part way through a semester? Enhanced data was also seen by the roundtable participants as a necessity to the development and enhancement of Indigenous program pathways. Acquiring a fulsome picture of Indigenous learners' transfer experiences and how they define success in the context of their experience were essential. The follow-up roundtable discussion also identified the Ontario Education Number as a potential mechanism which could advance data collection processes in the future, and shared that Aboriginal Institutes are already doing work in this area which could be built upon.

Indigenous Pathway Credit Assessment

The amount of credits awarded because of an Indigenous pathway varied, amounting to less than one year to two years of study for the learner[2]. The most common amount of credit received totaled to under two years.

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[2] Survey respondents did not specify if credits received included excess credits.

Table 4: Number of Aboriginal Institutes, Colleges and Universities with Indigenous Pathways by Credits Awarded

Credits Awarded	# of Aboriginal Institutes	# of Colleges	# of Universities
Less Than One Year	2	2	2
One Year	1	4	2
Up to Two Years	1	10	3
Two Years	-	3	1

Eight institutions indicated that the credit assessment process was a 50/50 effort between the sending and receiving institution; with 5 institutions reporting that it was primarily or solely driven by the receiving institution. Two institutions believed that the process was driven by the sending institution.

Discrepancies were noticed in this regard, with some partnering institutions selecting conflicting statements to characterize the level of collaboration between the sending and receiving institution during the credit assessment process. This could be explained by institutions choosing the statement that best characterized their general approach to credit assessment or by institutions employing different definitions of collaboration.

A Chi-Square Test (p-value=0.69) revealed that there was no significant relationship between the maximum number of credits awarded in a pathway and level of collaboration between the sending and receiving institution in the credit assessment process.

The methodologies of block credit transfer review, program/course outcomes review, case by case basis review and course outline review also did not have a significant influence on maximum credits granted. A Chi-Square Test (p-value=0.72) revealed no relationship between methodology for credit assessment and maximum number of credits awarded.

All credit assessment methods had similar levels of usage with 7 institutions assessing credit transfers using a block credit transfer, and 6 institutions assessing credit transfers with each of the following: program/course outcomes, case by case basis, and course outline review. Seven institutions reported that they use more than one method with only one institution utilizing all four methodologies. Most institutions employed a combination of two or three approaches.

Multiple participants believed that the current methodologies to assess pathways are not the most appropriate model for Indigenous learners, citing a need to explore more collaborative and wholistic approaches. This will be discussed at greater length in the next section.

Aboriginal institutes, colleges, and universities alike involved multiple individuals from their institution in the credit assessment processes, including program coordinators, faculty, the Registrar's Office, transfer coordinators and academic administration. Only one institution did not employ a team approach to credit assessment, reporting that the program coordinator was responsible for conducting a credit assessment.

A Chi-Square Test (p-value=0.87) verified that there was no significant relationship between the maximum number of credits awarded in a pathway and involvement of or lack of involvement of different

group/individuals in the institution (e.g. faculty, program coordinator, associate registrar/registrar, transfer coordinator, and academic leadership).

Contradictory to the above, multiple individuals spoke about the necessity of having Indigenous content experts participate in the transfer credits assessment process for Indigenous pathways. This tension could be explained by numerous factors, including the quality of credits awarded and residency requirements that limit the number of credits transferred that contribute to the degree audit.

As one participant explained, residency requirements at the receiving institution can limit the number of credits that can be applied to a degree audit. They noted that it would be beneficial to look at the conversion rate of transfer credits that contribute to the degree audit to ensure full disclosure be provided to potential learners.

Indigenous Knowledges and Credit Assessment

> Fleming College's Indigenous Perspectives Designation (IPD). provides students in social service and environmental programs with an optional opportunity to access knowledge of Indigenous cultures, histories, traditions and contributions to society.

While utilizing different approaches, multiple institutions indicated that they have or are currently in the process of strengthening the culturally-responsiveness of their curriculum and/or institution. This difference in approach may be attributed to the uniqueness of each college and its surrounding community, as respondents consistently shared that planning efforts toward Indigenization were inclusive of Indigenous leaners, Indigenous communities and Elders.

Approaches spanned from embedding Indigenous content across curriculum to the addition of stand-alone courses within academic programming, to focusing on experiential learning opportunities through student support services. Confederation College, for example, currently is integrating seven "Indigenous Learning Outcomes" across all academic programming. Initiated in 2011, approximately 95% of the programs at the College, currently include two or more Indigenous Learning Outcomes (Confederation College, n.d.).

Using a stand-alone model, Centennial College currently offers a "stackable credential" in Indigenous Studies. Comprised of four general elective credits (taken as two general electives, one mandatory course in diploma programs and one additional course), students learn about current issues, community, relationships, self-governance, and sovereignty within Canada.

Fleming College has chosen to blend integrative, discrete and experiential opportunities through their Indigenous Perspectives Designation (IPD). IPD provides students in social service and environmental programs with an optional opportunity to access knowledge of Indigenous cultures, histories, traditions and contributions to society. In addition to two general education courses in Indigenous studies, learners must also participate in a minimum of four approved co-curricular Indigenous events or experiences that will be incorporated into a learner portfolio assignment. The programs that offer IPD as an option have also

committed to providing discipline-specific Indigenous curriculum, beyond what will be offered in the two general education courses.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, one institution was apprehensive about incorporating Indigenous knowledges within academic programming. They believed it was more appropriate to make Indigenous knowledges available through experiential learning opportunities delivered through student support services. They cited issues related to non-Indigenous faculty teaching Indigenous knowledges, and a desire to focus on reaching Indigenous students as reasons for the approach.

The need for a broad commitment to Indigenous education was identified in survey responses, follow-up conversations and assigned a high degree of importance in the roundtable discussion. Conversation ensued about the need to: eliminate misconceptions of Indigenous education as "less than," provide training to PSE employees, ensure the cultural safety of Indigenous employees and hire more Indigenous employees.

With efforts to ensure culturally-responsive institutions still underway, it appears that institutions in Ontario are only at the cusp of accounting for Indigenous knowledges within credit assessment. Follow-up conversations did not provide evidence of stand-alone or add-on credentials being utilized within credit assessment processes.

Moreover, one out of five institutions with a pathway between an Indigenous and non-Indigenous program imparted that there is Indigenous content within the non-Indigenous program subject to an Indigenous pathway and that Indigenous knowledge was factored into the credit assessment process.

Kennepohl (2016) naturalizes this lag, arguing that only after the development and incorporation of learning outcomes have gone through a transition phase and are well underway will learning outcomes be the primary means of transfer credit assessment. If this remains true, this number should increase in coming years with multiple institutions sharing that they are currently undergoing efforts to increase cultural responsiveness.

In the one reported case where Indigenous knowledge was reported to inform the credit assessment process between Indigenous and non-Indigenous programs, a learning outcomes-based approach was utilized. No further detail on the methodology was provided.

Scholars such as Kennepohl (2016) and Roska and colleagues (2016) have articulated the usefulness and far reach of an outcomes-based approach in credit transfer. Within their article on defining and assessing higher education, Roska and colleagues (2016) describe the Measuring College Learning project. What they found was that common ground could be found in interdisciplinary transfers through generic and discipline-specific competencies.

What is unclear is if the above approach can be successfully applied when attempting to fuse different knowledge systems instead of different disciplines operating within the same knowledge system. Perhaps proof of this challenge can be found in the fact that including Indigenous knowledge was more prevalent in pathways between programs rooted in different Indigenous cultural traditions that have shared foundational principles. Four institutions answered that they have pathways between programs rooted in different cultural traditions, with three quarters of these institutions indicating that they do factor in differences in cultural traditions during the assessment process. No details were provided on how this is accomplished.

In follow-up conversations, one participant also shared that an interdisciplinary approach could be used to assess transfer credits within a discrete model of indigenization. They explained that the learner would rather focus on learning the Indigenous content or the discipline-specific content. This would be dependent on if the learner's route was from an Indigenous to a non-Indigenous program or vice versa.

The conversation on Indigenous knowledges and credit assessment also raised additional considerations, such as the need to ensure that learners achieve the necessary learning outcomes in accelerated models that utilize an integrated approach. For example, if multiple learning outcomes are introduced in year one and a learner enters the program in year two, how does an institution ensure that the learner achieves all required learning outcomes without creating additional costs or other barriers to graduation?

Who is qualified to develop pathways that include Indigenous knowledges was also a key consideration. Multiple institutions identified the need for a collaborative approach which could include Indigenous content experts, fluent language speakers and experts in pathway development, curriculum and provincial standards. Multiple institutions currently have or are hiring Indigenous curriculum specialists to support indigenization, and while none were identified as participants in the pathway development process, moving forward they may occupy a more prominent role in pathway development.

Seeing the Learner

Several institutions spoke to tensions between an Indigenous wholistic framework and the credit assessment process. Specifically, they felt challenged when trying to see the learner beyond the credits they possess, and instead as a whole person. It was believed that current processes promote a way of thinking centered around quantification and equivalency instead of situatedness and relationships. For example, one individual explained that within a block transfer model there is a whole background of the student that is not evaluated. In addition, they need to fit into one of the pre-established boxes whether that be the block transfer or a prior learning assessment to receive credit.

Attached to this notion of "seeing the learner," processes also need to have the capacity to identify what the learner's needs are, including wrap around academic and support services. They also need to have flexibility to accommodate the lifestyle and circumstances of learners and as discussed more in the next section, recognize the learner's pre-existent knowledge and skills learned through experience.

Current tools both within and outside of the education system were identified that could provide a starting point to transform the current credit assessment process. One follow-up conversation identified a need for more laddering curriculum across the province. For example, the Florida Adult Education Career Pathways Toolkit, promotes the use of a ladder framework that includes three components: bridge programs, clear pathways and road maps that identify multiple entry and exit points and depicts vertical and lateral movement within a career cluster (Mills, 2012, p. 54).

Another individual brought forth the use of Gladue reporting in the justice system. These reports provide a tool to tell the individual's story so that an informed decision can be made on sentencing by the courts. A similar report could also support post-secondary institutions' decision-making efforts in credit transfer and to identify additional supports needed. Lastly, many individuals spoke of the need to include a broad range of individuals into the credit assessment process so that the learner could be reviewed in a more wholistic manner. For one individual, they felt that if the right people were engaged, including Indigenous communities, relationships would be strengthened and a process that works would emerge organically.

Honouring Personal Experience

Within Indigenous pedagogies, experiential knowledge is considered both valued and valid (Ray & Cormier, 2012). As such, a necessary subset of the larger discussion on Indigenous knowledges and credit assessment is how to formally acknowledge the lived experience and prior knowledge of Indigenous learners.

In follow-up conversations, institutional representatives spoke about the knowledge and skills Indigenous learners harnessed through attending ceremony, mentorships and apprenticeships with Elders and community members, speaking an Indigenous language, raising children or caring for family members and prior work experience. This prior experience was viewed as relevant in multiple disciplines including but not limited to Indigenous studies, nursing and personal support worker programs and social work; however, the question remains as to how this translates into credits for the learner.

In terms of specific methods to assess experience, institutions acknowledged the use of challenge exams, curriculum vitae reviews, letters of support and/or essay writing. One institution also acknowledged CV reviews, letters of support or essay writing as a method for learners to meet admission requirements if they are just below the requirement. General education requirements were acknowledged during the roundtable discussion as an opportunity to account for personal experience, with participants suggesting that there is already space within the current General Education Framework to acknowledge skills and knowledge such as fluency in an Indigenous language, beading, and leatherwork

Since Indigenous learners' personal experiences are likely to include cultural and spiritual knowledge, there was an identified need to ensure culturally-safe methods of recognition. One participant shared that fluent language speakers and Elders should be involved in assessing Indigenous language competencies. Another individual communicated that there are more appropriate ways to account for cultural and spiritual knowledge aside from granting credit for an Indigenous-specific course. They explained that Indigenous learners can be recognized within non-Indigenous programs for the perspectives and knowledges they bring to their respective discipline. For example, geese hunting, and navigating the land and waterways directly relate to an environmental management program. An experience can be designed for Indigenous learners so that they can teach this to non-Indigenous faculty and learners, furthering their own awareness of the value of this knowledge and their own understanding by relating and teaching this knowledge within a specified discipline.

Some institutions, mostly colleges, have implemented Prior Learning and Recognition (PLAR) as a methodology. For example, Algonquin College has a PLAR administrator who facilitates assessments for students depending on the course and the experience. For other institutions, PLAR was a foreign practice and was viewed as incompatible with their internal processes and philosophies. For example, one university reported that they have a specific clause in their academic calendar that does not allow for the practice of PLAR, while another institution shared that within specific disciplines, such as the arts, prior experience and skill are expected and must be demonstrated prior to entry.

While limited, there are examples of PLAR being utilized within an Indigenous context. Northland College in Saskatchewan has introduced a form of PLAR referred to as "Holistic Portfolio PLAR" (Robertson, 2011, 459). With the objective of building or regenerating Indigenous identity that has been impacted by colonization, Indigenous learners reflect on their past experiences to generate new understandings. Conrad (2008) explains that unlike the typical "challenge for credit PLAR" in which learners must present their prior knowledge in "predetermined knowledge clusters," Holistic Portfolio PLAR provides learners

with the opportunity to build knowledge off their pre-existent foundation (as cited in Robertson, 2011, p. 461).

Vancouver Island University's Canoe of Life Model of Prior Learning Assessment and Indigenous Portfolio is delivered as a mandatory course within the Aboriginal University Bridging Program Certificate. The model was developed with Elders and Coast Salish communities. Akin to the Holistic Portfolio PLAR, it asks Indigenous learners to critically reflect on past experiences to create new knowledge and understanding and formulate a strong sense of identity and appreciation for their Indigenous and experiential knowledge. As part of the course, learners develop education and career goals, and create a learning plan and personal Indigenous portfolio (Hobenshield et al., 2014).

With Indigenous learners attending community-based training and learning centers the need to provide recognition for formalized training in a non-accredited environment was also identified. As mentioned previously, the need to identify training done to date in an accredited institution in which the learner did not complete their course and/or semester was also acknowledged.

OCAD University has been able to create a policy that permits learners to take OCAD courses if they are not enrolled at the university but have an intent to enroll at a later date. As a result, they were able to create an Indigenous pathway with Six Nations Polytechnic that ladders learners into a second-year undergraduate program.

Designed collaboratively between OCAD and Six Nations Polytechnic, in the Bachelor of Fine Arts in Visual Culture pathway, learners take an OCAD first year colour course and Aboriginal art history course online and in-person courses at Six Nations Polytechnic. Learners can choose to complete the first year only and receive a Six Nations Polytechnic Certificate or to continue their education with an advanced standing into the 2nd year of the 4-year Bachelor of Fine Arts in Indigenous Visual Culture program.

Following a similar model, the Native University Program at Six Nations Polytechnic, in cooperation with a consortium of universities: Brock University, McMaster University, University of Guelph, University of Waterloo, University of Western

> Vancouver Island University's Canoe of Life Model of Prior Learning Assessment and Indigenous Portfolio is delivered as a mandatory course within the Aboriginal University Bridging Program Certificate. As part of the course learners develop education and career goals, and create a learning plan and personal Indigenous portfolio.
>
> Hobenshield et al., 2014

> The Native University Program at Six Nations Polytechnic, in cooperation with a consortium of six universities, provides learners with an opportunity to apply five credits earned at Six Nations Polytechnic toward a Bachelor of Arts program at any of the consortium universities.

Ontario and Wilfred Laurier University provides learners with an opportunity to apply five credits earned at Six Nations Polytechnic on a full or part-time basis toward a Bachelor of Arts program at any of the above universities (Six Nations Polytechnic, 2017).

In a different approach, an agreement struck between the Heads of Business at colleges and McDonalds Canada, awards McDonald employees with at least two of four company courses required to become a manager the equivalent of first-year courses in a two or three-year business diploma. Within this agreement, a manager-in-training could enter a business program in second-year, complete the program through an online, in-class or blended delivery, and potentially saving up to $4,500 in tuition (Lewington, 2016). While this opportunity is not Indigenous specific it can serve as a transferable model. For example, many First Nations have National Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse program (NNADAP) workers and partnerships could be struck with First Nations, Health Canada and post-secondary institutions to grant advanced standing in social services programs.

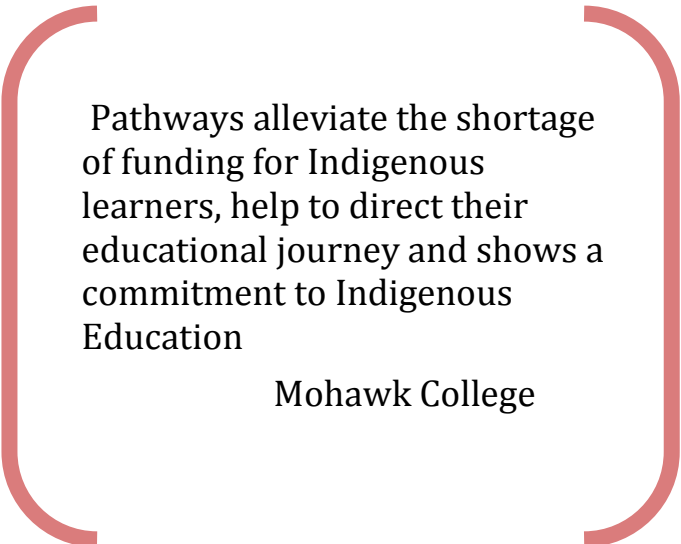## Indigenous Pathway Advantages, Disadvantages and Challenges

Advantages

Overall, post-secondary institutions in Ontario believe that there are more advantages than disadvantages associated with Indigenous pathways. Almost all respondents reported that Indigenous pathways provide educational advancement opportunities for the learner (91%) and greater access for the learner (91%). Eighty-seven percent of institutions indicated that Indigenous pathways improve learner mobility, while flexibility and convenience for the learner (83%) and professional advancement opportunities for the learner (74%) were reported by many.

Just over half of respondents (57%) are convinced that Indigenous pathways lower costs for learners. The lack of consensus among survey respondents may be attributed to the type of pathways available. As calculated in one study, if a college student can earn their pathway credential and a university degree in four years they can be expected to save 14-30 percent when compared to direct entry; however, learners only "break-even" if completion takes 4.5-5 years (Dick, 2013, p. 32)

This finding was supported by one institution who shared that a pathway can save a learner approximately $5200 in tuition fees. Indirectly, pathways may also result in more savings as it was suggested that college learners who transfer into university are more prepared and thus experience greater rates of success.

Just under half of respondents (43%) believed that Indigenous program pathways increase the applicant pool and when asked if there are any other advantages to Indigenous pathways, respondents noted that such pathways allow learners to study closer to home, support the validation of Indigenous knowledge systems and provide non-Indigenous peoples with exposure to Indigenous knowledge systems.

> Pathways alleviate the shortage of funding for Indigenous learners, help to direct their educational journey and shows a commitment to Indigenous Education
>
> Mohawk College

Indigenous pathway development was seen as part of a larger movement to support reconciliation efforts with Indigenous peoples, particularly through the Truth and Reconciliation Comission of Canada's education recommendations.

Disadvantages

Far fewer respondents indicated that there were disadvantages. In fact, 45% of survey respondents believed that there were no disadvantages to Indigenous pathways with 35% citing learners taking courses they may not want to take as the most prominent disadvantage. Other disadvantages noted were undervaluing of transfer credits (20%), inefficient program study delivery/course load issues (10%), accreditation/certification challenges for the learner (10%), limited space (10%), and greater cost to learners (5%).

Despite being the most prominent disadvantage, "learners taking courses they may not want to take" was seen by numerous respondents in follow-up conversations as an inherent disadvantage and it was not believed that efforts should be taken to address this disadvantage aside from communicating to learners the value and purpose of these courses.
When asked to identify other disadvantages not listed in the survey, one institution noted that Aboriginal self-identification may be required for access or preferential access to a program via a pathway and learners may not want to self-identify. In follow-up conversations, it was identified that students may not want to self-identify due to racism.

Another institution shared the concern that if a learner's course workload is reduced due to a pathway (e.g. part-time status because of number of credits transferred) external funding could be jeopardized if the funder has a minimal course load policy. Similarly, there could be implications of reduced course-load for other sources of funding such as the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP).

Challenges

Thirteen respondents from the college and university sector believed that there were challenges when creating, implementing and/or assessing Indigenous pathways. As discussed in the previous two sections, institutions were challenged by wholistic conceptions of pathways and learning, such as the inclusion of wrap around supports in pathway discussions and agreements, the construction of pathways with multiple points of entry and exit and recognition of experience through Prior Learning Assessments and other means.

The challenge of having institutions recognize Indigenous knowledges as a valid way of knowing was identified. This challenge was also identified during the roundtable discussion, with one participant sharing that Indigenous programs are "programs plus," because they must meet both Indigenous and western requirements to establish validity and quality. Related to this concept of "programs plus" was the need to ensure that Indigenous programs align with professional credentials and to demonstrate their alignment with non-Indigenous programs.

Perhaps related, participants also shared that content is not always understood by the instructor, contributing to the undervaluing of transfer credits and that administration must see the value in Indigenous pathways.

Related to the above was a need for cultural competency in instructors, which one respondent indicated can be achieved by hiring local people. In a similar vein, another individual asked, are there qualified staff to assess Indigenous knowledge and teach within these programs?

A lack of human resources was also identified as a barrier to pathway development because there is not enough time to meaningfully engage with Indigenous communities. Financial resources were also cited as a challenge, as one participant stated, they wanted to ensure that current initiatives are not lost to create new initiatives.

Various funding policies were also seen as a barrier to pathway development. One interviewee noted that in some instances transition programs were not funded by learner's First Nations because learners were expected to be prepared after grade 12 or through academic upgrading.

Funding policies were also seen as a challenge that restricted program delivery structures, as one institutional representative shared, learners cannot stretch their learning out over additional years, such as completing a 2-year program over three years and this is a barrier to alternate modes of delivery such as block learning which allows learners to remain in their communities or closer to home. Moreover, funding for non-accredited programs that have pathways to accredited programs was flagged as a potential barrier moving forward.

Data was also a common challenge raised. Some institutions shared that they currently do not have the capacity to track pathway learners. Other institutions do have the capacity to track pathway learners by characteristics including discipline, gender, and geographic location. They explained that once the infrastructure is in place, tracking pathway learners is not an onerous process. When students come in through the admissions program they are flagged as a transfer student via a specific code, and students can be sorted by that code. In this instance, as indicated in one follow-up phone conversation, the challenge for institutions is understanding how to best use the data that is available.

Other data-related challenges and needs were also identified. While many institutions shared that they track learners that Self-ID as Aboriginal, a further break-down would be helpful in confirming if there are sub-populations, such as band-sponsored learners, that are under-represented in Indigenous pathways or have unique experiences. For example, one college shared that they had limited success in recruiting first generation, band-sponsored students. They found that financial incentives were not as alluring, and other incentives were needed to get these students in the door. They found that the dual credit program, which provides high school students with an opportunity to take college credit courses, was a successful program for sponsored students.

Tracking a learner over their entire journey from entry to workplace was also a challenge and identified need. Some institutions shared that they ask partners to share aggregate data of learners who have applied or have been accepted to another institution, but this does not always occur. Furthermore, even with aggregate data there is no way to definitively discern individual identity or even what graduating cohort learners are from. Logistically, the creation of standardized data sets and tools such as a shared credit module form would support comparative analysis, atop of supporting internal mechanisms to automate transfer credits, however, it still would not address access to cohort level data.

In addition, at the roundtable discussion, important considerations for data collection were noted. OCAP (ownership, control, access, and possession) was viewed as a necessary framework to guide data collection and analysis related to Indigenous learners and pathways. Aboriginal education councils were identified as

potential owners of data sets related to Indigenous learners. Engaging and including Indigenous communities through a variety of methods such as the development of community reports, data sharing and research agreements was also identified and seen as ways to promote Indigenous-driven pathways. Initial access was also a concern. Numerous institutions stressed the need for pathway conversations to be inclusive of the initial entry points for learners, including secondary school and academic upgrading. One interviewee shared that Indigenous learners are not being streamed for the academic stream, and that once a learner is in the applied or college stream it is a much longer route for learners to gain access to university. Similarly, at a college-level, one institution found that many band sponsored students do not have the required Grade 11 Math and English so they are unable to take advantage of their pathway opportunity.

Program offering at high school can also limit access to post-secondary studies. For example, if a school does not offer physics or calculus in a classroom setting and this is a prerequisite, in can be a barrier to access. Alternatively, limited selection can impact a student's average because they may not be able to take courses that play to their strengths.

Lastly, a cluster of challenges related to in-community pathways were recognized. These included jurisdictional issues, program feasibility and success measures that are number driven, logistics surrounding the delivery of longer term programs with lab-based components and access to student supports, and the perceived impact of in-community delivery on campus enrollment. Specifically, as one individual shared, the misconception that in-community learning would compete with on-campus delivery instead of attracting "new" learners who would have otherwise not enrolled in post-secondary education.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This report has identified key considerations, practices and areas of further research that support Indigenous pathway development and assessment, informing the development of an Indigenous Program Pathways Action Plan (Appendix J). Overall pathways should be wholistic, accessible, collaborative and community-driven, be expanded and supported by enhanced data and Indigenous approaches and occur within a broader framework of commitment toward Indigenous education:

Wholistic and Accessible Pathways

- Indigenous pathway development should be comprehensive, spanning from K-12 to employment;
- An enhanced focus on academic upgrading and other initial entry points to post-secondary studies should occur to support access to Indigenous pathways as some Indigenous learners do not currently meet eligibility requirements; and,
- Collaboration among sending and receiving institutions should extend beyond transfer credit assessment to include data sharing and the delivery of wrap-around supports.

Collaborative and Community-Driven Pathways

- Indigenous communities, Indigenous learners and Indigenous content specialists must be meaningfully involved in pathway development and assessment processes;

- Indigenous communities should be equipped with the necessary information to meaningfully participate in pathway assessment and development. An environmental scan of similar pathways should be conducted prior to new pathway development to maximize learner advantages, and data related to Indigenous learners should be available;
- Enhanced collaboration should occur between institutions and relevant stakeholders, to support the development of innovative and consistent pathways;

Pathway Expansion

- There is a lack of Indigenous pathways within disciplines that are both meaningful and relevant to Indigenous communities, such as justice, environmental science and art & design. Further pathway development in these areas should be explored;
- Indigenous learners are spread across disciplines, requiring the development of additional pathways outside of Indigenous programs; and,
- Best practices should inform the development of new pathways. Consistent with a strengths-based approach, laddering curriculum or other means should be utilized to demonstrate the relevance and value of such pathways to learners and Indigenous communities.

Enhanced Data

- Indigenous learners are accessing and experiencing Indigenous pathways differently. More information on Indigenous learners' experiences is needed overall as well as in relation to sub-populations including on-reserve, sponsored and adult learners;
- Further planning at an institutional and system level needs to occur to support standardized data collection and analysis efforts; and,
- Data collection efforts need to be informed by Indigenous-based research principles and include indicators that are meaningful and relevant to Indigenous peoples, including but not limited to Indigenous-based measures of success.

Indigenous Approaches to Pathway Development

- Personal experience is a respected knowledge tradition among Indigenous peoples and post-secondary institutions should recognize the personal experiences of Indigenous pathway learners upon entry. Innovative work in both an Indigenous and non-Indigenous context is occurring that can inform practices in Ontario institutions;
- Institutions across Ontario are using a variety of approaches to incorporate Indigenous knowledges including integration into current curriculum, stand-alone courses and through extra-curricular experiential opportunities. As such a spectrum of approaches to credit assessment of Indigenous content should be explored in place of a standardized approach;
- Ontario is only at the cusp of incorporating Indigenous knowledges in credit assessment, promising practices, including outcome and interdisciplinary approaches should be explored; and,
- Alternative modes of program delivery and subsequent pathways that align with the lived experience of Indigenous learners, such as collaborative-based programming and block programming should be explored.

Commitment to Indigenous Education

- A comprehensive review of institutional and system level policies, including funding policies, is needed to identify and address barriers to Indigenous modes of education delivery, pathway development and assessment;
- Post-secondary education employees should be knowledgeable about Indigenous peoples and equipped to support Indigenous learners; and,
- Post-secondary education learners should be knowledgeable about Indigenous peoples.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Indigenous Program Pathways Inventory Survey

Indigenous Program Pathway Inventory Survey

The purpose of this survey is to document and understand Indigenous post-secondary and/or training program pathways within and between Aboriginal Institutes, Colleges, Universities and community-based delivery agencies in Ontario to inform a discussion on enhancing and developing Indigenous program pathways.

More specifically, this survey contains questions that will help us to: identify current Indigenous post-secondary and training programs (Indigenous programs) in Ontario, identify current Indigenous program pathways in Ontario, understand the status of Indigenous program pathways in Ontario, understand who is accessing Indigenous program pathways, and identify potential Indigenous program pathways in Ontario.

This may require you to access institutional data that is not readily available. Because of this, you can access the survey multiple times, up until the survey close date (September 30, 2016, 5:00pm).
To do this you must ensure that you press "next" or "done" at the bottom of each page that you have entered a response on. To re-access the survey with your saved responses, you must use the same computer and web browser.

The amount of time needed to complete the survey will depend on the robustness of Indigenous programming and Indigenous program pathways at your institution and will take approximately 5-45 minutes to complete if all information is readily available.
Project results will be published on the Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer (ONCAT) website and will be disseminated to all participants as well.

Thank you for participating in our survey. Your feedback is important!

1. What institution do you work at?

2. What is your position(s) at this institution?

3. Does your institution currently have Indigenous post-secondary and/or training programs?
Yes
No

4. Please list and include award granted upon completion (e.g. certificate, diploma, graduate certificate, post graduate certificate, degree etc.), completion time and associated credentials for Indigenous programs

5. What is the mode of delivery for these programs (e.g. in-person, online, blended etc.)?

6. How many learners were enrolled in Indigenous programs at your institution for the 2015/16 academic year?

7. Were there any waitlists for Indigenous programs at your institution in the 2015/16 academic year? If yes, please specify.

8. Is your institution currently in the process of developing Indigenous post-secondary and/or training programs? If so, please list, including award granted (e.g. certificate, diploma, graduate certificate, degree), completion time and any credentials associated with the award, if available.

9. Does your institution currently have any pathways to or from Indigenous post-secondary and/or training programs?
Yes
No

10. Please list all programs that are subject to an Indigenous program pathway.

11. What credits are awarded to learners when they enter or leave this program(s) as a result of an Indigenous program pathway?

12. How are awarded credits assessed? Please check all that apply.
Program/course outcomes
Block credit transfer
Case by case basis
Course outline review
Other (please specify)

13. Who is involved in the assessment process? Please check all that apply.
Transfer/Credit Coordinator
Senate/Program Quality Committee/Academic Council
Program Coordinator
Program Faculty
Vice-President Academic
Dean/Associate Dean/Chair
Registrar/Associate Registrar
Other (please specify)

14. Please select what statement best describes the assessment process:
The process was a 50/50 effort between the receiving and sending institution
The process was driven primarily by the receiving institution
The process was driven primarily by the sending institution
The process was driven solely by the receiving institution
The process was driven solely by the sending institution

15. If there is a pathway(s) in place between an Indigenous and non-Indigenous program, is there Indigenous content/knowledges in the non-Indigenous program(s)?
Yes
No

Not Applicable

16. Is Indigenous content/knowledges factored into this assessment process(es)?
Yes
No
Not applicable
If yes, how?

17. Do you have a pathway(s) between Indigenous programs that are rooted in different cultural traditions (e.g. Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee)?
Yes
No
If yes, how?

18. Are differences in cultural traditions factored into this assessment process(es)?
Yes
No
Not applicable
If yes, how?

19. How do you notify potential and current learners about Indigenous program pathway opportunities? Please check all that apply.
Recruiters visit classes
Information on our website
Pamphlets
Other, please specify

20. Do you have a transfer program(s) in place to support learners who are transitioning as a result of an Indigenous program pathway?
Yes
No

21. What is the format of this program(s)?

22. What comprises the content of this program(s)? Please check all that apply.
General academic skills
Discipline-specific material
Indigenous knowledges (e.g. language, culture, protocols)
Other (please specify)

23. Do you track learners who enter your institution through an Indigenous program pathway?
Yes
No

24. How many learners applied to your institution through an Indigenous program pathway for the 2015/16 academic year?

25. How many learners entered your institution through an Indigenous program pathway in the 2015/16 academic year?

26. What percentage of current learners in programs with Indigenous pathways entered as a result of these pathways?

27. Is there an Indigenous program pathway that on average attracts more learners than other pathways?
Yes
No
If yes, please specify

28. What is the retention rate of learners who entered your institution through an Indigenous program pathway in the 2015/16 academic year?

29. What is the 2015/16 graduation rate of learners who entered your institution through an Indigenous program pathway?

30. What is the most common age range(s) of current learners who entered your institution through an Indigenous program pathway? Please check all that apply.
Under 19
19-24
25-29
30-40
Over 40
We have an equal number of learners from all age ranges
I don't know

31. What is the gender composition of current learners who entered your institution through an Indigenous program pathway?

32. For current learners who entered through an Indigenous program pathway, what region did they most commonly come from?
Northern Ontario
The GTA
Southern Ontario
Eastern Ontario
Western Ontario
I don't know

33. Is your institution located in this region?
Yes
No
I don't know

34. Does your institution count self-identified Aboriginal learners?
Yes
No
I don't know

35. What percentage of current learners in Indigenous programs are Aboriginal?
Less than 5%
5-25%
25-50%
50-75%
More than 75%
I don't know

36. What percentage of current learners who entered your institution through an Indigenous program pathway are Indigenous?
Less than 5%
5-25%
25-50%
50-75%
More than 75%
I don't know

37. What are the advantages of having Indigenous program pathways in place? Please check all that apply.
Educational advancement opportunities for the learner
Professional advancement opportunities for the learner
Greater access for the learner
Improved learner mobility
Flexibility and convenience for the learner
Lower cost for the learner
Increases the applicant pool
There are none that I can think of at this time
Other (please specify)

38. What are the disadvantages of having Indigenous program pathways in place? Please check all that apply.
Learners required to duplicate courses/course material
Inefficient program study delivery/course load issues
Greater cost to the learner
Accreditation/certification challenges for the learner
Learners must take courses they may not want to take
Limited space
Transfer credits are undervalued
There are none that I can think of at this time
Other (please specify)

39. Are there any challenges when creating, implementing and/or assessing Indigenous program pathways?
Yes
No
I don't know
If yes, please explain.

40. Are there any successes you would like to highlight in regards to Indigenous program pathways?
Yes
No
If yes, please specify.

41. Are there certain areas of study where your institution is interested in developing Indigenous program pathways?
Yes
No
If yes, please specify.

42. Would you be willing to participate in a follow-up call to discuss survey results and identify potential actionable items that support existing pathways and pathway expansion?
Yes
No
If yes, please provide your contact information.

Appendix B: Participant Introductory Letter

CANADORE
college

September 1, 2016

Dear Potential Participant,

Re: "INDIGENOUS PROGRAM PATHWAYS INVENTORY" SURVEY

Funded by the Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer (ONCAT), the "Indigenous Program Pathways Inventory" project seeks to develop a comprehensive inventory of Indigenous program pathways in Ontario, including those pathways that exist within and between Aboriginal Institutes, Colleges, Universities and community-based delivery agencies in the province.

As part of the "Indigenous Program Pathways Inventory" project, Canadore College will be conducting a survey on Indigenous Program Pathways. The survey will largely focus on documenting current pathways, including awarded credentials and credits, and innovative and supportive features, but will also include questions that will inform an understanding of enhanced and future pathways in Indigenous programming.

As a recognized leader at your institution in one or more of the following areas: enrollment, pathways and transfers, and Indigenous education, it is believed that you are well-positioned to support our efforts to document and envision current and future pathways in Indigenous programming. In 5-10 business days, you will be emailed a link to an online survey via SurveyMonkey. To ensure that our project results are representative of the provincial landscape of Indigenous programming, we ask that you please take the time to respond.

If we have contacted you in error and you believe that there is a more suitable contact(s), or if you would like more information about the project, please contact Lana Ray, Minowewe Consulting at: minowewe@outlook.com. A project backgrounder has also been provided for your reference.

Project results will be published on the ONCAT website and disseminated to all participants.

Sincerely,

Jeannette Miron
Registrar/
Manager of Institutional Research
Canadore College

Mary Wabano
Director, First Peoples' Centre/
Associate Dean School of Indigenous Studies
Canadore College

Appendix C: Project Backgrounder

CANADORE college

BACKGROUNDER

"Indigenous Program Pathways Inventory" Project

Description

Funded by the Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer (ONCAT), the "Indigenous Program Pathways Inventory" project is one year in duration, running from April 2016-March 2017.

During this timeframe, the project seeks to develop a comprehensive inventory of Indigenous program pathways in Ontario, including those pathways that exist within and between Aboriginal Institutes, Colleges, Universities and community-based delivery agencies in the province. The efforts of this project will culminate in an Indigenous Program Pathways Action Plan which institutions can use to support and expand Indigenous pathways.

This will be accomplished through four main activities:

1. A province-wide survey that will be disseminated to Registrars, Indigenous Leads and Pathway/Transfer Leads, or their equivalents when present.

2. Follow-up phone calls with survey participants to discuss and interpret survey results and identify potential actionable items that support existing pathways and pathway expansion.

3. A roundtable with subject matter experts to present and discuss results, informing the development of the Indigenous Program Pathways Action Plan.

4. A one-day forum with participation from Aboriginal Institutes, Colleges, Universities and community-based delivery agencies, and students in the province to present and refine a draft Indigenous Program Pathways Action Plan.

Potential Benefits

-Identifies gaps and opportunities for post-secondary education (PSE) pathways

-Facilitates networking and discussion between PSE institutions and other relevant parties

-Increases awareness of Indigenous programming in Ontario

-Contributes toward the development of baseline data and criteria for transfers in Indigenous programming in Ontario

-Increases partnerships between PSE institutions

-Increases mobility and access to PSE for Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners

-Increases access to Indigenous content for Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners

-PSE graduates possess knowledge and skills that are increasingly relevant to Indigenous communities and organizations

Contact Information

For more information on the "Indigenous Program Pathways Inventory" Project please contact:

Lana Ray, Minowewe Consulting (807)-632 6828/minowewe@outlook.com

Appendix D: Leadership Introductory Letter

CANADORE
college

August 31, 2016

Dear Vice-President Academic/Academic Lead,

Re: "INDIGENOUS PROGRAM PATHWAYS INVENTORY" SURVEY

Funded by the Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer (ONCAT), the "Indigenous Program Pathways Inventory" project seeks to develop a comprehensive inventory of Indigenous program pathways in Ontario, including those pathways that exist within and between Aboriginal Institutes, Colleges, Universities and community-based delivery agencies in the province.

As part of the "Indigenous Program Pathways Inventory" project, Canadore College will be conducting a survey on Indigenous Program Pathways. In 5-10 business days, enrollment, pathway/transfer, and Indigenous education leads from your institution will receive an online survey via SurveyMonkey. The survey will largely focus on documenting current pathways, including awarded credentials and credits, and innovative and supportive features, but will also include questions that will inform an understanding of enhanced and future pathways in Indigenous programming. Project results will be published on the ONCAT website and disseminated to all participants.

As the academic lead at your institution we wanted to bring this project to your attention. We appreciate the significant role that you occupy at your respective institution, and believe your engagement and support will be a critical success factor of the project.

If you would like more information about the project, please contact Lana Ray, Minowewe Consulting at: minowewe@outlook.com. Alternatively, you can contact either of us at: Jeannette.Miron@canadorecollege.ca and Mary.Wabano@canadorecollege.ca. A project backgrounder has also been provided for your reference.

Sincerely,

Jeannette Miron
Registrar/
Manager of Institutional Research
Canadore College

Mary Wabano
Director, First Peoples' Centre/
Associate Dean School of Indigenous Studies
Canadore College

Appendix E: List of Participating Institutions

Survey Participants

Aboriginal Institutes

First Nations Technical Institute
Oshki Pimache O Win Education and Training Institute
Seven Generations Education Institute

Colleges

Algonquin College
Cambrian College
Canadore College
Centennial College
Collège Boréal
Confederation College
Contestoga College
Durham College
Fleming College
George Brown College
Georgian College
Mohawk College
Northern College
Sault College
Seneca College
Sheridan College
St. Clair College
St. Lawrence College

Universities

Algoma University
Brescia University College, University of Western Ontario
Laurentian University
Nipissing University
OCAD University
Trent University
University of Ontario Institute of Technology
University of Toronto Mississauga
University of Waterloo

Follow-Up Conversation Participants

Colleges

Algonquin College
Cambrian College
Centennial College
Confederation College
Fleming College
Sault College
Sheridan College
St. Clair College

Universities

Nipissing University
OCAD University
Trent University
University of Ontario Institute of Technology

Roundtable Discussion Participants

Aboriginal Institutes

First Nations Technical Institute
Seven Generations Education Institute

Colleges

Algonquin College
Cambrian College
Canadore College
Confederation College
Fleming College
Sault College
St. Clair College

Universities

OCAD University

Appendix F: Institutional Response Rate by Survey Question

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE RATE BY SURVEY QUESTION					
Q1: N=30	Q8: N=23	Q15: N=14	Q22: N=4	Q29: N=1	Q36: N=18
Q2: N=30	Q9: N=29	Q16: N=10	Q23: N=14	Q30: N=3	Q37: N=22
Q3: N=30	Q10: N=19	Q17: N=14	Q24: N=1	Q31: N=1	Q38: N=19
Q4: N=20	Q11: N=19	Q18: N=7	Q25: N=2	Q32: N=4	Q39: N=24
Q5: N=19	Q12: N=14	Q19: N=13	Q26: N=2	Q33: N=4	Q40: N=23
Q6: N=14	Q13: N=13	Q20: N=14	Q27: N=3	Q34: N=25	Q41: N=23
Q7: N=14	Q14: N=15	Q21: N=4	Q28: N=1	Q35: N=19	Q42: N=19

Appendix G: Indigenous Program Pathways Inventory Project Survey Summary

CANADORE
college

INDIGENOUS PROGRAM PATHWAYS INVENTORY PROJECT

SURVEY DATA COLLECTION SUMMARY

- Forty-six survey responses were received, representing 30 institutions.
- The institution response rate was 55%. Colleges had the highest response rate at 75%, followed by universities (41%) and Aboriginal institutes (33%).
- Sixty percent of all respondents were colleges, 30% universities and 10% Aboriginal institutes.
- Twenty-nine percent of respondents were Indigenous leads, 24% were pathway leads, 16% were admission leads and 31% of respondents occupied other positions at their respective institution.
- Questions related to Indigenous pathway learner demographics had the lowest response rates of any question, with only 7% of respondents answering questions related to gender or age composition.

SURVEY RESULTS SUMMARY

- Sixty-seven percent (n=20) of participating institutions have Indigenous programs in place. By institution type, this includes 100% of Aboriginal institutes, 67% of universities and 61% of colleges.
- The most widespread areas of study are social services (e.g. child welfare, social work, mental health and addictions), preparatory studies (e.g. bridging programs, general arts and science), and health (e.g. nursing, paramedic, pre-health).
- One college reported a waitlist for their Indigenous child welfare program in the 2015/16 academic year.
- Sixty-nine percent of participating institutions have at least one Indigenous pathway in place. By institution type this includes 87.5% of universities, 67% of Aboriginal institutes and 61% of colleges.
- Social services is the most popular discipline for pathway development, being offered at almost double the number of institutions when compared to pathways in other areas of study.
- To date, there have been no reported Indigenous pathways developed in the disciplines of justice (e.g. police foundations, law, forensic psychology), hospitality and tourism (e.g. culinary arts, travel services, hotel management) and aviation.
- There were multiple interdisciplinary pathways, with fluidity most prominent between social services, Indigenous studies, and community development.
- Five institutions reported pathways between Indigenous and non-Indigenous programs. In some but not all instances the non-Indigenous program had Indigenous content.
- The most common credential learners hold entering an Indigenous pathway is a diploma and the most common credential learners hope to gain from an Indigenous pathway is an honours bachelors' degree.
- The amount of credits awarded because of an Indigenous pathway varied, ranging from less than one year to two years of study. The most common amount of credit received was less than two years but more than one year.
- Four institutions reported transition programs for learners entering their institution through an Indigenous pathway. These programs commonly include general academic skills, Indigenous knowledges, and discipline-specific content and are delivered in-person.

- There were limited horizontal pathways in place, and no pathways identified to or from a master's or doctoral program.
- Five institutions indicated that they track learners who enter their institution through an Indigenous pathway. A need for better data on Indigenous pathways was identified.
- Only three institutions shared information on the geographic mobility of their Indigenous pathway learners. These learners tend to stay close to home.
- When the percentage of Indigenous pathway learners with Aboriginal ancestry was known, the distribution was almost identical to the overall composition of learners with Aboriginal ancestry in Indigenous programs.
- Eight institutions indicated that the credit assessment process was a 50/50 effort between the sending and receiving institution; with 5 institutions reporting that it was primarily or solely driven by the receiving institution. Two institutions believed that the process was driven by the sending institution.
- Most institutions employed 2-3 methods to assess credit transfers, with block credit transfer being the most common method of assessment.
- No significant relationship was found between the maximum number of credits awarded in a pathway in relation to: level of collaboration between the sending and receiving institution in the credit assessment process, involvement of certain groups/individuals in the institution (e.g. faculty, program coordinator, associate registrar/registrar, transfer coordinator, and academic leadership), or methodology used to assess credit transfers.
- Only one institution reported that Indigenous knowledges were factored into the assessment process between Indigenous and non-Indigenous programs.
- Four institutions identified pathways between programs rooted in different cultural traditions, with 75% of these institutions indicated that they do factor in differences in cultural traditions during the assessment process. No information was provided on how this is done.
- Multiple institutions shared that they are currently in the process of indigenizing their curriculum, adding Indigenous content and/or learning outcomes to all curriculum.
- Participants believe that there are more advantages than disadvantages associated with Indigenous pathways. Almost all respondents reported that Indigenous pathways provide educational advancement opportunities for the learner (91%) and greater access for the learner (91%). Just over half of respondents (57%) were convinced that Indigenous pathways lower costs for learners.
- When asked if there are any other advantages to Indigenous pathways, respondents noted that such pathways support reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, allow learners to study closer to home, support the validation of Indigenous knowledge systems and provide non-Indigenous peoples with exposure to Indigenous knowledge systems.
- Forty-five percent of institutions thought there were no disadvantages to Indigenous pathways, with 35% citing learners taking courses they may not want to take as the most prominent disadvantage.
- When asked to identify additional disadvantages, mandatory Aboriginal self-identification and jeopardized funding for learners due to a reduced workload were mentioned.
- Almost half of all institutions believed that there were challenges when creating, implementing and/or assessing Indigenous pathways. Institutions were challenged by holistic conceptions of pathways and learning, recognition of Prior Learning Assessments, scheduling, human resource capacity, and a lack of validation of Indigenous knowledge systems by institutions.
- Six institutions (4 colleges, 1 Aboriginal institute and 1 university) shared that they are currently in the process of developing Indigenous programs. Areas of programming include business and administration, early childhood education, health, justice, and preparatory studies.

Appendix H: Follow-up Conversation Discussion Questions

CANADORE
college

INDIGENOUS PROGRAM PATHWAYS INVENTORY PROJECT

SURVEY FOLLOW-UP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Are there key components of your institution's Indigenous program and pathway experience that is not reflected in the survey result summary that, if included, would enhance people's understanding of the current and future landscape of Indigenous programming and pathways?
- Was there any information in the survey results summary that you felt was surprising or conflicting with your views of Indigenous programs and pathways?
- From reviewing the survey results summary, are there areas where you think further discussion and work on Indigenous programs and pathways needs to occur?
- Should the development of Indigenous pathways differ from pathway development in other areas? (e.g. who is involved, assessment of Indigenous knowledges). If so, how?
- How important is tracking Indigenous pathway learners to the success of Indigenous pathways? Are there steps that can be taken to enhance data collection?
- Would someone from your institution be interested in attending one of the regional Indigenous pathway forums? Are there additional individuals who you would like us to invite (e.g. a student representative, partner)? Does your institution or an affiliate have a meeting space that you think would be ideal to host a regional forum?
- How can we ensure that we get the utmost value from these forums? Are there key topic areas or activities that should be included? (e.g. focus of pathway development, networking time)

Appendix H: Roundtable Discussion Meeting Agenda

Indigenous Program Pathways Inventory Project
Roundtable Agenda
March 16, 2017, 8:30a.m.-2:15p.m.
Location: Simcoe Room, Marriott Downtown Centre, Toronto

Time	Item	Objective(s)
March 15, 2017		
7:30p.m.	Dinner at Trios Bistro (if available)	
March 16, 2017		
8:30a.m.-9:00a.m.	Hot Breakfast	
9:00a.m.-9:20a.m.	Introductions	
9:20a.m.-10:00a.m.	Presentation of Phase One Results	-To present methodology, findings & recommendations from Phase One
10:00a.m.-10:15a.m.	Break	
10:15a.m.-11:00 a.m.	Final Report Activity & Discussion	-To identify key findings, areas that require expansion & gaps -To ensure continuity between report content & recommendations
11:00a.m.-12:15 p.m.	Recommendations Activity & Discussion	-To further prioritize recommendations -To identify ideas and actionable items that support recommendation implementation
12:15p.m.-1:00 p.m.	Lunch	
1:00p.m.-2:15p.m.	Wrap-Up & Forum Discussion	-To complete any outstanding work from the morning -To discuss forum objectives and structure -To identify potential participants & experts for the forum

Appendix I: Roundtable Discussion Meeting Summary

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

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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 inefficacies. 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 J: 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	Work with a local community to design and pilot a K-12 to employment pathway model Involve K-12 institutions and learners in the creation of possible pathways	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, Indigenous learners and Indigenous content specialists must be meaningfully involved in pathway development and assessment processes	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	Review work done to date in this area Meet with the Northern Collaborative and the Confederation College group to identify and discuss shared priorities Meet with Colleges Ontario to identify and discuss shared priorities
Pathway Expansion		
Best practices should inform the development of new pathways. Consistent with a strengths-based approach, laddering curriculum or other means should be utilized to demonstrate the relevance and value of such pathways to learners and Indigenous communities	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

Enhanced Data		
Further planning at an institutional and system level needs to occur to support standardized data collection and analysis efforts Data collection efforts need to be informed by Indigenous-based research principles and include indicators that are meaningful and relevant to Indigenous peoples, including but not limited to Indigenous-based measures of success.	Standardize data collection across PSE Data collection to be guided by OCAP principles and Aboriginal Education Councils Develop consistent engagement and evaluation pieces to support pathway development and assessment	Develop Indigenous baseline data requirements Develop draft guidelines or overarching principles for institutions to adopt Develop pathway standards based off Indigenous concepts of success
Indigenous Approaches to Pathway Development		
PSE institutions should recognize the personal experience of Indigenous pathway learners upon entry	General education courses provincially recognized for language and skill competency such as beadwork, drumming, leather work etc. Build Indigenous knowledges and skills into current curriculum	Examine the space to acknowledge Indigenous knowledges and skills within the current general education framework and PLAR policies and practices Create and implement training to support the assessment of Indigenous knowledges and skills through GE and PLAR If necessary, create guidelines for Indigenous knowledges and link to current framework and PLAR policies and practices
Commitment to Indigenous Education		
A comprehensive review of institutional and system level policies, including funding policies, is needed to identify and address barriers to Indigenous modes of education delivery, pathway development and assessment	Revise the "Minister's Binding Policy Directive"	Engage in discussions with the Ministry about barriers to Indigenous pathway development
PSE employees should be knowledgeable about Indigenous peoples and equipped to support Indigenous learners	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 out this work

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