

Discussion Notes Prepared for the
November 21, 2007

Aboriginal PSE Forum

**Based Upon the Dialogue on Aboriginal
Post-Secondary Education Policy in BC**

Meeting Held on September 21 and 22, 2007

Introduction

The following information summarizes the Dialogue on Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education Policy in BC – a meeting that was held on September 21 and 22, 2007. That meeting included First Nations and provincial government representatives from throughout British Columbia. The gathering was intended to provide an opportunity for discussion about several critical aspects of Aboriginal post-secondary education. The meeting participants were presented with several discussion papers, and they then worked in small groups to further consider the identified issues. This package includes the original “discussion pieces,” as well as a brief summary of the subsequent discussion and draft recommendations.

This paper is intended to serve as a basis for the further development of recommendations on Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education policy.

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**Notes from the
Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education Dialogue Meeting
Held September 21 and 22, 2007, Vancouver, BC**

Indigenous Knowledge

Discussion Paper Prepared by Joanne Archibald and Lorna Williams

Building Indigenous Principles

- Value the diversity of Indigenous Nations and respect their self-determination movement regarding ownership and sharing of their Indigenous knowledges.
- Understand that there is a spiritual continuum, guided and led by ancestors in all aspects of learning and teaching.
- Recognize that there is a responsibility to self, family, community, nation, the land, the earth, the ancestors and the descendents, which must be part of all structural designs.

Indigenous Knowledges

- Recognize and develop types of Indigenous knowledges such as Indigenous science, Oral Traditions, Traditional Ecological Knowledge/place-based knowledge, Indigenous education, Indigenous law etc...
- Develop Indigenous epistemology / ways of knowing such as intergenerational learning, experiential learning, learning through story, songs, dance, and ceremony, revealed knowledge, reflection.
- Recognize that the inclusion of the life cycle includes both temporal and spatial dimensions, as well as the Indigenous vision of community which includes all life forms as relatives and the concept of wholeness and engaging the spiritual, emotional, cognitive, and physical dimensions.

Language and Culture Revitalization

- Emphasize Indigenous language immersion programs.
- Make Indigenous language and culture the core of any programming
- Appreciate that Indigenous culture is a dynamic concept that has changed over time but is built upon Indigenous knowledge.
- Understand that the web of stories embodies and conveys the interdependent and communal dynamics, principles, transformations and truths necessary for revitalization and maintenance.

Unique Roles & Responsibilities of Aboriginal Institutions (regarding Indigenous knowledges)

- Aboriginal institutions need to use Indigenous knowledges as the foundation for governance, institutional policy, programs, management, and student services.
- Faculty and staff who work in Aboriginal institutions need to value and understand how to incorporate Indigenous knowledges into their teaching, learning and work.
- Institutions must blend both Indigenous and Western / modern approaches throughout.
- Aboriginal institutions have rich resources upon which to draw for assistance in developing Indigenous approaches and content to programs /courses such as its students, families, and community members.
- Indigenous knowledge must not be appropriated, stolen, or commodified.
- Indigenous protocols must be respected and practiced authentically.
- The phenomena of balancing and bridging two worlds or multiple worlds are assumed as a central aspect of the institution.
- Inclusion, welcoming, sharing and kindness are extended to all peoples who the institution serves.
- Engagement with Indigenous Nations is an interdependent process; a collaboration based in place, community and family; a process that promotes respect, co-construction of knowledge, telling of stories, and the placing of a different narrative in modern or western spaces.
- There is a need for demographics and design centered in the Indigenous world.
- Statutes and regulations must be based on Indigenous cultural values and processes (sharing, dialogue, celebration, ceremony, generosity and ecology etc.).

Decolonized Relationships

- Learn about effects of colonization and approaches for decolonization.
- The oppressor within must be dealt with to avoid the colonization of the decolonization.
- There is a notion of two-way decolonized relationships between academy and Indigenous communities / nations. This implies four dimensions, weavings, and directions; from the academy to the Indigenous communities; Indigenous communities to the academy; internally to the academy; and internally within Indigenous communities.
- There is a need to include sustainability, tribal vitality, and ‘a coming back to our power’.
- It is necessary to critique and respond to knowledge production dimensions of power, control, hierarchy, materialism, enterprise, conquest, and dominion.
- It is critical to express an Indigenous methodology to deconstruct modernization or colonized dynamics so that a more democratic Indigenous world, space, and future can be envisioned.

Additional comments from the September 21 and 22, 2007 meeting

There is an overarching need to validate Indigenous Knowledge, which will involve Aboriginal institutes describing and interpreting Indigenous Knowledge and public post-secondary institutes recognizing and understanding the uniqueness / individuality of Indigenous Knowledge. It is the responsibility of all post-secondary institutes to nurture strong Indigenous students, which is related to this recognition.

Public policy needs to recognize and honour Indigenous views, and needs to encompass two different types of Indigenous knowledge: (1) knowledge that is specific to a First Nation; and (2) common core Indigenous Knowledge including decolonization and building sound foundations.

Indigenous Knowledge Group Recommendations

1. The Ministry of Education, AVED, needs a policy for respecting Indigenous Knowledge that:
 - acknowledges the benefit of Indigenous Knowledge and recognizes its link to the holistic health and wellness of individuals and communities;
 - includes protocols for using Indigenous Knowledge;
 - recognizes that Indigenous Knowledge is owned by community
2. There is a need to recognize the distinct role of Aboriginal post-secondary institutes in teaching Indigenous Knowledge for the Nation.
3. Policy is needed to address Indigenous Knowledge in institutions that serve multiple communities. Indigenous Knowledge is a core learning of these institutions.
4. Aboriginal communities must develop protocols for institutes to follow.

Unique Role of Aboriginal Post Secondary Institutions

Discussion Paper Prepared by Pauline Waterfall

Background

Evolution

Community-based Aboriginal post-secondary institutes did not necessarily evolve in a well-planned or systematic way over time, nor did they initially receive support, recognition or core funding for operation or services. Many Aboriginal adult and post-secondary institutes began in substandard settings with limited or no resources. This continues to be the case with some current Aboriginal post-secondary institutes. Most of the Aboriginal institutes grew from the dedication of those committed to addressing a myriad of community gaps that resulted from ineffective historical efforts to offer Aboriginal education. Despite these barriers, these institutions have been in place for up to 40 years with successful outcomes.

Experiences and Needs

Aboriginal post-secondary institutes emerged in response to community experiences and needs that included but are not limited to the following negative factors.

- historical high drop-out rates of students at the secondary and post-secondary settings off-reserve
- high unemployment rates in community settings
- unproductive and unhealthy socio-economic experiences in community settings
- negative educational experiences including racial discrimination, marginalization, and alienation in external settings
- community, family, personal and cultural displacements
- costly and diminishing funds to support external post-secondary education

The institutes continued to grow as a result of the following positive factors.

- emergence of computer technology and subsequent access to alternate delivery models such as e-learning and BC Campus.ca
- devolved regional post-secondary service models
- effective partnerships between public and Aboriginal post-secondary education institutes
- credited and transferable learning from Aboriginal to public institutes
- retention and high success of Aboriginal learners who now contribute to community leadership and capacity building

Unique Roles of Aboriginal Institutes

Generally, Aboriginal institutes offer services in holistic settings that encompass cultural, family, and community values and ways. They work in partnership with community stakeholders to

provide personally relevant and academically challenging education opportunities within a safe, caring and supportive environment. They work to reinforce self-identity, historical teachings and life long learning.

Honoring Retention and Capacity in Communities

Celebration of rites of passage and achievements is a traditional way that is practiced in Aboriginal communities. This cultural value is reinforced in community events, including ceremonies that honor graduates who return to work within community settings. Scholarships are given in public acknowledgement of academic achievements. For example, most Aboriginal institutes host a year-end graduation ceremony and feast to honor the accomplishments of students.

Serving Community Needs

Most Aboriginal communities are small and isolated; even those adjacent to urban areas tend to be independent and self-contained. With this labour market, the need for qualified personnel is evident and serves as a basis to do community development planning. Reconstructing Aboriginal communities after decades of disruption becomes possible with local educational and training services.

Bridging Nature of Aboriginal Institutes

Aboriginal adult and post-secondary institutes provide front-line services from basic literacy to university studies and job training initiatives. Partnerships with public post-secondary institutes (PPSI) provide the mechanism to offer community-based, first-step learning opportunities that lead to successful transitions because academic skills are strengthened and self-identity and confidence reinforced. These factors enable learners to make effective transitions while personal contact is maintained throughout students' continued academic pursuits in urban settings.

Career Progression and Laddering

Students receive career counseling, with many traveling to public Post-Secondary Institutes (PPSI) settings for orientation or bringing public PSE representatives into communities where career fairs are hosted annually. Students are assisted in developing short and long term learning plans that serve as a map that articulates goals with achievable completion schedules. Students in Aboriginal institutes are advised of prerequisite requirements, which must be met prior to transitions elsewhere. University-transfer course options are recommended to ladder into further education in a PPSI setting.

Serving Students' Needs

The personal and academic needs of students in an Aboriginal institute setting are well known as learning progresses and challenges arise. An interagency support network for students is provided and may include: medical, social, psychological and financial interventions or support as needed. Personal attention to each student is a key to providing whole growth and reinforcement of self-identity and self-esteem leading to positive outcomes.

Student and Family Supports

Family units within community settings provide the extended support required to foster success and learning. This is particularly important, given the intergenerational history of family

displacement and disunities from previous educational experiences that removed students from a young age. Often, a family-like support system is fostered within the Aboriginal institute setting, where care, nurturing and discipline are provided.

Adult Secondary Jurisdiction

Educational jurisdiction is now legislated in Canada as it applies to secondary settings. However, many learners in Aboriginal adult and post-secondary institute settings are adults who are enrolled in elementary and secondary studies in order to upgrade academic skills to graduate with an adult Dogwood diploma. Because of this unique circumstance, adult secondary jurisdiction is the next step to articulate and realize local control of local education while meeting academic rigors and standards. Until this happens, Aboriginal post-secondary institutes and adult secondary students will be required to enroll into educational programs that are based on western pedagogy, with little or no opportunity to integrate cultural or local relevance and content.

Conclusions

Without a doubt, Aboriginal post-secondary institutes have and will continue to contribute to capacity building at the individual and community level, and within society as a whole. Providing opportunities for Aboriginal students to grow and flourish to realize their full potential is occurring at the community level, which is shown by the Indigenous Adult Higher Learning Association's ongoing data collection multi-year project. Aboriginal students who leave community-based learning situations make successful transitions to urban-based public post-secondary settings. Their care and support doesn't stop when they leave their home communities — it is extended throughout their academic careers and fostered by personal contact, public acknowledgement and celebration of incremental academic achievements, provision of financial support through scholarships and bursaries, and other personal touches that inspire and uplift students in their continued pursuits. The Heiltsuk have a traditional ritual called "Ca-ca-xee-la", which means the act of uplifting and giving encouragement to loved ones. This is practiced today and evident in the high enrollment and successful retention of its Aboriginal post-secondary learners who complete their studies and return to work in their home community. In essence, we share the mutual need to foster self-reliant, productive citizens who contribute to the whole mosaic of life within an internal and external setting.

Aboriginal post-secondary institutes are like the little engine that could. Their proven records are measurable, and given an opportunity to enhance what they already do well, by the development of effective partnerships with PPSIs and added support funding, the Aboriginal controlled institutes will be in a position to assist more Aboriginal learners. The resulting mutual benefits to both societies will continue to evolve and grow exponentially for a win-win outcome.

Discussion Paper Prepared by Jeannette Armstrong and the En'owkin Board of Directors

Aboriginal post-secondary institutions serve to address the unique needs of Aboriginal communities in meeting their geographic and culturally specific cultural, economic and social mandates and the subsequent academic requirements which arise as a result, including the exercise of Indigenous Rights and the protection of their intellectual and cultural properties and religious freedoms.

We provide this paper and utilize specific examples from En'owkin Centre as a way to illuminate that uniqueness, in the spirit of understanding that each Aboriginal Institution is unique in its own way and in support of all of those institutions

Without reiterating the regretful facts of the social and economic conditions of the majority of Aboriginal communities in BC and the grave concerns they raise for all levels of government, it is important to mention that higher education is a powerful fundamental tool in the struggle for solutions. Of particular concern to local Aboriginal governments is the demand for qualified members to fill gaps in a wide variety of service and development sectors, and as a way to increase internal capacity towards ending continued cycles of dependency upon external consultants and expertise. It is a well known statistic that at least 90% of Aboriginal post-secondary graduates from public institutions move away from their Aboriginal communities to work for various levels of government or in business. This "brain drain" does little for the transformative changes our leadership strives toward.

Of vital concern to Aboriginal post-secondary institutions is the need to ensure the ability of local Aboriginal leadership to participate in a direct and local way in the identification, creation, and delivery of programming focused in specific key educational areas critical to their community's cultural and economic goals. Jurisdiction is a key issue for that reason – more so than other less clear political reasons.

Without question, the evidence is clear that the best solutions are those that come from within the communities – those that are mindful of specific and unique approaches which will ensure success of students. As an example, the En'owkin institution has consistently achieved a completion rate of over 95% of students who enter any of our college level programs and a completion rate of over 90% of students who enter any of our high-school to college bridging programs.

One of the reasons this is possible is that our Institution is located within easy commute access to many of the Okanagan communities, the largest population we serve. As an example, the highest percentage of students from the Okanagan communities are adults who have been failed by the public secondary schooling system and are returning to accomplish higher learning goals as mature students. These students demographically are in their mid-twenties to early-thirties, typically with a spouse and children. Typically, they are already established within a surrounding reserve community, as either new home owners or on the list for on-reserve housing – both requiring community residency. Such students can focus on their educational goals,

while at home, without the trauma and turmoil of having to re-locate and secure infrastructural needs to support “family” in health, daycare, and counseling, and with the support systems available in extended family systems. They avoid leaving family behind and thereby risk isolation and possible negative impacts to family relationships.

Another way in which Aboriginal post-secondary institutions serve in unique ways is to provide relevance to learners in terms of cultural uniqueness. For example, the provision of First Language learning programs is a priority for adults whose goals are to become language or cultural studies instructors. Under current teacher training arrangements with education faculties linked to public post-secondary institutions (such as the FNEC DSTC Model), language fluency courses are necessary, because of the state of endangerment of virtually all language groups in BC. Very small, or in some cases, non-existent pools of speakers are available to become much needed language and culture teachers in pre-school, elementary and high-schools throughout the province.

Aboriginal post-secondary institutions need the ability to create and deliver quality adult language fluency learning programs in each language family in BC, to fill the critical lack of First Language instructors in this province’s schooling system. These courses and programs can only succeed if they are located within a language community, providing a resource of fluent speakers, elders and experts in cultural studies. If anything, this is the strongest argument to provide direct and immediate support to Aboriginal post-secondary institutions who are engaged in this extremely critical area of maintaining the province’s rich heritage of First Languages. Indigenous languages and the knowledge they contribute as “new” information is vital towards addressing global environmental and social issues.

Public institutions, in their structure, have great difficulty in accommodating this kind of programming, usually relegating it to “linguistics” studies of First Languages, rendering language learning courses that carry university level credits quite inaccessible to the larger numbers of potential adults who would enter into programs to learn the language in preparation to become teachers of the language. As an example, the highest intake percentage in any program at En’owkin Centre is in Nsyilxcen language immersion courses.

Institutions such as En’owkin require direct support to better manage these types of programs, which are now “brokered” through service agreements with public institutions – leaving our Institution without the internal ability to make changes, to adjust to normal FTE fluctuations, or to deliver courses in unique language acquisition models.

Institutions such as En’owkin enjoy success as a result of the pedagogical approaches which are part of the unique and rich cultural intellectual processes available from within our own knowledge systems. By way of example, some language and cultural studies courses are delivered in nine week modules which transport students to culturally significant sites, to experience language and cultural immersion as well as to re-connect them with their land and history. Other modules, such as project-based course work or producing a cultural history for publication as a way to approach college level research writing is common. As a tangible product outcome, students are highly motivated as a result of both cultural-relevance and academic achievements gained. Students are academically prepared to meet the highest of rigor

standards bridging to public institutions in a wide variety of degree programs as they are comfortable in bringing their “cultural” intellectual package to support them in any area of higher learning. These are fundamental pedagogical reasons that Aboriginal Post-Secondary Institutions require direct support so that they can continue to provide much needed cultural and academic stepping-stones to academic programming in public institutions.

Aboriginal Post-Secondary Institutions serve public institutions in a unique way in that they carry out the difficult tasks of remediation of study practices of higher-risk students who have recently dropped out of secondary systems. This is not a usual mandate of Public Institutions as the practice of “weeding out” those whose “academic” skills fall below rigid criteria established for that very purpose sets Aboriginal students up for “failure” within a system that has already failed to provide them with the necessary tools to bridge the unique obstacles they face.

Aboriginal Post-Secondary Institutions were established primarily out of the mandate to provide Aboriginal students with viable alternatives to access higher learning while supporting their unique learning needs, and at the same time providing a clear pathway into programs of higher learning in Public Institutions armed with the fundamental tools to succeed in those highly competitive systems. As an example, core to En’owkin Centre academic courses is a program of remediation to increase study and research skills. This is accomplished through built in “community” presentations of projects as course “works” by students, increasing motivation to diligence in research, presentation and completion of readings and works assigned. Students enjoy doing hard work and spend hours doing diligent research and project preparation, and by doing so they acquire better study and work habits and impart fresh skills and pride in their abilities.

Other gaps that public education systems have difficulty in filling relate to other unique needs of Aboriginal students. Cultural remediation initiatives – including counseling, tutoring and the provision of cultural mentors and academic role models – provided to students who are undergoing stress, bereavement and or personal problems are core to Aboriginal student services. Cultural extracurricular programming, including on-site cultural events, round-tables, conferences, festivals and on-going peer-group events, serves to provide social and academic guidance and support to students in a way that focuses on Aboriginal student interest and needs.

For all of these reasons the Board of En’owkin Centre would like to suggest that a level of direct support is required in the provision of unique models which respect the intellectual and cultural jurisdictions of Aboriginal communities, rural and urban, and are critical in providing service to Aboriginal Peoples. The Board of En’owkin Centre is recommending and suggesting that any model of support take into consideration direct and immediate support to models which prove to be working, as well as to draw on their expertise on any task force, to assist in the creation of a made-in-BC approach to providing support to Aboriginal learners through our institutions.

The Board of En’owkin Centre is also recommending and suggesting that a dialogue representing non-public institutions, such as En’owkin, be convened to provide an opportunity to discuss critical issues, such as: collective course accreditation; tools to academize cultural content in areas such as Traditional Ecological Knowledge science and medicine, and Traditional Art forms; faculty tenure and retentions and faculty sharing; student recruitment; and models of

equitable and positive affiliation with degree granting public institutions. Other matters of mutual interest might include SSHRC research capacity, institution-to-institution traveling college exchanges and programming, as well as opportunities for research, practicum development, and training for Aboriginal graduate and post-graduate students choosing community-based program options.

Discussion Paper Excerpt from Native Education College – Review of Options July 2007

The role of NEC as an Aboriginal Learning Institution

NEC has been described as a bridge between cultural worlds – the Aboriginal world and the non-Aboriginal world, in educational and employment contexts. It is a bridge between a sense of failure to one of success and accomplishment. Students have also described it, as a ‘door opener’ and a ‘stepping stone’. NEC has opened up possibilities to life long learning, to career options, employment opportunities, to a process of self-healing and cultural and family restoration. It is here that students feel they took their first step into a future of their own determination. It has served as the entry to social work, law, education, justice, business management, and tourism careers.

A significant role for NEC has been as a resource centre. It plays a role as an information resource centre for the greater Vancouver region community on Aboriginal issues, history, cultural wisdom and general knowledge about Aboriginal people. In the past it has served as a resource for cultural programs, which brought the Aboriginal community to the centre to strengthen their cultural bonds. It has served as a gathering place for the Aboriginal community to learn and to celebrate. It is a home-base for life-long learning for the entire family, it functions as a safe, nurturing and welcoming environment for Aboriginal people who find themselves far from their traditional homelands. It is a place where people who have become disconnected from their cultural identity and from their traditional practices can reconnect in a respectful and trusting environment. It serves as a place for cultural immersion in the daily flow of activity at the centre, cultural learning occurs in a natural process; it is not programmed and fragmented as a course of study.

Graduates of NEC fill employment demands in a variety of sectors; it trains and educates practitioners in government, business, service delivery organizations, band and tribal governments, and Aboriginal regional organizations. It is able to respond to employer needs that are serving the Aboriginal population because of its connection to Aboriginal service delivery organizations. It has the infrastructure in place that can support timely and priority capacity building in its existing program offerings and its future plans. Students past and current remark that NEC has been a source of networking, people they meet at NEC connect them to opportunities and when they are in the practicum placements they meet graduates of NEC who give them additional support and encouragement, the network also helps them when locating resources and services for themselves and their families.

Due to long-term engagement in Aboriginal post secondary education NEC has played and can play an even greater leadership role for other Post Secondary Institutions. They can offer guidance and direction in meeting the needs of Aboriginal learners and in delivering programs that meet the economic, governance and service needs of Aboriginal communities. They can be a role model and a centre of excellence. All these years they have been quietly doing what others have strived to do and fell short. In recent years NEC has been developing an outreach program, developing courses in First Nations communities throughout BC. In this capacity they offer support to communities to undertake their own educational programming and implementation in

a culturally relevant process. They have worked in partnership with those communities to build local capability, tools, and structures that guarantee the knowledge gained remains in the community.

It has an established and demonstrated support structure for Aboriginal adult learners such as: a leadership that is pro-active in seeking and building on opportunities to enhance the quality of life of Aboriginal students, families and communities; faculty and staff who accept, understand and value the life experiences of all people involved in the NEC. The Faculty abides by culturally congruent practices as a way of life at the College, they have a deep knowledge of the culture of Indigenous people, and they also have a sensitive understanding of the effects of colonization and decolonization. Self-healing is built into their courses, teaching practices and their relationships with the learners and their families. Reflected in student comments the faculty and staff have a belief in the restoration of families and communities. The services and resources at NEC prepare individuals to set, plan and attain their career, employment and life goals; strengthens their cultural and personal identity and gets them ready for life beyond the College.

The physical setting of the NEC contributes to the well being of the learners, employees and community, it is a meeting place with welcoming and nurturing spaces both indoors and outdoors. Both current and past learners refer to the building itself as having powerful healing properties. Students attending NEC say that they experienced a non-stressful learning environment where they were challenged, supported and encouraged to do more than they thought they were capable of for the first time in their lives.

Curriculum Ownership, Academic Career Paths, Instructor Qualifications, and Research

Discussion Paper Prepared by M. C. Palmantier

Ownership of Curriculum

On the surface, ownership of curriculum appears to be a straightforward concept – that being, the institution within which the curriculum was developed owns the product. However, when it comes to curriculum content that includes knowledges of Indigenous peoples, this assumption now faces challenges.

- Who owns the curriculum ... the institution, the curriculum writer, the community?
- How is curriculum developed today?
- Who develops curriculum today? ('experts' / credibility / authenticity, etc)
- What processes / structures / bodies do we need to put in place to address the issues of curriculum ownership?

Goals/Objectives – usually institutional / professional body driven (owned). Community also has a role; however, in mainstream education this is the exception rather than the rule.

Content – room for flexibility and community input. What accountability measures should be in place to ensure integrity / respect, etc.?

Strategies (Androgogy/Pedagogy) – this relates to the question of who writes the curriculum such that it is respectful and reflective of Indigenous ways of teaching and learning

Academic Career Paths

'Traditional' career paths in academia are determined by three key areas of faculty performance: *teaching*, *service* (to the institution) and *research / publishing*. Given the context of working / teaching in an institution of higher learning, one would assume the priority of importance would be the same as that listed. In reality, however, the order of performance areas are reversed. For Indigenous faculty members, the 'traditional' academic journey can be particularly challenging.

Teaching – Indigenous faculty are often developing the curriculum that they are teaching. This takes time away from other endeavors (i.e. research and publishing).

Service – this requirement of faculty conventionally pertains to service to the university (and within the university). However, for Indigenous faculty, service is a much broader concept; service usually includes our own community(ies) and beyond. In addition, by virtue of who we

are (and the limited number of Indigenous faculty at many institutions), the call for committee membership within our institution can be overwhelming. Further, with the limited number of Indigenous faculty in our institutions they tend to be spread thin when it comes to the number of graduate student committee requests. Again, this takes time away from what is really the number one area - research and publishing.

Research – is the mainstay of what keeps one in academia. Research, and most importantly the publication of that research, is foremost in the minds of emerging academics (and particularly those on tenure track). While on this ‘treadmill’ there are additional responsibilities / expectations of Indigenous academics when it comes to research – with the foremost being that one does not do research for the sake of research.

Research needs to be of use... to our communities. The integrity / responsibility embedded in the research processes of Indigenous academics are guided by the ever present understanding that you can only burn your bridges once! We often live in and / or come from the communities in which we carry out our research. Hence, our accountability as researcher rests with the community as well as the institutions we are attached to.

Instructor Qualifications

The first generation of Indigenous scholars have since come and gone in North America. Scott Momaday, Beatrice Medicine are names that come to mind when thinking of our early Indigenous scholars. These individuals made their mark in academia from the ‘inside out’ so to speak. By this I mean that they worked their way through the trenches to attaining their PhDs. There is no question that they, and those who have come behind them, have more than met the requirements of the academy when it comes to academic preparedness. However, as Indigenous scholars, we need to ask ourselves if going through mainstream education is enough. Is there anything in place that holds us accountable to our communities / nations, etc? Should there be accountability measures for Indigenous scholars that rest outside of academia?

On the other hand, we have ‘experts’ and knowledge holders in our communities who do not hold *academic qualifications*. How do we respectfully embrace these individuals in the academy? Is there room to do so?

References:

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Additional comments from the September 21 and 22, 2007 meeting

There is currently no standard process across the province in terms of curriculum ownership. For Aboriginal-controlled institutes, ownership usually lies with the community, and it is difficult to accommodate traditional knowledge into mainstream frameworks. In general, there is a responsibility to share knowledge without losing ownership of the results of research, and the origins of knowledge should be respected.

Perhaps it would be useful to create an organization that includes the necessary leadership and appropriate involvement of Elders and knowledge keepers to address these issues.

Curriculum Ownership Group Recommendations

1. Ensure that curriculum developers own the curriculum.
2. Have an organization like the Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association (IAHLA) become an articulating, accrediting body for Indigenous knowledge and for credentialing knowledge authorities.
3. Document best practices.
4. Have Indigenous post-secondary education recognized as a third sector of post-secondary education in the province of British Columbia. That should include similar recognition / role / accountability of Aboriginal-controlled and public post-secondary institutes. It should also include equitable resources.

Relationship Building

Discussion Paper Prepared by Brenda Leighton

This discussion paper outlines the issues around relationship building and partnerships between public and Aboriginal adult and post-secondary institutes.

Issues and Challenges with Relationship Building

In order for Aboriginal adult and post-secondary institutes to offer accredited / transferable courses and programs, currently they must partner with public post-secondary institutes. Aboriginal institutes, their communities and funders require the courses and programs to be accredited. Furthermore, with the push for language revitalization, Aboriginal communities and institutes are seeking recognition, accreditation and transferability of their language programs.

At this time, there is no one set ‘blueprint’ for partnering with a public institute. Often the partnership is based on the relationship of the individuals negotiating the affiliation / service agreements. Aboriginal communities and Aboriginal institutes often note the frustrations they experience as a result of developing an affiliation or service agreement. Some of the challenges include the following.

- Relationships require a foundation of mutual respect and commitment. Aboriginal institutes need to help public institutes understand and respect what Aboriginal institutes are doing in the communities and there needs to be a mutual understanding of collaboration and partnership development.
- Aboriginal institutes play a critical role in the lives of Aboriginal students. This often is not understood by the public institutes.
- In many instances, the public institute(s) in a community is not aware of the Aboriginal institute(s). Most of the 29 Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association member institutes have been in operation for over 10 years.
- Both public and Aboriginal institutes maintain very different philosophies, which presents challenges when trying to build relationships.
- Aboriginal institutes are often looked at as competing with public institutes for the same students.
- It is difficult to have a good working relationship when public institutes are seen as having “power over” Aboriginal institutes. This situation is created and perpetuated by the fact that public institutes are recognized and funded through the provincial government and Aboriginal institutes are, more often than not, barely surviving – and yet still proving to have high success rates with their learners.

- Generally there is limited involvement by both institutions on the boards of each other.

Issues and Challenges with Partnership Development

- Some public institutes view a partnership as the public institute having all of the control over the resources and the way in which the education program will be delivered, and the Aboriginal institute as providing the “in kind contribution” such as the classroom, photocopier, etc.
- Most partnerships involve the Aboriginal institute taking all of the risks and paying all of the fees.
- Partnerships often fall under the community education arm of the public institutes; thus they are required to be cost-recovery.
- Many partnerships do not involve developing long-term relationships – they are purely a business contract to deliver a course or program.
- It is difficult to form partnerships when there is no trust relationship.
- It is difficult to form partnerships when there is limited funding and costs to run programs belonging to public institutions, which are very costly.
- Many Aboriginal institutes broker programs with public institutes; the public institutions will often charge a fee for service and also collect the FTE’s for the program.

Recommendations for Building Better Working Relationships

- Relationship building must start from the top. By understanding and recognizing the crucial role that Aboriginal institutes play in the lives of Aboriginal adult and post-secondary students in this province, the Ministry of Advanced Education would be in a position to encourage and support the building of these relationships.
- In order to ensure support for Aboriginal students who are studying and being successful through community-based deliveries, Aboriginal institutes need to be resourced to continue to offer this programming leading to student success.
- Mechanisms need to be created to support the development and recognition of Indigenous courses / programs, leading to the Aboriginal institutes being in a position to award certificates, diplomas and degrees.
- By recognizing and acknowledging the fact that Aboriginal institutes are experiencing greater student success in some areas of adult and post-secondary education, the public institutes can work from the position of collaboration and trust Aboriginal institutes to provide this education, thus eliminating the duplication of programs and competition for students.
- It is important to encourage representation by local Aboriginal institutes on public institute’s boards and vice versa.

Recommendations for Building Successful Partnerships

- Partnerships are about building bridges and sharing responsibilities. There must be mutual agreement based on ground rules for program delivery.
- Public institutions receive core funding from the province; Aboriginal institutes do not. When partnering, public institutions need to be willing to provide resources – human and financial.
- Partnerships must involve both parties taking part in any decisions involving the delivery of the program, such as the hiring of instructors, modification of the curriculum, etc.
- Partnerships should focus and build on the strengths and expertise of each institute.
- There must be open and honest communication between both institutes and across all departments.
- To create a better understanding of the partnership, public institutes need to clearly outline the funding arrangements and not be collecting service delivery fees as well as FTE dollars.
- By developing an affiliation / service agreement model and sharing this model with both the public and Aboriginal sectors, both parties can build capacity and mutual partnerships.

Additional comments from the September 21 and 22, 2007 meeting

This working group highlighted the various relationships to consider, including, among others, those within Aboriginal communities, between Aboriginal communities, with government, with and between Aboriginal institutes, and between Aboriginal institutes and public institutes. In some cases, relationships have existed for decades or more, but without formal structures.

Overall, there is a need for mutual respect and commitment and a sharing of power and control. Relationship building must also be built upon an understanding that Aboriginal communities have a vision of post-secondary education and beyond. Finally, there is a need for a common understanding of “consultation,” “standards of relationships,” and “accountability.”

Partnership and Relationship Development Group Recommendations

1. There is a need for an ‘overarching Aboriginal post-secondary body’ made up of Elders, students, Aboriginal academics, IAHLA etc. to direct, develop, and implement Aboriginal post-secondary education policy that addresses a wide variety of institutional delivery models and small Aboriginal institutes / communities.
2. MAVED should have an Aboriginal Council to develop enabling legislation to address Aboriginal post-secondary education with a wide variety of delivery models i.e. culturally relevant, community based delivery models which address the needs of the Aboriginal post-secondary institutions and communities toward self-determination. This is a time when there is an open ear but there has to be enabling legislation formalizing the existing relationships that takes care of knowledge development, resourcing, etc.

Aboriginal Control / Governance

Discussion Paper Prepared by Nancy A. Morgan, Morgan & Associates

Introduction

The strength or resilience of any particular structure is often determined by its foundation. In the case of Aboriginal post-secondary institutions, one of the most important foundations is jurisdiction. This paper will focus on using jurisdiction as a means to strengthen Aboriginal post-secondary institutions.

The purposes of the paper are to:

- propose definitions for key concepts required to support a dialogue on Aboriginal jurisdiction over Aboriginal post-secondary institutions;
- establish some of the general legal context for the discussion; and
- discuss some of the legal and policy challenges and opportunities facing Aboriginal post-secondary institutions.

The paper will begin by looking at the key reasons why it is important to strengthen Aboriginal post-secondary institutions. It will then propose definitions for some of the key concepts related to this topic. This will be followed by a discussion on jurisdiction and post-secondary institutions and on the special challenges facing Aboriginal post-secondary institutions. Finally, the paper will propose some next steps for advancing Aboriginal jurisdiction over Aboriginal post-secondary institutions.

Reasons for strengthening Aboriginal post-secondary institutions

The key reasons for strengthening Aboriginal post-secondary institutions are to:

- improve the range of post-secondary education options available to Aboriginal students; and
- ensure Aboriginal post-secondary institutions offer a high quality and relevant education to their students.

Aboriginal post-secondary institutions are not intended to replace public post-secondary institutions, rather they are intended to offer Aboriginal students an alternative learning environment which allows students to complete their education or offers them a bridge to the public post-secondary system.

In order for Aboriginal post-secondary institutions to fulfill their commitments to their students, the credentials they issue must be recognized in the work place and by trade and professional organizations, as well as by other post-secondary institutions. This places a heavy onus on these institutions to negotiate arrangements and agreements with other institutions and organizations in order to ensure that their students have a full range of employment options once they complete their educational program.

At a more general level, the strengthening of Aboriginal post-secondary institutions can help to:

- enable Aboriginal people to secure more challenging and better compensated employment;
- build a skilled Aboriginal workforce to carry out work within Aboriginal communities and elsewhere; and
- support the exercise of self-government within Aboriginal communities.

Aboriginal self-government cannot be exercised in a meaningful manner unless a significant proportion of an Aboriginal community's government employees are members of that community. Similarly, unless Aboriginal post-secondary institutions are largely controlled by the Aboriginal community or communities that they seek to serve, they will not fulfill the very reason for their existence.

At the present time, two of the main factors limiting Aboriginal control over Aboriginal education are:

- the lack of recognized jurisdiction; and
- the lack of a secure funding base.

The balance of this paper will focus primarily on the first of these – the lack of recognized jurisdiction.

Key concepts

This section will define the key concepts surrounding the issue of jurisdiction over Aboriginal post-secondary institutions – the right to education; self-government; jurisdiction vs. control; and federal, provincial and Aboriginal jurisdiction.

Right to education

The right to education can be viewed as having two separate aspects. The first of these is the right to receive an education. The second is the right to govern, i.e. to control or make laws with respect to education. The struggle to strengthen post-secondary institutions is related to both of these aspects, but is more closely tied to the second. If the issue was simply access to education, then the answer could very well lie in providing more financial support to Aboriginal students to attend public post-secondary institutions. But the struggle is about more than that, it is about fulfilling the vision of “Aboriginal control of Aboriginal education” and about ensuring that Aboriginal students receive a high quality and relevant education that responds to their

distinctive needs. This cannot be accomplished without a secure jurisdictional or governance foundation. Such a foundation would enable an Aboriginal community to establish its own education system and pass laws regarding the system and the education of its members.

Self-government

Self-government generally refers to the right of a people or a society to govern itself. It includes the right to establish institutions of governance (including a law-making body, a bureaucracy and an administration of justice system). Self-government is also linked to and flows from the concept of self-determination.

The right of self-government is an Aboriginal right protected under section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*. This was confirmed in 2000 by the British Columbia Supreme Court in the *Campbell* case. This case provides support for the view that section 35 is intended to protect Aboriginal self-government and provides an independent source of jurisdiction for Aboriginal communities. The test for determining if a particular undertaking is an Aboriginal right protected under section 35 is whether it is an element of a practice, custom or tradition that is integral to the distinctive culture of the Aboriginal group claiming the right. It seems likely that jurisdiction over education would meet this test.

Jurisdiction vs. control

“Jurisdiction” is a concept that refers to legal power or authority, and includes the right to make laws. Jurisdiction, in its more general sense, can be inherent (i.e. not derived from an outside constitutional or statutory authority), constitutionally-based (i.e. derived from a constitution) or delegated (i.e. granted by another government’s legislation).

“Control” is a commonly used word with many possible definitions. For the purposes of this paper, “control” will be used in the more limited sense of practical control, while “jurisdiction” will be used to refer to the concept of legal authority.

In the context of education, practical control relates to issues such as administration, financing, educational personnel, and curriculum development and delivery. Jurisdiction, on the other hand, relates to the nature and source of the authority to exercise that control and, in particular, the right to make laws that establish the foundation for education systems and institutions.

Federal, provincial and Aboriginal jurisdiction

Sections 91, 92 and 93 of the *Constitution Act, 1867* establish the foundation for federal and provincial jurisdiction in relation to Aboriginal post-secondary education. Section 91(24) gives the federal government exclusive legislative authority over “Indians and lands reserved for Indians”. Section 92 provides the provinces with jurisdiction over matters such as property and civil rights, municipal institutions and all matters of a local or private nature. Section 93 then provides the provinces with the exclusive right to make laws in relation to education.

Because Canada has exclusive jurisdiction over Indians, while the provinces have exclusive jurisdiction over education, it is difficult to determine conclusively which of them has jurisdiction over “Aboriginal education”.

As noted above, Aboriginal jurisdiction over education is likely an Aboriginal right protected under section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*. This jurisdiction is therefore likely to be concurrent or to co-exist with federal and provincial jurisdiction. As a result, any one of these governments – Aboriginal, provincial or federal – may have the authority to pass laws in this area.

Jurisdiction and post-secondary institutions

Most post-secondary institutions in BC are established by provincial legislation. Some of the key provincial statutes include:

- the *University Act*;
- the *College and Institute Act*;
- the *Private Career Training Institutions Act*; and
- the *Degree Authorization Act*.

Many Aboriginal post-secondary institutions are established under provincial law as societies. Some institutions operate instead within a First Nation's administration, as an arm or a branch of the First Nation itself. As a result, other governments' laws (such as the *Society Act* or the *Indian Act*) currently determine the basic structural parameters of how Aboriginal communities establish and operate their education systems and institutions.

As noted above, Aboriginal communities may very well have constitutionally protected jurisdiction over education. If so, why aren't they exercising this jurisdiction? The short answer is that Aboriginal post-secondary institutions require funding from other levels of government in order to operate. If an Aboriginal community were to go it on its own and pass its own laws establishing and governing its own post-secondary institutions it might very well lose some or all of its funding from other governments. This means that, until an Aboriginal accreditation system is established that is recognized by the governments providing funding, these institutions will likely continue to be required to meet provincial accreditation and other quality assurance standards as a pre-requisite to receive funding.

By way of background, funding for Aboriginal post-secondary students' studies is generally provided by the federal government in accordance with various programs and initiatives. As well, students may be eligible for student loans from Canada and BC (however, BC student loans are only available if the institution is registered with the Private Career and Training Institutions Agency).

Some Aboriginal post-secondary institutions, which have affiliation agreements with recognized public institutions, also receive provincial funding.

All of this highlights the inextricable link that exists between accreditation, jurisdiction and funding.

Special challenges facing Aboriginal post-secondary institutions

One of the serious challenges facing Aboriginal post-secondary institutions is the lack of a formal, active and recognized accreditation system designed specifically for them. While a number of accreditation processes have been proposed or established over the years, none of them is currently positioned to address the specific needs of Aboriginal post-secondary institutions in British Columbia. As well, even if an accreditation system were established, it would need to have a jurisdictional foundation in order to be effective. One way to do this would be to establish the accreditation process in law. But under whose law – Aboriginal, provincial or federal? As noted above, the answer to that question is that any one of them might be able to pass such a law.

As a result of the lack of a recognized accreditation process, many Aboriginal post-secondary institutions enter into affiliation agreements with accredited public post-secondary institutions. This helps overcome some of their challenges, but sometimes at the expense of their autonomy.

One further challenge facing Aboriginal post-secondary institutions is the fact that, if they wish to offer specialized programming, they must draw students from many Aboriginal communities, not just the community within which they are located. This means that initiatives often need to be centralized or regionalized to make them viable. For example, there is no point in establishing an Aboriginal nursing program in a community of 300 people that draws students from only that community. Looking at this issue from a jurisdiction perspective, the challenge is then to find a process for developing a legal foundation for institutions that may have a wider reach than just one Aboriginal community.

A further complication is that, in some cases, the most suitable location for an institution may not be on-reserve. While both the federal and provincial governments are moving towards recognizing First Nations' jurisdiction over kindergarten to grade 12 education, this recognition has not, to date, extended beyond the boundaries of reserves (or, in the case of treaties, treaty settlement lands).

Next steps

One of the options for strengthening Aboriginal post-secondary institutions is to develop a province-wide accreditation process. The underpinnings for this process could be simply policy for now. Over the longer run, this process could be built into a collective or parallel Aboriginal law-making initiative, much like the First Nations Education Authority's school certification process under the kindergarten to grade 12 First Nations jurisdiction initiative. Alternatively, the process could be set out in a provincial law jointly developed with Aboriginal post-secondary institutions. The advantages and disadvantages of all the available options would have to be carefully considered before any particular approach was adopted.

Other interim steps would include expanding current collaborative initiatives with other governments with the goal of finding ways to significantly increase Aboriginal control over Aboriginal post-secondary institutions. Both the federal and provincial governments on the funding front, as well as the provincial government on the regulatory front, could take steps to

help strengthen Aboriginal post-secondary institutions. They could also encourage public post-secondary institutions to engage in meaningful collaborative processes with Aboriginal post-secondary institutions as true partners.

Conclusion

There is growing interest in strengthening Aboriginal post-secondary institutions. This discussion is increasingly focused on the exercise of jurisdiction as a long-term solution to some of the challenges facing Aboriginal post-secondary institutions. The focus on jurisdiction is partly a result of interest generated by the recent initiative to recognize First Nations' jurisdiction over kindergarten to grade 12 education on-reserve, including a school certification process for First Nations schools. Jurisdiction, however, has always been important as it lays the strongest possible foundation for Aboriginal control. In the meantime, new opportunities will hopefully enable Aboriginal post-secondary institutions to better live up to the vision of Aboriginal control of Aboriginal education.

Accreditation and Transferability

Discussion highlights from September 21/22, 2007 Dialogue

For Aboriginal institutes, affiliation agreements have been the principal vehicle for recognition. Should the provincial government check whether Affiliation Agreements continue to be effective? Would it be more effective to develop a better relationship with the BC Council of Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT)?

Any program that has Aboriginal content must go through the Degree Quality Assurance Board (DQAB). Should there be an Aboriginal Representative on the DQAB?

Is there a role for an Aboriginal Accreditation Board? To be appropriate, such a change must recognize that jurisdiction remains with individual First Nations, with authority delegated to a collective model, and it must include Aboriginal experts with the authority to set all criteria.

No discussion paper was available for this topic, rather the following links to the web site of the BC Council on Admissions and Transfer were recommended.

<http://www.bccat.bc.ca/pubs/private.pdf>

<http://www.bccat.ca/transfer/accreditation.cfm>

www.bccat.ca/transfer/quality.cfm

www.bccat.ca/transfer/private.cfm

Accreditation Group Recommendations

1. Include Aboriginal representatives on the Degree Quality Assurance Board and other professional bodies.
2. Pursue:
 - Dialogue
 - Accreditation
 - Credentialing
 - Research
 - Learning from examples.

Information and Communication Technology in Post-Secondary Education

Discussion Paper Prepared by Franki Craig

No discussion of post-secondary education is complete without reference to the significant and growing place of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in contemporary post-secondary institutions. Public post-secondary institutions in British Columbia offer on-line registration to students. Their Service Plans are posted on the internet, and student outcomes documented, stored and analyzed in computer-based data warehouses. Post-secondary institutions worldwide are investing heavily in on-line teaching.¹ Aboriginal communities are investing in developing online tools to enable Aboriginal students to have access to the language and culture of their Elders. Use of technology is ubiquitous and educators assume that students will have access to computers and the internet in order to do research and complete assignments.

Aboriginal post-secondary institutes offer a variety of programs from ABE to Continuing Education to University Transfer. Some are fully equipped with broadband internet connection and ICT infrastructure. Others are not.

Below are just a few of the initiatives that indicate the importance of Aboriginal post-secondary institutions being 'connected':

- Transformative Change Accord in which the province committed over the next decade to 'close the gap' between Aboriginal people and other British Columbians in education, health, and economic opportunities. Broadband connectivity and user capacity is key to program and project development, delivery (especially to rural and remote communities), and tracking results.
- BCcampus - a Ministry of Advanced Education (AVED) initiative. This free Online Collaboration Community features access to interactive webcasts, workshops and events, as well as tools for live collaboration, networking and education. Last year, 15,538 registrations took place through BC Campus.
- On September 14, the Premier officially opened the Centre for Digital Media at the Great Northern Way Campus. The related news release states that the world market for video game development in BC is expected to grow to approximately \$42 billion by 2010.²

Aboriginal people regard ICT infrastructure and capacity in Aboriginal communities to be fundamental to meaningful participation in social, cultural and economic development in the 21st century and to bridging the 'digital divide'. There are presently 73 First Nations communities lacking broadband internet connection.³

1. Sylvia Bartolic-Zlomislic and A. W. (Tony) Bates. Investing in Online Learning: Potential Benefits and Limitations. University of British Columbia.
2. < <http://www.gov.bc.ca/aved/>>
3. Ibid., News Release, September 14, 2007.

N.B. – The topic of Information and Communication Technology in Post-Secondary Education was discussed throughout the September 21/22, 2007 Dialogue discussion groups; therefore, there is no breakout session specific to this topic.

APPENDIX ONE

Notes from the Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education Dialogue Meeting Held September 21 and 22, 2007, Vancouver, BC

The meeting began with comments from representatives of the Ministry of Advanced Education.

The Ministry is currently working on the Aboriginal post-secondary policy, which is framed within the New Relationship Document and the Transformative Change Accord. The question for the representatives at the September meeting, as well as for the upcoming November forum, is: What is needed in a policy to help actualize the vision for post-secondary education of Aboriginal people?

The meeting participants then considered a variety of different models of Aboriginal post-secondary education.

For example, the Native Education Centre (NEC) in Vancouver, BC is governed by a volunteer Board with strong community support. The Centre strives to provide a culturally appropriate and welcoming atmosphere for Aboriginal learners. The Centre offers primarily transferable courses, but it also strives to offer relevant pre-trade courses. Unfortunately, NEC struggles with inadequate funding and related uncertainty about the Centre's viability.

Nicola Valley Institute of Technology (NVIT) is a publicly recognized and funded, Aboriginal controlled institute. Central to NVIT is its strong focus on student success, both while at NVIT and after students leave. The Institute is also committed to its roots within its founding communities and to strong cultural inclusion in all aspects of its operations. Because of its status as a public institute, NVIT struggles less than other Aboriginal institutes with transferability and funding issues. In general, the provincial government has supported NVIT's efforts to remain community-directed; for example, although the provincial Ministry has the authority to approve or not approve NVIT's Board selection, it has never interfered. NVIT strives to be accountable to its communities and its funding agencies, and it also respects the communities and organizations with which it partners.

WWN, located in the Nass Valley, has been offering post-secondary education for 30 years, and it is now mandated to do so by the Nisga'a government. The Nisga'a are particularly committed to ensuring that intellectual ownership remains with the Nation, and WWN has created research protocols with its partner institutes. WWN's claim to fame is its Nisga'a language and culture programming, which presents an important opportunity for people to study within the Nisga'a community. Language and culture is also incorporated in all studies from high school equivalency, to technical, to health leadership, to business administration. WWN data demonstrates a high rate of student success, but WWN continues to struggle for recognition of its work.

The En'owkin Centre is a post-secondary institute of the Okanagan Nation that is committed to respect of intellectual property rights and community ownership of the language. The En'owkin Centre's work extends beyond education to conservation, intellectual property rights, and Indigenous knowledge, nationally and internationally. However, the institute faces an ongoing challenge to retain control in the post-secondary environment.

Overall, the meeting highlighted the following themes related to Aboriginal-controlled institutes.

- A commitment to accountability to and involvement from the Aboriginal community.
- A difference in challenges faced by institutions that serve the needs of urban Aboriginal people and those that serve land-based people, particularly in terms of security for institutions in urban environments where the Aboriginal voice has been marginalized.
- A commitment to equitable, accountable governance and respectful involvement of Elders and knowledge keepers.
- The need for a process to allow Aboriginal institutes to control the transferability of Indigenous knowledge.
- The need for recognition of the institutes' unique role in post-secondary education, including their preparation of students to enable them to excel in the public system.

Overall, Aboriginal-controlled institutes assert the voice of Aboriginal people and are changing the picture in BC, but there is a need to recognize that authority rests with First Nations. Also, the institutes need greater sustainability, including adequate funding.

Another key concern includes the need to build on Indigenous knowledge to guide the work of post-secondary institutes. For many people who attend Aboriginal institutes, it is the revitalization, maintenance and re-achievement of their identity that gives them the strength to go on. The question is how to make Indigenous knowledge accessible while at the same time protecting that knowledge. To make that possible, it is important to form respectful partnerships with other institutions.

Summary of Small Group Discussions

Group 1 – ACCREDITATION AND TRANSFERABILITY

Some of the key issues for consideration include the following.

For Aboriginal institutes, affiliation agreements have been the principal vehicle for recognition. Should the provincial government check whether Affiliation Agreements continue to be effective? Would it be more effective to develop a better relationship with the BC Council of Admissions and Transfer (BCCAT)?

Any program that has Aboriginal content must go through the Degree Quality Assurance Board (DQAB). Should there be an Aboriginal Representative on the DQAB?

Is there a role for an Aboriginal Accreditation Board? To be appropriate, such as change must recognize that jurisdiction remains with individual First Nations, with authority delegated to a collective model, and it must include Aboriginal experts with the authority to set all criteria.

The following links to the web site of the BC Council on Admissions and Transfer were also recommended.

<http://www.bccat.bc.ca/pubs/private.pdf>
<http://www.bccat.ca/transfer/accreditation.cfm>
www.bccat.ca/transfer/quality.cfm
www.bccat.ca/transfer/private.cfm

Accreditation Group Recommendations

3. Include Aboriginal representatives on the Degree Quality Assurance Board and other professional bodies.
4. Pursue:
 - Dialogue
 - Accreditation
 - Credentialing
 - Research
 - Learning from examples.

Group 2 – CURRICULUM OWNERSHIP GROUP

Overall, the following issues were highlighted.

There is currently no standard process across the province in terms of curriculum ownership. For Aboriginal-controlled institutes, ownership usually lies with the community, and it is difficult to accommodate traditional knowledge into mainstream frameworks. In general, there is a responsibility to share knowledge without losing ownership of the results of research, and the origins of knowledge should be respected.

Perhaps it would be useful to create an organization that includes the necessary leadership and appropriate involvement of Elders and knowledge keepers to address these issues.

Curriculum Ownership Group Recommendations

1. Ensure that curriculum developers own the curriculum.
2. Have an organization like the Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association (IAHLA) become an articulating, accrediting body for Indigenous knowledge and for credentialing knowledge authorities.

3. Document best practices.
4. Have Indigenous post-secondary education recognized as a third sector of post-secondary education in the province of British Columbia. That should include similar recognition / role / accountability of Aboriginal-controlled and public post-secondary institutes. It should also include equitable resources.

Group 3 --- INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE GROUP

The following key points were raised by this working group.

There is an overarching need to validate Indigenous Knowledge, which will involve Aboriginal institutes describing and interpreting Indigenous Knowledge and public post-secondary institutes recognizing and understanding the uniqueness / individuality of Indigenous Knowledge. It is the responsibility of all post-secondary institutes to nurture strong Indigenous students, which is related to this recognition.

Public policy needs to recognize and honour Indigenous views, and needs to encompass two different types of Indigenous knowledge: (1) knowledge that is specific to a First Nation; and (2) common core Indigenous Knowledge including decolonization and building sound foundations.

Indigenous Knowledge Group Recommendations

1. The Ministry of Education, AVED, needs a policy for respecting Indigenous Knowledge that:
 - acknowledges the benefit of Indigenous Knowledge and recognizes its link to the holistic health and wellness of individuals and communities;
 - includes protocols for using Indigenous Knowledge;
 - recognizes that Indigenous Knowledge is owned by community
2. There is a need to recognize the distinct role of Aboriginal post-secondary institutes in teaching Indigenous Knowledge for the Nation.
3. Policy is needed to address Indigenous Knowledge in institutions that serve multiple communities. Indigenous Knowledge is a core learning of these institutions.
4. Aboriginal communities must develop protocols for institutes to follow.

Group 4 – PARTNERSHIP AND RELATIONSHIP DEVELOPMENT

This working group highlighted the various relationships to consider, including, among others, those within Aboriginal communities, between Aboriginal communities, with government, with and between Aboriginal institutes, and between Aboriginal institutes and public institutes. In some cases, relationships have existed for decades or more, but without formal structures.

Overall, there is a need for mutual respect and commitment and a sharing of power and control. Relationship building must also be built upon an understanding that Aboriginal people have a vision of post-secondary education and beyond. Finally, there is a need for a common understanding of “consultation,” “standards of relationships,” and “accountability.”

Partnership and Relationship Development Group Recommendations

1. There is a need for an ‘overarching Aboriginal post-secondary body’ made up of Elders, students, Aboriginal academics, IAHLA etc. to direct, develop, and implement Aboriginal post-secondary education policy that addresses a wide variety of institutional delivery models and small Aboriginal Institutes/communities.
2. MAVED should have an Aboriginal Council to develop enabling legislation to address Aboriginal post-secondary education with a wide variety of delivery models i.e. culturally relevant, community-based delivery models which address the needs of the Aboriginal post-secondary institutions and communities toward self-determination. This is a time when there is an open ear but there has to be enabling legislation formalizing the existing relationships that takes care of knowledge development, resourcing, etc.

NOTE:

During the September 21/22 Dialogue, the following topics were not discussed as a separate break-out topic, but were interwoven in the other discussions. Therefore, at this time, there are no specific recommendations for these topics.

- Unique Role of Aboriginal Post-Secondary Institutions
- Aboriginal Control/Governance