



Annual Report 2010/2011

*BC Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education
and Training Partners Group*

BC Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Partners Group

C/o Suite 113-100 Park Royal South, West Vancouver, BC V7T 1A2

Toll-free in BC: 1-877-422-3672 T: 604-925-6087 F: 604-925-6097

INTRODUCTION

This report is intended to provide an update on the work done by the British Columbia (BC) Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Partners (the PSE Partners). It reviews the activities undertaken by the Partners, collectively, from the time of the November 2010 Call to Action meeting through to the November 2011 Call to Action.

The creation of the PSE Partners in 2005 represents a unique and significant commitment by post-secondary education stakeholders in BC. The group signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), as follows.

We, the undersigned, acknowledge that although there has been some progress in recent years, there is a need for improved levels of participation and success for Aboriginal learners in post-secondary education and training in British Columbia. We state our intention to work collectively toward this goal within the mandates of our respective organizations and to bring in other partners as appropriate. This will be accomplished by building on our successes to date, collectively identifying needs, and implementing strategies to improve the success of Aboriginal post-secondary learners in BC.

THE PARTNERS (updated 2011)

- The First Nations Education Steering Committee
- The Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association
- Métis Nation BC
- BC Ministry of Advanced Education
- Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada
- BC Ministry of Education, Aboriginal Enhancements Branch
- BC Association of Institutes and Universities
- Research Universities' Council of BC
- BC Colleges
- United Native Nations Society
- BC Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation
- First Nations Summit Task Group
- First Nations Public Service
- BC Assembly of First Nations
- Service Canada

GOALS & PRIORITIES

In 2006, the Partners identified several priority areas for their collective efforts, which are outlined in the Partners "Made in BC Approach" document. The areas of focus include the following:

1. **Student Financial Support** – scholarships and bursaries, access to childcare and transportation support, and financial support for trades and transitions to post-secondary
2. **Support for Community Post-Secondary Education Coordinators / Administrators** – capacity building and training in administration, conflict resolution, and policy development (including a formal accredited program)
3. **Institutional Support (including program and student support services)** – programs to facilitate transitions to post-secondary, partnerships with Aboriginal communities to ensure relevance of programming, curriculum development, targeted funding to address under-representation in specific career fields, alternative delivery models, as well as support for students within institutions
4. **Data Collection and Reporting** – the development of common definitions, data sharing protocols, and the use of data for informed decision-making

PARTNERS GROUP ACTIVITIES 2010/11

Throughout the past year, the PSE Partners met on six occasions to share information and discuss important topics related to Aboriginal post-secondary education and training. Those meetings represented an important opportunity to gather input from the Partners regarding their key initiatives. It also allowed for the identification of opportunities for joint action.

The PSE Partners were involved in several ongoing projects in 2010/2011, including the following:

1. January 2011 Strategic Planning

An external review of the PSE Partners (2010) found that, while there were some concerns about the PSE Partners Group operations, the joint effort is widely perceived to be an invaluable initiative. Further, a range of stakeholders indicated that they remain supportive of the collective focus and they are re-committed to improving the Group's effectiveness. Overall, there is a strong indication that the formation and continuation

of the PSE Partners is a strong reflection of the need for collaboration and partnerships to improve Aboriginal students' post-secondary participation and success.

Following the external review, the PSE Partners undertook a Strategic Planning session in January 2011. During this session, the PSE Partners committed to improving access, retention, completion and quality of education experience for Aboriginal post-secondary learners in BC. For 2011-2012, the following priorities were identified:

- Evolving role and status of Aboriginal institutes
- Evaluation of the 2007 Aboriginal Strategy and next steps
- Student level supports – e.g., academic support to students, bursaries, housing, child care, transportation
- Adult Upgrading Deliveries
- “Practical Irritants” for Aboriginal students entering public post-secondary institutions
- “Time to completion” – e.g., funding timelines requiring completion in 4 or 5 years when it takes most students (including non-Aboriginal) 6 years to complete a Bachelors degree
- Trades programming – and student funding issues
- Dual credit – how to encourage more dual credit courses without affecting students' Post-secondary Student Support funding
- K-12 preparedness – including academic advising, the consequences of early decisions and the streaming away of students from academic English and Math
- Racism

2. Evaluation of 2007 Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Strategy

Working with the Post-Secondary Education Partners, the Ministry of Advanced Education conducted an external evaluation of its 2007-2010 Aboriginal Post-Secondary Strategy. The evaluation was completed in March 2011. The Evaluation can be found at <http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/aboriginal/evaluation.htm>. Feedback was received from approximately 800 participants in public post-secondary institutions and Aboriginal communities and organizations.

The evaluation found that significant progress has been made as a result of the initiatives taken under the 2007 Strategy, and recommended renewing, with some modifications, most of the funded initiatives including:

- Three-year Aboriginal Service Plans at 11 public post-secondary institutions with a goal of increasing access, retention and success for Aboriginal learners;
- Reducing financial barriers through targeted scholarships for Aboriginal learners; and
- Enhancing opportunities for Aboriginal culture to be reflected within the infrastructure of institutions by funding Aboriginal Gathering Places.

The evaluation identified several areas for improvement, including:

- Ministry's reporting, monitoring, follow up and assessment processes;
- Ministry and public post-secondary institutions' partnerships and engagement with Aboriginal communities; and,
- Ministry's role in coordinating, aligning and sharing best practices on projects, policies and programs.

Aboriginal Service Plans

Based on the evaluation results, the Ministry of Advanced Education is providing funding to continue the Aboriginal Service Plan initiative at the eleven pilot institutions in 2011/12. The institutions with Aboriginal Service Plans are:

- Camosun College
- Capilano University
- College of New Caledonia
- Nicola Valley Institute of Technology
- North Island College
- Northwest Community College
- Thompson Rivers University
- University of Northern British Columbia
- University of Victoria
- Vancouver Community College
- Vancouver Island University

The 2007 Strategy laid important groundwork for future policy design, implementation and evaluation.

3. Development of New Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education Policy Framework

Over the last year the Ministry of Advanced Education has been working with a subcommittee of the Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education Partners to develop a new Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education Policy Framework.

Members of the subcommittee included:

- First Nations Education Steering Committee
- First Nations Public Service
- Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association
- Research Universities Council of BC
- BC Association of Institutes and Universities
- BC Colleges
- Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada
- Ministry of Advanced Education
- Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation
- Métis Nation BC

Regular meetings of this Working Group have focused on various policy issues, such as the Ministry's Evaluation of its 2007 Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Strategy and Action Plan.

The Framework aims to improve the responsiveness of British Columbia's post-secondary system to the needs of Aboriginal learners. The Ministry will be consulting on a draft framework over the Fall and Winter of 2011/12.

4. Data Mapping Working Group

Since 2006, the Data Mapping Working Group has been working to ensure consistent and high quality data collection as it relates to Aboriginal post-secondary education in BC. Its purpose is to promote the collection, analysis, reporting and publication of useful data and to review and suggest recommendations for relevant research. Under direction from the Partners, the Data Mapping Working Group is developing an inventory of Aboriginal-targeted instructional programs in public and Aboriginal post-secondary institutions.

Since January 2010, the Data Mapping Working Group's active membership has grown to include:

- First Nations Education Steering Committee
- Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association
- Research Universities Council of BC
- BC Association of Institutes and Universities
- Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada
- Ministry of Advanced Education
- Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation
- Métis Nation BC

5. Funding Working Group

The Funding Working Group was created to advance efforts in the following areas:

1. identify, review, and analyze funding policy and programs in Aboriginal post-secondary education and training in BC and Canada;
2. determine gaps and opportunities in funding policies and initiatives as they relate to Aboriginal education; and
3. promote the development of resources to reduce financial barriers for Aboriginal learners, including a web portal or electronic medium to increase access to information about student awards and financial assistance.

Aboriginal Learning Links

In the past year, the Funding Working Group continued to support the Aboriginal Learning Links (ALL) web site (www.aboriginallearning.ca), which was designed to provide information on scholarships, bursaries, and resources for post-secondary education in BC. In the summer of 2011, all of the web links to information related to potential financial support, scholarships, bursaries, post-secondary institutions, child care, housing, and career opportunities were tested and updated.

As well, to promote the site, a bookmark was designed and distributed in the fall of 2011 to Aboriginal students in public and IAHLA institutes. Statistics indicate a 60% increase in the number of website users compared to the previous year.