
BC Indigenous Post-Secondary Education and Training Partners

June 12, 2019

Meeting Notes

Department of Indigenous Services Canada, 1138 Melville St. Vancouver, BC

PARTICIPANTS:

BC Aboriginal Training Employment Alliance
Members (BCATEAM)

- Deanne McLeod, Executive Director

BC Colleges

- Colin Ewart, President

Department of Indigenous Services Canada (DISC)

- Wendy Rogers, Director, Programs and Partnerships
- Laura Langs, Advisor

First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC)

- Debbie Jeffrey, Executive Director
- Thane Bonar, Director of Communications & Policy

First Nations Public Service Secretariat (FNPSS)

- Jehan Casey, Executive Director
- Bernice Timmer, Reseacher

Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association
(IAHLA)

- Dr. Verna Billy-Minnabarriet, Chair

Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training
(AEST)

- Jeff Vasey, Assistant Deputy Minister
- Deb Hull, Executive Director, Teaching Universities, Institutes and Aboriginal Programs
- Tony Nelson, Director, Targeted Learner Supports Programs (Teleconference)
- Nancy Singh, Director, Sector Business Innovation (Teleconference)
- Emily Cronin, Executive Director, Governance, Engagement and Corporate Services Branch (Teleconference)

Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation
(MIRR)

- Stephanie Gabel, Senior Advisor, Socio-Economic Partnerships

Research Universities' Council of BC (RUCBC)

- Jim Martell, Director

FACILITATION:

- Ruth Wittenberg, Acting Chair
- Nicolas Mejia, FNESC, Manager, Post-Secondary Education and Training

1. Welcome and Review of Draft Agenda

The June 12, 2019 Draft Agenda was reviewed and approved.

2. Review of Draft Meeting Notes—March 6, 2019

The draft meeting notes from March 6, 2019 were reviewed and accepted as presented.

3. Review and Approval of Updates Terms of Reference

The Partners reviewed the Draft Terms of Reference, which included updates from the previous meeting. Additional edits to the Draft Terms of Reference were proposed, and the Amended Terms of Reference were approved by the Partners.

4. Federal Budget 2019/MC and Treasury Board Submission

FNESC provided an update on work being undertaken at the national level to create the space for the development of regional post-secondary models. First Nations, through the Assembly of First Nations, have put forward a treasury board submission in order to access funding for their regional models. In DISC's update to the Partners, they noted that Budget 2019 includes a commitment of \$327 million dollars over 5 years for the Post-Secondary Student Support Program. Of this enhanced funding, BC will receive approximately \$7.8 million, which falls significantly short of the funding requested in the First Nations PSE Policy Proposal. DISC will be informing First Nations of this enhanced funding soon.

5. FNESC Post-Secondary Education Coordinator Workshops

FNESC delivered a presentation summarizing feedback and themes arising from the 2019 PSE Coordinator Workshops in relation to the BC Tripartite PSE Model. The feedback from the workshops confirmed ongoing First Nations support for the development and implementation of the Model.

6. BC Teacher's Council: Ninth Standard

Partners raised that there is a need to better equip teachers to effectively and appropriately integrate Indigenous knowledge, history and culture in the K-12 classrooms and to develop parameters for the 6th professional development day for teachers. It was suggested that a meeting between the PSE Partners and the Vice-Academics in the Fall could help advance discussions on the Ninth Standard.

Action Item: FNESC to coordinate a meeting between the PSE Partners and the Vice-President Academics in the Fall.

7. Indigenous Language Fluency/Proficiency Degree

IAHLA provided an update on the Indigenous Language Fluency/Proficiency Degree. AEST has \$2 million to support the implementation of the first two years of the Indigenous Language Fluency/Proficiency Degree. Further discussions are required to determine how this funding will be allocated to First Nations communities and their institutes. The University of British Columbia Okanagan has also submitted its degree for approval by the Degree Quality Assurance Board.

8. Provincial Program and Initiatives Updates

a) Aboriginal PSE and Training Policy Framework Refresh

AEST provided an update on the the Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Policy Framework (Aboriginal Policy Framework), which is currently being updated in order to align with the provincial government's commitment to fully implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action, and ensure it reflects the current climate of the post-secondary system in BC. AEST requested feedback from the Partners on the vision. It was raised that AEST could deliver a presentation to the FNESC Board and at the FNESC Conference on the Aboriginal Policy Framework Refresh.

b) Indigenous Board Member Representation/Forum

AEST discussed planning underway for an in-person gathering for Indigenous board members at public post-secondary institutions. The purpose of the gathering is to support Indigenous board members and identify the tools, resources and capacity-building opportunities that Boards require to advance reconciliation. It was mentioned that there is a need to put mechanisms in place to support all board members to work more effectively with First Nations.

c) Indigenous Skills Training Alignment Project

Emily Cronin joined the Partners by teleconference to update them on the status of the Indigenous Skills Training Alignment Project. AEST recently hosted three-day workshops on Indigenous Skills Training. The purpose of the workshops was to discuss recommendations that would come in place at the beginning of the 2020-2021 fiscal year. FNEC expressed concern with the Ministry making significant changes to existing programs without First Nations having had the opportunity to complete work on the BC Tripartite PSE Model. A draft report has been circulated to workshop participants for feedback, and AEST shared key themes arising from the meeting with the Partners.

d) Student Financial Assistance Project

In 2017, AEST contracted the Social Research and Demonstration Corporation in order to evaluate Student Financial Assistance programs accessed by Aboriginal learners. The goal of this project was to improve funding made available through applications to the province, not funding provided directly through the federal government to First Nations communities. The final report is complete. Some members of the Partners Table expressed that it does not go far enough in terms of recommending alternative approaches to the student loan model for better supporting Indigenous students.

e) Student Housing Framework

Nancy Sing, Director of the Sector Business Innovation, joined the Partners meeting via teleconference. A student housing workshop will be taking place in October 2019 at the University of British Columbia. The PSE Partners were invited to attend the workshop. It was noted that FNEC has been involved in the development of the framework and there have been additions that support the Action 4 of the Aboriginal Policy Framework, "Support student housing projects at public post-secondary institutions with an emphasis on serving Aboriginal learners and their families."

f) Supports for Former Children and Youth in Care

Tony Nelson, Director of Targeted Learner Supports Programs, joined the Partners meeting via teleconference to speak about the Tuition Waiver Program for former children and youth in care. The Program has been accessed by 806 students, and \$3.6 million has been disbursed to public post-secondary institutions, as well as Native Education College. \$1 million has also been disbursed through the Youth Futures Education Fund to support non-tuition related expenses. The Ministry is engaging with institutions and stakeholders on the development of wrap-around supports and on the potential expansion of the criteria for the Tuition Waiver Program.

FNEC informed the Partners that it is developing a strategy with the BC Assembly of First Nations, the First Nations Summit and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs that includes a legal opinion on the responsibilities of the provincial government for the education of former and current children and youth in care. The First Nations Leadership Council has passed a resolution supporting FNEC in developing the strategy.

9. ILEAD/BCAPSC Participation at the PSE Partners Table

The Partners discussed options for Network of Post-Secondary Indigenous Education Leaders (ILEAD) and British Columbia Aboriginal Post-Secondary Council (BCAPSC) to attend future PSE Partners meetings.

Action: The Chair to send a letter inviting ILEAD to attend PSE Partners meetings once a year to discuss the work of

ILEAD, their priorities and potential areas of collaboration with the Partners.

10. Other

First Nations have consistently called on the Province to include a mandatory First Peoples course, or bundle of credits, as a requirement for any student graduating from the K-12 education system. These calls have been met with resistance, and a mandatory course, or bundle of credits, has yet to be put in place. FNESC will continue to raise this matter, and the First Nations Leadership Council will be having further conversations with the Province.

11. Future Meeting Locations

It was agreed that future meetings of the Partners would continue to take place at DISC.