
BC Indigenous Post-Secondary Education and Training Partners

June 6, 2021

Videoconference

PARTICIPANTS:

Association of BC Deans of Education

- Jan Hare

BC Aboriginal Training and Employment Members

- Deanne McLeod, Executive Director, North East Native Advancing Society (NENAS)

BC Colleges

- Colin Ewart, President

Department of Indigenous Services Canada (ISC)

- Dena Duncan, Acting Director, Indigenous Partnerships
- Kurtis Blohm, Acting Manager, Education Programs
- Laura Langs, Education Programs Advisor

First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC)

- Thane Bonar, Director, Communications and Policy
- Jasper Cattell, Policy Analyst, Post-Secondary Education and Training

First Nations Public Service Secretariat

- Bernice Timmer, Manager, Planning and Policy

Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association (IAHLA)

- Dr. Verna Billy-Minnabarriet, Chair
- Naomi Narcisse, Academic & Campus Coordinator, Nicola Valley Institute of Technology

Métis Nations of BC

- Jason Chan, Senior Director, Ministry of Employment and Skills Training and Post-Secondary Education

Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training (AEST)

- Nicola Lemmer, Assistant Deputy Minister, Post-Secondary Policy and Programs and Division
- Monica Cox, Executive Director, Indigenous Policy and Engagement Branch

- Bryan Dreilich, Director, Post-Secondary Engagement and Partnerships, Indigenous Policy and Engagement
- Fiona Cubitt, Director, Policy and Planning, Indigenous Policy and Engagement Branch
- Janet Hanuse, Director, Indigenous Programs, Indigenous Skills Training and Partnerships Branch, Workforce Innovation and Division Responsible for Skills and Training
- Monique Lacerte, Director, Indigenous Engagement and Partnerships, Indigenous Policy and Engagement Branch
- Sunjit Bains, Acting Executive Director, Indigenous Skills Training and Partnerships Branch, Workforce Innovation and Division Responsible for Skills and Training
- Naomi Adams, Senior Policy Analyst, Policy and Planning, Indigenous Policy and Engagement Branch
- Nadaya Howells, Acting Manager, Indigenous Relations, Indigenous Skills Training and Partnerships Branch, Workforce Innovation and Division Responsible for Skills and Training
- Tracy Hampton, Co-Op Student, Indigenous Policy and Engagement Branch

Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation (MIRR)

- Stephanie Gabel, Senior Advisor, Social/Economic Planning

Ministry of Education

- Nicole Ryan, Acting Director, Indigenous Education

Research Universities' Council of BC (RUCBC)

- Jim Martell, Director

Service Canada

- Charan Bhullar, Regional Director, Indigenous Programs Delivery

FACILITATION:

- Judith Sayers, Chair
- Nicolas Mejia, FNESC Manager, Post-Secondary Education and Training, IAHLA/FNESC

1. Welcome and Review of Draft Agenda

The Indigenous Post-Secondary Education and Training Partners (the Partners) reviewed the Draft Agenda for the June 6, 2021 meeting. It was suggested that members of the Indigenous Policy Working Group provide an update on the Group's work at the end of the meeting. The Draft Agenda was approved.

2. Review of Draft Meeting Notes

The Draft Meeting Notes for the March 9, 2021 meeting were reviewed and approved. It was noted that Associate Deputy Minister Dawn Thomas had been scheduled to present on the *In Plain Sight* recommendations at the June 6, 2021, Partners meeting, but has had to postpone her presentation to the September 8, 2021, meeting.

3. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Implementation

The Partners discussed ongoing work related to the implementation of the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (Declaration Act). AEST informed the Partners that the Ministry was able to share sections of the Draft Declaration Act Annual Report with Indigenous partners, but not the full report. The Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation shared the full report with the First Nations Leadership Council. The Annual Report will be released June 30, 2021. AEST also noted that the Consultative Draft of the Action Plan would soon be released for engagement with Indigenous partners.

FNESC and IAHLA asked if there were any updates on the Declaration Act alignment of laws process. AEST informed the Partners that a secretariat is being formed to coordinate this work. Partners expressed concern over the secretariat's role in setting priorities for the review of legislation, and requested AEST provide an update on the secretariat's work at a future Partners meeting.

Action Item: AEST to provide an update on the secretariat for the alignment of laws under the Declaration Act.

4. COVID-19 Impacts and Response Roundtable

The Partners discussed developments related to the COVID-19 pandemic. FNESC and IAHLA expressed appreciation for COVID-19 funding provided by AEST to assist First Nations-mandated institutes. ISC noted that additional COVID-19 funding to support Indigenous students and institutes will be provided in the 2021-22 fiscal year. This will include \$150.6 million over two years for student funding through the Post-Secondary Student Support Program and the Métis and Inuit Post-Secondary Education Strategies, and 26.4 million of institutes funding through and the Post-Secondary Partnerships Program and the Métis and Inuit Post-Secondary Education Strategies.

AEST provided a summary of the results of its call for public post-secondary institutions to provide information on their engagement activities with First Nations communities and institutes during the pandemic. Partners expressed concerns with quality and quantity of engagement with First Nations students, communities and institutes reported by public-post secondary institutions during the pandemic and the need for a post-pandemic assessment of the system's response.

The Partners discussed plans for the return to on-campus instruction in the fall semester. It was noted that the Indigenous Reference Group will be meeting soon to discuss the next iteration of the Go-Forward Guidelines. FNESC and IAHLA expressed the need to strengthen language in the Guidelines to ensure that students from First Nations whose communities remain closed due to the pandemic are accommodated by post-secondary institutions. FNESC, IAHLA and ABCDE noted additional challenges faced by students who are required to complete practicums or in-person activities as part of their programs, and may need extra accommodations if their communities remain closed.

5. First Nations Children and Youth in Care Protocol

FNESC and AEST provided an update on work under the First Nations Children and Youth in Care Protocol, signed by the First Nations Leadership Council, FNESC, AEST, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Children and Family Development in 2020. It was noted that a Protocol Oversight Committee meeting was held in April 2021 to discuss priorities for the Protocol work plan, and that the Protocol's technical table is meeting regularly to develop this document. AEST noted that it is also continuing work to expand the Tuition Waiver Program, and that it will be engaging with Indigenous partners on this initiative.

6. Provincial Program and Initiatives Updates

a) Indigenous Skills Training and Education

AEST confirmed that a total of \$39 million was allocated to the Indigenous Skills Training and Education program in 2020/21, including \$24 million from the base budget (\$12 million of federal funding and \$12 million of BC funding) and a \$15 million lift from BC's economic recovery plan. It was noted that many communities continue to deliver programs funded in the 2020-21 fiscal year as a result of COVID-19 impacts, and AEST is focusing staff resources on being flexible and adjusting contracts as needed. AEST informed the Partners of its intention to undertake engagement on the design of Indigenous Skills Training programs, and will begin work on a strategy for engagement in spring 2022. FNEESC and IAHLA raised concerns that the current approach is not equitable. FNEESC and IAHLA also noted that many communities and institutes find the current application process unclear, and MNBC and IAHLA requested distinctions-based data on learners served by the program.

b) Aboriginal Student Data Report

AEST provided an update on the Aboriginal Student Data Report. The Ministry shared a new draft of the Report with the Partners, which it noted had been reviewed in detail by the Indigenous Policy Working Group.

Action Item: Partners to inform AEST of any revisions/ issues with the draft Data report within two weeks.

c) Aboriginal Service Plan

AEST provided an update to the Partners on its plans to conduct engagement on the Aboriginal Service Plan (ASP) program. The Ministry intends to explore changes to the program before considering expanding it to all 25 public post-secondary institutions in the 2022-23 fiscal year. It noted that it currently has plans to meet with the IAHLA Board of Directors and the FNEESC Post-Secondary Subcommittee, and will be scheduling additional engagement sessions with other partners.

FNEESC and IAHLA, along with MNBC, expressed the need for a full overhaul of the ASP prior to any planned expansion. It was noted that the 2018 review of the program had only modest impacts on Indigenous learner outcomes and experiences, in light of the goals of the Policy Framework, and requires extensive changes.

d) Indigenous Board Members Gathering

The second gathering of Indigenous Public Post-Secondary Board Members was held on Friday, May 21, 2021, and was organized by AEST, FNEESC and MNBC. AEST provided a summary of the topics discussed at the Gathering. FNEESC and MNBC both expressed appreciation for the discussions at the event and noted that it was a positive experience for those involved.

7. Other

a) Indigenous Policy Working Group Update

AEST provided a brief update on the work of the Indigenous Policy Working Group. Topics recently discussed by the Working Group included the ASP, the return to campus, the Aboriginal Student Data Report and the Consultative Draft of the Declaration Act Action Plan. AEST suggested potentially developing a work plan for the Working Group, which would be approved by the Partners.

8. Future Meeting Dates

The Partners are scheduled to meet on the following dates:

- September 8, 2021
- December 14, 2021.

9. Adjournment and Closing

The meeting was adjourned at 12:35 pm.