

Pathways for Aboriginal Learners: Collaborating across Aboriginal Institutes, Colleges and Universities

Phase One Year End Report
2014/15



By

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides a summary of the activities undertaken in the initial year of the “Pathways for Aboriginal Learners: Collaborating across Aboriginal Institutes, Colleges and Universities” project as well as next steps. Key deliverables, financial expenditures and pathway development are reported on.

Commencing in August 2014, “Pathways for Aboriginal Learners: Collaborating across Aboriginal Institutes, Colleges and Universities” is a two-year project funded by the Ontario Council of Articulation and Transfer (ONCAT). Through a tripartite partnership between The Centre for Policy in Aboriginal Learning (CPAL), Confederation College (main proponent), First Nations Technical Institute (FNTI) and Trent University (Trent), the project seeks to create distinct academic and student support pathways that are rooted in Indigenous knowledges, for Aboriginal Learners, making it the first Indigenous-centered transition Pathways model for Aboriginal transfer students in Ontario.

To date knowledge exchange and the creation of a memorandum of understanding between the three institutions has occurred. A review and evaluation of curriculum alignment, and the creation of a draft articulation agreement are also complete. Alongside these efforts, work to support learner’s transitions have begun, through a process of asset mapping and support and recruitment focused discussions with Aboriginal learners.

An analysis of the content of Indigenous Studies, Environmental and Social Work programs at Trent, Confederation, and FNTI confirmed the feasibility of creating distinct pathways in Indigenous Studies, with the need for additional exploratory work in the areas of Environmental Studies and Social Work. A first cohort of transfer students (a soft launch) from the Confederation College Aboriginal Community Advocacy program to the Trent University Indigenous Studies program will take place in September 2015, which will see students entering the third year of study.

A corollary of the exercise of mapping transferability within Indigenous programs, and between Indigenous and non-Indigenous programs is the identified need for a culturally-informed strategy of alignment. Preliminary efforts to align curriculum utilizing Confederation College’s “Aboriginal Learning Outcomes” as a companion framework to the Learning Outcomes approach is underway.

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PATHWAY DEVELOPMENT

A main objective of the project is to develop pathways between Indigenous Studies, Environmental and Social Work programs at Trent, Confederation and FNTI. These pathways for learners are two-way, providing an opportunity to move horizontally between institutions. A preliminary analysis of the course content within these three program streams identified 27 potential pathways for development (see Table 1).

Table 1: Potential Pathways between Trent, Confederation and FNTI

	IS	IES	ACA	NCFS	ET	IL	SW
Indigenous Studies (IS)-Trent							
Indigenous Environmental Studies (IES)-Trent							
Aboriginal Community Advocacy (ACA)-Confederation							
Native Child & Family Services(NCFS) Confederation							
Environmental Technician (ET)-Confederation							
Indigenous Leadership (IL)-FNTI							
Social Work (SW)-FNTI							

Once all potential pathways were identified feasibility of pathways were assessed based on the following criteria: program alignment, program stability, and development, and current partnerships and pathways. Programs that were strongly aligned, well-developed or longstanding, and that currently did not have any current partnerships or pathways in

place were placed in the highest priority. This resulted in the focus on the potential pathways of the Indigenous Studies program at Trent to and from the Aboriginal Community Advocacy program at Confederation, and the Indigenous Environmental program at Trent to and from the Environmental Technician program at Confederation.

The next step involved a more fulsome evaluation of the pathways using the learning outcomes framework, including an environmental scan of any similar pathways. The environmental scan determined that no clear benchmarks were in place regarding transferability of credit hours, with credit hours varying by programs and institutions. The maximum transfer of 60 credit hours for a two year college diploma was identified and the scan also revealed that pathways in environmental programs were quite common, whereas pathways between Indigenous Studies programs were scarce at best.

While linkages between the Environmental programs were present, deemed in need of further analysis, the evaluation between the Trent Indigenous Studies and Confederation Aboriginal Community Advocacy program uncovered high compatibility levels both in discipline specific and cultural content. In response, a draft articulation agreement for the pathway between the two programs was developed, outlining a 60 credit hour transfer which would allow learners to begin their studies at Trent in the third year of the Indigenous Studies Degree program. Table 2 provides a summary of the pathway.

Table 2: Pathways for Aboriginal Community Advocacy Diploma graduates entering Indigenous Studies Degree

Program Requirements for BA (Honours) in Indigenous Studies	Courses Granted through transfer equivalency from Confederation College (required for program)	Courses students will need to take to meet specific program requirements
5.0 INDG credits consisting of INDG 1000Y, 2100Y, 3105Y, 3813Y, 4201H and 4202H	INDG 1000Y, 2100Y	INDG 3105Y, 3813Y, 4201H & 4202H
5.0 INDG additional credits, including at least 0.5 credits from each of the four clusters: Indigenous Knowledge, Culture & Languages Indigenous Lands, Politics & History Theories, Methods & Practice Cultural Expressions & Performance	INDG 3860Y	
	INDG 2000Y, 3401H	
	1011H, 1012H, 1500H	
		0.5 credits
At least 3.0 of the INDG credits at the 4000 level from the four clusters	---	two additional 4000 level courses from the four clusters (4201H & 4202H would be the third)
A minimum of 7 credits at the 3000 or 4000 level	one and a half courses at this level included above: 3860Y and 3401H	one additional half credit at the 3000 or 4000 level (five courses at this level included above: 3105Y, 3813Y, 4201H, 4202H, 2-4000 level courses)
A minimum of 3 credits with a grade of 60% in a different disciplines	INDG-POST 2000Y, INDG-ADM 1500H	1.5 credits in different disciplines

A cohort from the ACA Diploma program will transition to Trent University's IS Degree program September 2015. Discussions with these learners related to their transition needs will create awareness of the pathway strategy. A discussion guide was developed to frame this work (see Appendix A).

PATHWAY ANALYSIS

An in-depth analysis of the alignment between the Aboriginal Community Advocacy program and the Indigenous Studies program, and the Environmental Technician program and Indigenous Environmental Studies programs was conducted.

The initial phase of the methodology employed for this analysis included a course by course analysis. Syllabi from the Indigenous and Environmental programs were analyzed by members of the research team utilizing a learning outcomes framework. While this approach highlighted a feasible pathway within the Indigenous Studies programs, it did not produce similar results for the Environmental programs.

This lack of immediate alignment indicated that there was a need to revise and create new curriculum in order to achieve transferability. This initiated a broader discussion about the role of Indigenous knowledge systems in assessing transferability as a complement to disciplines such as Environmental Studies.

In the second phase, course syllabi from both areas of programming were then analyzed using the Aboriginal Learning Outcomes framework. Developed in 2007 through the collaboration of the Aboriginal Education Council at Confederation College and Negahneewin College of Academic and Community Development, these outcomes provide a framework for Confederation College to infuse Indigenous knowledges across curricula. The seven (7) Aboriginal Learning Outcomes are:

1. Relate principles of Indigenous knowledge to career field.
2. Analyze the impact of colonialism on Aboriginal communities.
3. Explain the relationship between land and identity within Indigenous societies.
4. Compare Aboriginal and Canadian perceptions of inclusion and diversity.
5. Analyze racism in relation to Aboriginal peoples.
6. Generate strategies for reconciling Aboriginal and Canadian relations.
7. Formulate approaches for engaging Aboriginal community partners.

When used to assess transferability, greater alignment was found in both Indigenous Studies and Environmental programs. As the Aboriginal Learning Outcomes are integrated into the curriculum, the knowledge, skills, and attitudes derived from these outcomes are reinforced through various assignments and measures across course content. This

enables learners to experience their learning in a culturally relevant manner. This resonates with learners so that their learning experience is affirmative. This also increases understanding of the Aboriginal Canadian context for both learners and instructors. Enhanced awareness and appreciation of this historical and current landscape, prepares graduates for the workplace. Increased alignment of curriculum is visible when matching infused Indigenous content at the originating institution (Confederation College Appendix D) with Indigenous content at the receiving institution (Trent University Appendix C). The discussion of the relationship between the outcomes and essential employability skills is ongoing.

NEXT STEPS

Building upon the work accomplished in Year One of the project, the primary objectives of Year Two are to:

- Assess the feasibility of other pathways identified in the preliminary analysis, utilizing both traditional and culturally-relevant learning outcome frameworks;
- Formalize and implement pathways deemed feasible through learning outcome frameworks;
- Design and implement a holistic student transition pathway that will support Aboriginal learners;
- Create an evaluation mechanism for the learner transition support model.

Table 3 provides a detailed summary of activities with timelines associated with project outcomes.

Table 3: Project Phase II Implementation Plan

	Spring 2015	Summer 2015	Fall 2015	Winter 2016
Pathway Feasibility				
Review Indigenous Leadership and Community Development curriculum with FNTI's Haudenosaunee governance curriculum				
Examine potential pathways including LCD degree pathways				
Develop articulation agreements between partnering institutions based on above				
Formalize and Implement Pathways				
Finalize IS-ACA articulation agreement				
Finalize other articulation agreement signed by partnering institutions				
Promote articulation agreements to key staff and learners				
Design, Implement and Evaluate Student Support Pathways				
Conduct sessions with learners on transition needs				
Finalize asset map and conduct gaps analysis				
Develop transition program				
Implement transition program at test site (Trent)				
Evaluate transition program via focus groups and surveys				

Discussion Questions

1. What would make this program appealing for you to attend?
2. What could we do to help you transition?
3. Do you have any concerns about the transition?
4. Are you able to attend a 3 week orientation prior to school sta

Appendix D: Inclusion of Aboriginal Learning Outcomes in Confederation College
ACA Program

Aboriginal Learning Outcomes: January 2015		ALO #1: relate principles of indigenous knowledge to career field	ALO #2: analyze the impact of colonialism on Aboriginal communities.	ALO #3: Explain the relationship between land and identity within Indigenous societies	ALO #4: Compare Aboriginal and Canadian perceptions of Indigenous societies and diversity	ALO #5: Analyse racism in relation to Aboriginal Peoples'	ALO #6: Generate strategies for reconciling Aboriginal and Canadian relations.	ALO #7: Formulate approaches for engaging Aboriginal community partners.	
Confederation College: Aboriginal Community Advocacy Program									
YEAR ONE									
Course code	Course Title								
CS 040	College Writing Essentials								
LV 100	History of Aboriginal and Canadian relations	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
LV 109	Indigenous Identity and Relationship to Land	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
LV 110	Government, Law and Aboriginal Peoples	X	X		X	X	X	X	
LV 202	Aboriginal Law and Self-government	X	X		X		X	X	
LV 204	Introduction to Advocacy	X	X		X		X	X	
LV 210	Traditional Knowledge and Ethics	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
LV 213	Community Development Process	X	X		X		X	X	
MC 155	Microsoft Applications								
MC 124	Aboriginal Language and Culture	X	X	X	X		X	X	