

Creating Mobility for Students Enrolled in New Programs at FNTI
A Common Core Cultural Curriculum (4C) for Indigenous Post Secondary
Learners at the First Nations Technical Institute

Final Report

August 30, 2020

First Nations Technical Institute (FNTI)

Indigenous curriculum is not a concept...it is series of life teachings that honour the gifts that each learner carries. It is our responsibility as educators to create the space to realize this potential.

Dr. Joyce Helmer, Anishinaabe-Kwe, 2020

Acknowledgments

G'Chi-Meegwetch to all of the participants in this project. Together we have created a different space and place in the Indigenous Post-Secondary landscape.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The First Nations Technical Institute in Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory is currently developing some of the first University undergraduate degrees offered by Indigenous Institutes in Ontario. These newly created programs are being developed to accommodate an archive of common core cultural curriculum (4C's) are uniquely structured and will be delivered unlike anything that currently exists in public education in the country.

This project has enabled FNTI to identify and begin to develop and secure pathways for students entering and exiting Indigenous programming across institutions with full or partial credentials. This project has also helped to define options to either complete or continue with post graduate studies at other post-secondary institutions in Ontario.

The goals of this project were to map the existing cultural courses using the Ontario Qualifications Framework and the Indigenous Learning Outcomes. Subsequent to that each of the newly proposed courses were analyzed to produce additional curriculum maps aligning the courses, content and Intended Learning Outcomes across all courses in all programs.

Creating a common resource guide for this new process was critical as a step to developing relationships with some of the existing PSE partners and will be instrumental in guiding the next steps with the key stakeholders in pathways offices in Ontario.

Existing articulation agreements were reviewed and newly identified relationships were explored to enable learners enrolled in the newly developed programs to enter and exit with ease from this unique environment to more traditional Western education systems.

SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION

FNTI as learning institution

FNTI strives to create healthy, prosperous and vibrant learners and communities through transformative learning experiences which are built on a foundation of Indigenous Knowledges. We are committed to the success of our learners, our program deliveries, policies, and wrap around supports which allows us to continually innovate to facilitate sustainability, improvement and positive change throughout the institution. A central component of all that we do is to incorporate Indigenous worldviews, knowledge and values to reinforce and maintain our cultural self-determination.

What we stand for in the Post Secondary sector

FNTI serves as the third pillar of Post-Secondary education sector (PSE) in Ontario. As an Indigenous PSE we are pivotal to enhancing access and mobility options to the Indigenous communities throughout the Province. We are positioned to afford learners opportunities to earn a diploma, degree or advanced degrees in collaboration with our other PSE partners.

In addition, FNTI's responsive and flexible delivery model allows Indigenous communities to respond to broader labour market trends, as well as individual and specific labour market needs in Indigenous communities. As a recent example, a central Ontario Anishinaabe community had made the strategic decision to extend their K-3 programming to K-6 and was in urgent need of more qualified staff to work in the community. In a relatively short turn around, FNTI was able to offer the required programming in the community to quickly respond and meet their workforce requirements with their own community members.

FNTI's Transformative Learning model

FNTI provides learners with opportunities to critically reflect on personal purpose, gifts, assumptions, values and belief systems, in order to facilitate autonomous thinking, personal growth, and self-determination.

Meeting learners and community needs

FNTI serves multiple Indigenous constituents locally, nationally and internationally. Due to the methods in which our programs are delivered we are called on by many Indigenous groups, organizations and communities who may have specific needs they feel can be met with our programming and/or delivery.

Locally, FNTI delivers an Aviation full-time post-secondary program as well as community programs. Our commitment to the local community is to provide support and learning programs that enhance other opportunities available to community members.

Additional community programming includes the Tyendinaga Justice Circle, an alternative justice forum for Indigenous youth in the community. Additionally, FNTI has partnered with various services provided by the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte to assist in service and program delivery for the community.

As well, FNTI has the Training and Development Centre which will tailor training to the needs of Indigenous and non-Indigenous, government and non-governmental organizations, business and individuals.

The development and delivery of post-secondary programming at FNTI are direct results of requests made by Indigenous people and communities throughout Canada. FNTI is known for our intensive professional mode of delivery and programming particularly geared to mature and adult learners who may also be employed full time. We are also known for creating learning environments which are informed by and respectful of our learner's cultural heritage and traditions. Programs developed at FNTI are reflective of Indigenous cultural knowledge, traditions, ceremony and when possible Indigenous languages.

As well, part of FNTI's core mission is to ensure that community program offerings are current, viable and relevant to the communities that we serve. This means that a great deal of engagement and deliberate communication throughout the year takes place to determine where and when to deliver programming. We have ensured that our relationship with the communities that we serve is respectful, responsive and sustainable.

Once we receive a request and determine that we have a viable place to run programming, the following would further inform our decision to go ahead with a delivery:

- 1) Localized labour market trend analysis
- 2) Gap analysis of current programming (review current sector offerings)
- 3) Review regional Indigenous labour market needs
- 4) Input from Indigenous skills and training agencies

Protecting Indigenous knowledge

FNTI upholds its Indigenous philosophies through its conduct and business practices; through our policies, internal and informal ways of interaction and sharing, adhering to values of and vision of our local communities and those communities that we serve. FNTI is cognizant of protection of Indigenous knowledges, and traditional ecological knowledge. As well, we are developing internal capacity to deal with the use, the dissemination, protocols, housing, and archiving.

A critical component of our self-determination is the role of FNTI's Cultural Advisors/ Elders. They are part of the spiritual and Traditional Knowledges. The classroom teachings/learnings become more powerful, deeper and enriched when these Knowledges are spoken, taught and passed on to faculty and learners by these Knowledge Keepers. There is a heavy reliance on these Knowledge Keepers throughout the development of our new undergraduate programs.

Process and purpose

As evidenced above, there is a need for creating custom accessibility and mobility approaches for Indigenous learners in our current PSE environment. It is well articulated in academic literature that Indigenous learners are well served in a culturally responsive environment. FNTI strives to create that environment and work with our partners to align a similar response in partner institutions. Creating pathways for seamless admissions and transfers from an Indigenous Institute is critical at this time as we are at the beginning of offering our own undergraduate degrees. Relationship building, information sharing and formalizing processes is vital.

This project afforded FNTI to examine newly developing Indigenous undergraduate programs and explore various elements to build a common core of cultural knowledges to serve as a foundation.

Indigenous Program Development

Currently, at FNTI a number of undergraduate degree level programs have been in various stages of development. A number have been completed over the course of this project and are scheduled to begin in the current academic year. The Bachelor of Indigenous Social Work, Bachelor of Science in Food Sustainability, Bachelor of Health Science: Midwifery, Bachelor of Indigenous Law and Justice are all four-year programs what will be offered in the 2020/21 enrollment cycle.

Indigenous Trauma based approaches, Family Violence Diploma, and a 4-year undergraduate degree in Indigenous Leadership are also currently in various stages of development and are also incorporating elements or all of the common core cultural curriculum. Following are some samples of the proposed Indigenous undergraduate program descriptions:

Bachelor of Indigenous Social Work Program Description

The Bachelor of Indigenous Social Work (BISW) degree program will provide FNTI's typical high level of academic rigour and Indigenous education, with traditional practices and cultural knowledge, which are expected by Indigenous Peoples across the province.

Indigenous social workers play an integral role in the health and well-being of families and the communities. Changes in legislation have resulted in networks of First Nations child and family services agencies building greater workforce capacity in communities across Ontario and Canada.

Graduates from the program will be equipped to reduce the number of Indigenous children in care. Backed by invaluable Indigenous education, they will improve systems to be truly child and family centred, community directed, and focused on prevention and early intervention.

Bachelor of Indigenous Science: Foods Sustainability Program Description

This unique degree is being designed to equip students with the knowledge and skills needed to contribute to food sovereignty, community growth, economic development and ecological restoration at First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities across Canada. The degree will incorporate experiential learning on the land with teachings that revolve around the traditional Haudenosaunee food systems cycle. This Indigenous education opportunity will provide students with the knowledge and skills needed to help communities across Canada. Seed care and seed saving, sustainable horticulture, foraging wild foods and medicines, soil health and sustainability, and traditional fishing and hunting principles will be components of the learning experience.*

FNTI has built a greenhouse that has been specifically conceived to support the new stand-alone degree program. Greenhouses can be used to address critical issues affecting Indigenous communities, such as climate change, food security and relationships to environment, food and diet. Agricultural, horticultural, arboriculture crops grown in the greenhouse will help expose students to a wide variety of ideas, opportunities and tastes. This additional element of Indigenous education will begin to enhance their relationship to food, their environment and the Earth.

**Haudenosaunee is an Indigenous term for ‘People of the Longhouse’ who are known as the Iroquois Confederacy by the French, and the League of Five Nations by the English. The confederacy is properly called the Haudenosaunee Confederacy.*

Bachelor of Indigenous Health Sciences: Midwifery Program Description

The Indigenous Midwifery program, another integral Indigenous education opportunity, will increase access to culturally safe midwifery care in Ontario. Indigenous midwives will support the health and well-being of Indigenous women, babies, families and communities, offering choices for Indigenous Peoples to deliver and receive care on their traditional lands. The comprehensive stand-alone Indigenous Midwifery degree will be four years in length and bring a traditional Indigenous model of care to the forefront.

This Indigenous education program’s approach and curriculum is rooted in Indigenous worldviews, which recognize that Onkwehón:we midwives provide primary care during the prenatal period, labour, delivery and up to six weeks postpartum. Services include puberty teachings, sex education, pre-conception care, pregnancy, birthing, post-natal/post-partum care, traditional parenting, well-woman and well-baby care, and much more.*

Indigenous midwives practice under the exemption for Aboriginal midwives in the Midwifery Act, 1991, which is also defined in the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991, recognizing the right of Onkwehón:we midwives to practice autonomously with Indigenous women, babies, families and communities. In 2017, Indigenous midwives were granted access to similar funding streams as registered midwives with the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

**Onkwehón:we is an Indigenous term referring to ‘human beings and all of life – earth, water, plants, vegetables, trees, animals, rocks, winds, sun, moon, stars, and spirit world.*

A number of additional programs are currently in various stages of development. They include Bachelor of Indigenous Education, Bachelor of Indigenous Leadership, Family Violence Worker Diploma and the Trauma Informed Approaches Diploma.

SECTION TWO: PROGRAM MAPPING PROCESS

Metrics

At the completion of this project the Indigenous Advanced Education and Skill Council (IAESC.ca) qualification framework was not available. Therefore, two specific validated metrics were utilized to consolidate and distill the information from each of the programs; the Ontario Provincial Qualifications Framework, and the Indigenous Learning outcomes.

Provincial Qualifications Framework

The Ontario Qualifications Framework (OQF) is used within the Ontario education system. It provides information on postsecondary certificates, diplomas, undergraduate and graduate degree programs. (www.tcu.gov.on.ca/pepg/programs/oqf/)

Indigenous Learning outcomes framework

The Indigenous Learning outcomes used in the curriculum and program mapping originated in 2009 from the Negahneewin Education Council at Confederation College in Thunder Bay. These outcomes demonstrate cultural knowledge acquisition, skills and values with application to a multitude of community contexts: urban, remote, rural, organizational. Linkages to community relationships are central threads throughout each outcome and by extrapolation to regional, national and global perspectives. These learning outcomes by composition link to the principles of reflection, responsibility, relationship, reciprocity and reclamation. These outcomes are critical to creating consistent foundational building blocks across all programs. (<https://www.confederationcollege.ca/professional-development/ilo>).

Program comparisons and analysis

The unique nature of the program development afforded wide and various opportunities to review and develop individual program content while auditing the options for common core content and delivery options. This allowed us opportunities to integrate knowledges across courses and in various contexts. This was achieved through building complex wholistic reviews of content, delivery, industry needs, current curriculum material and practices in other Institutions, timing, barriers, relationship to customary Indigenous practices (apprenticing) and ongoing relationship building with other affinity programs and schools.

A review of available course content from Trent, Ryerson and Laurentian Universities provided a level of comparison and examples of like-minded Indigenous program offerings.

Extensive discussions with a variety of institutional personnel from Registrar's, Vice Presidents and faculty members provided insight into their respective philosophies, values, beliefs and nuances of Indigenous curricula – content and delivery.

This was useful to ensure that learners were indeed able to transfer and mobility was possible between and among programs and institutions with seamless success.

Collaborative community response

A critical element in the project deliberations was the inclusion of comprehensive community involvement and feedback on every aspect of the project. Multiple meetings and conversations were carried out to garner support and seek feedback at various points. A variety of individuals were provided with different components of the curriculum content to review, modify and edit as relevant. Specific content experts were involved to provide “a deeper dive” into Indigenous specific historical context design. The pathway forward will continue to be collaborative and relational between relevant community stakeholders.

SECTION THREE: PROGRAM REFERENCE AND RESOURCE GUIDES (R&R Guide)

Concurrent with the 4C development and the undergraduate program development a comprehensive Table of Contents (Appendix 1) of references and resources was suggested. Each new program will be provided with a guidebook specific to each program area. The R & R Guide is divided into sections with an introductory unit containing information that is common to all programs. Each program will have a separate unit which will be a repository of current processes, practices, content, modules, assessments, assignments, and pedagogical suggestions. As well, all program storyboards, course outlines, lesson plans, schedules and a comprehensive Bibliography will be maintained for each program in their respective units. This will be an invaluable resource to new personnel and will ensure current documents for yearly program reviews.

SECTION FOUR: PATHWAYS AND MOBILITY

It has been well documented that in order for Indigenous Learners to succeed within the Western education system it is vital that learners are able to develop a sense of belonging. One of the ways to develop a sense of belonging a student needs is to find commonalities with their own lives and living conditions. Learners will begin to understand the similarities among the diverse Indigenous Nations through their own personal context.

The inclusion of cultural practice within the education curriculum can develop this sense of belonging. Providing the opportunity for a student to know oneself and one's heritage will ensure that learners develop a strong sense of identity, leading to greater self-confidence and higher persistence rates. Including a plethora of consistent common cultural core curriculum options will serve to continuously enhance a student's sense of belonging and the contents and contexts will provide deeper meanings and richer understandings of course content and relationships to lived personal and professional experience. On a micro level, the continuity of Indigenous references made during lectures will serve to continuously enhance a student's sense of belonging and it will provide a deeper meaning and understanding to the topics being discussed.

One of the ways that FNTI has chosen to address the academic cultural responsiveness is through a common core curriculum. Historically a common core curriculum is often viewed as a one size fits all framework. Our definition of common core encompasses common courses that would or could be applied to multiple programs as applicable but also includes what we teach (content) and how we teach it (Andragogy and Indigegegy).

Common Core cultural curriculum

A core component of the undergraduate content development included a suite of 20 Indigenous cultural courses. They were developed to inform the foundation of a common core cultural curricular approach which afford learners opportunities to learn about themselves in relation to their own culture whichever Nation they belong to. It is our understanding that an inclusive approach to integrating Knowledges is critical to learners feeling a sense of belonging to their own Nation and the global Indigenous landscape. Each of these courses have/will be developed into a comprehensive teaching guide with a wide-ranging list of supporting documents and resource suggestions. (Appendix 2) These courses will be available in face-to-face and online delivery platforms.

The 20 courses include:

1. Introduction to Indigenous Studies 1: World View and Cultural Fluency
2. Indigenous Well Being and Health
3. Indigenous Oral Traditions, Creation Teachings and Original Instructions
4. Introduction to Indigenous Studies 2: Identity and Social Organization
5. Principles of Indigenous Sovereignty and Nation Building
6. Indigenous Agricultural Heritage
7. Indigenous Governance Teachings
8. Indigenous Problem Solving
9. Principles of Indigenous Leadership
10. Effective Indigenous Leadership Skill Sets
11. Recovering Health Sovereignty

12. Indigenous Ecological Knowledge
13. Continuity and Change: Profiles in Indigenous History
14. Indigenous Economies
15. Expressive Indigenous Culture
16. Building Indigenous Community Capacity
17. Indigenous Founding Values
18. Indigenous Sports Traditions
19. Restoring Environmental Sovereignty
20. Cultural Components to Treaty Making

The suite of common core courses is meant to provide a foundation of knowledges and skills to strengthen the learners scope within their respective disciplines. The common core curriculum contents were developed by subject experts and Indigenous Knowledge Keepers and Language speakers to encompass Indigenous history, languages and relationships. This archive of courses will be available for inclusion in any program at anytime. The delivery and scheduling profile allow for a number of options that are flexible and collaborative across programs and within programs.

The FNTI Common Core Cultural Curriculum (4 C's) is a framework for making local context driven curricula. It stresses customary identities shaped by a common language aligned with contemporary models of education. As stated previously, we understand that it is critical to include local history and traditions, customs, values and beliefs in our pedagogy. In this way it is our goal to reshape perceptions far beyond the conventional methods of teaching.

Some important considerations within the development and implementation of the FNTI 4C initiative includes the following elements and strategies:

- a) The capability to teach and infuse language throughout all aspects of course development, planning and implementation
- b) The inclusion of integrated learning opportunities. Integrated learning is the ability to draw on a range of skills, viewpoints, contexts, and situations and apply them to the current topic or condition. In the 4C initiative we could bring together different disciplines such as Social Work and Indigenous Justice or Midwifery and Food Systems so that students can work together to make the connections between their respective subject areas. These opportunities would allow learners to collaborate on systemic approaches to specific cases or topics. Utilizing diverse and contradictory points of view will assist learners to understand issues and positions contextually. This approach could apply across the suite of program offerings.
- c) Adding aspects of critical relational and reflective practice components such as Culture Camps and Health & Wellbeing courses. Cultural education consists of the capacity for reflection. In a common core cultural curriculum, learners learn to reflect upon their own culture, culture of others and culture in general. This capacity for relational engagement and critical reflection is a main form of self-consciousness, cultural self-consciousness but also philosophy, science and citizenship. It strengthens cultural identity and will serve as part of the continuum throughout the learners post secondary experience at FNTI. The considerate intention of the 4C "cultural mirroring" process will provide an ongoing approach to "checking in" with oneself and strengthening individual self-determination for moving successfully through school and onward.
- d) Creation of essential teaching teams to ensure culturally responsive teaching (CRT).

Culturally responsive teaching fully recognizes and respects learners for who they are and what they bring (their personal gifts) to the classroom. CRT empowers learners to expand their capabilities in other domains such as social, emotional, and political arenas. CRT includes learners' individual skills, languages, and attitudes and makes those attributes meaningful in every aspect of the learning

Each team will include Indigenous Knowledge Keepers and/or Elder Advisors collaborating with faculty facilitator/instructors, Student Success Facilitators and a diversity of learners. This reinforces the notion of teachers are learners and a part of the learning process, not necessarily as the only one with the subject knowledge. Accessing the skills and stories of the wider community is another way to include culture in the curriculum. Culturally responsive teaching and support teams who live and breathe the culture add a tangible depth to the material when they share Indigenous Knowledge and culture. The teams serve in classroom management and support roles can ensure the support structure, strategic direction and organisational goals align with a strong cultural practice curriculum

- e) Acknowledgment of the connection to the land. The inclusion of placed based and service-learning integration is important to the 4C initiative to ground the source of all learning for Indigenous Peoples'. Land/place based and service-learning offers a way for learners to explore the connections discovered in their integrated learning environments to not only reinforce the learning but to make learning relevant. Place based and service learning are particularly effective for community collaborative projects. This will be critical elements in the Midwifery, Indigenous Justice and Indigenous Food Systems programs. The sense of belonging, community and purpose that comes from land/place based and service-learning is enormous. It encourages learners to make a support, encourage and sustain their own communities.

Options for common core curriculum

The 4C curriculum of comprehensive, historic and linguistically accurate courses invite a number of options that will be readily available to program developers as new post secondary programs are being created and to individual faculty members as they prepare their course material. These common courses can also serve as possible enhanced professional development opportunities with community partners. For example, the Indigenous worldview course can be offered in conjunction with the community Language immersion program.

FNTI is actively involved in partnering with community entities with existing local programming. For example, Tribal Councils with established language and cultural programming developed within communities' resources could be established as laddering into FNTI programs. These resources could also be added to the suite already established to broaden the scope of program content. Formalized pathways through Memorandums of Understanding could be created to further create seamless access and transferability between Tribal Territories.

The flexibility of the 4C initiative in our current academic setting is endless.

A few examples:

1. The 20 completed courses could be offered as a stand-alone two-year Indigenous Studies diploma program.
2. The successful completion of the Indigenous Studies diploma would then be a pre-requisite to acceptance into every FNTI accredited post-secondary program

3. The 4C program could be utilized as a library of options for individual program planning affording flexibility while maintaining the consistent core of intended learning outcomes and common core standards across the respective programs.
4. The 4C courses could be used as possible electives to enhance and extend program course choices.
5. The whole content of each of the course be included in each program Resource guide to provide elements of information to enhance course preparation. Examples include areas of Indigenous research and communications courses could be supplemented with historical information included in the 4C courses.
6. The 4C courses could be offered to a combination of programs at the same time. For example, Indigenous Social Work, Indigenous Justice, Aviation and Midwifery could all be enrolled in the same course at the same time. For example, Indigenous worldview or Indigenous History)
7. Some of the 4C courses lend themselves to a specific andragogy which would include culture camps. For example, the inclusion of a cultural camp at the beginning of each year would serve to engage learners in their post secondary experience with other learners and provide a culturally responsive atmosphere while achieving credits.
8. 4C course could be offered as Electives in our academic partnership programs.
9. Our academic partners may want to collaborate on offering FNTI Indigenous courses within their on-campus programs.

Summary of Pathways

This project was carried out concurrently with the Provincial Indigenous Education Strategy credentialing guidelines. In preparation for the approved guidelines the project sought to draft possible pathways that would be available for transfer (entry and exit) from FNTI's suite of programs.

The following graphics outline some possible strategies for future articulation agreements.

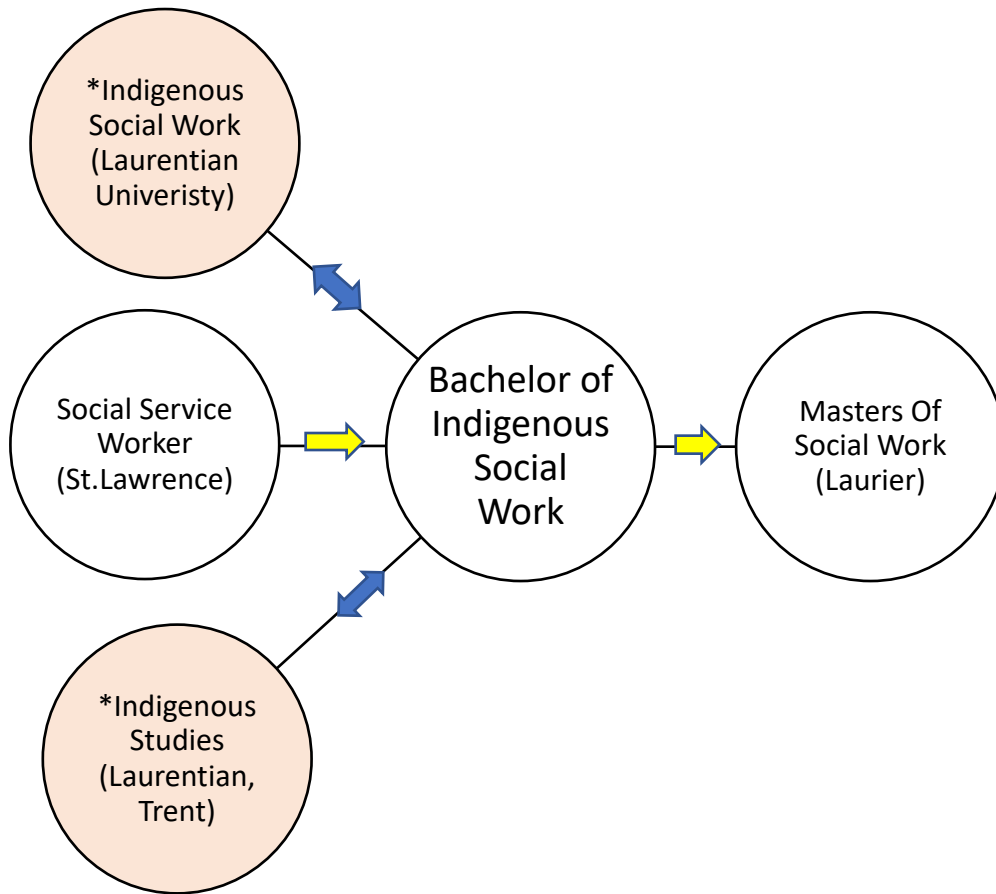


Figure 1: Pathways for the Proposed Bachelor of Indigenous Social Work Program (BISW)

The proposed Bachelor of Indigenous Social Work Program has a number of confirmed and proposed pathways that will allow learners a greater mobility between institutions and credentials. FNTI currently has a robust pathway for learners completing the Social Service Worker Program at Canadore College. These learners will automatically move into the BISW program if they choose to continue their post-secondary studies. A current articulation agreement with Wilfred Laurier opens up the pathway for a graduate degree. In this project initial discussion were carried out with Laurentian University to begin to create the relationship between their *Indigenous Social Work and *Indigenous Studies Programs and the new program at FNTI. FNTI, Trent University and Confederation College have an existing Memorandum of Understanding and it expected to confirm specific program articulations as the new BISW program accreditation is confirmed.

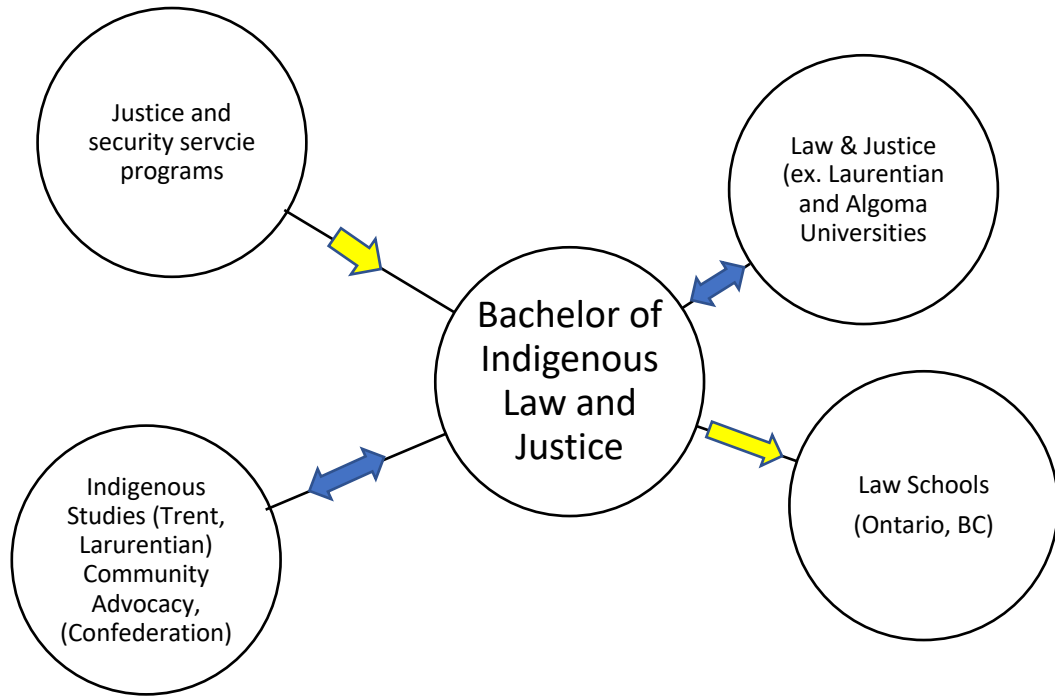


Figure 2: Pathways for the Proposed Bachelor of Indigenous Law and Justice

There are a number of affinity programs that are available for learners as part of the Indigenous Law and Justice pathway. A number of colleges offer Justice and Security programming while not identified as an Indigenous program offer Indigenous specific content and practicum opportunities. The graduates of this Indigenous Law and Justice will be well prepared as a socially accountable and sociologically knowledgeable practitioner and be well positioned to enroll in Law School to become a lawyer. Learners will also be able to transfer to either Laurentian University or Algoma University into the Bachelor of Law & Justice program.

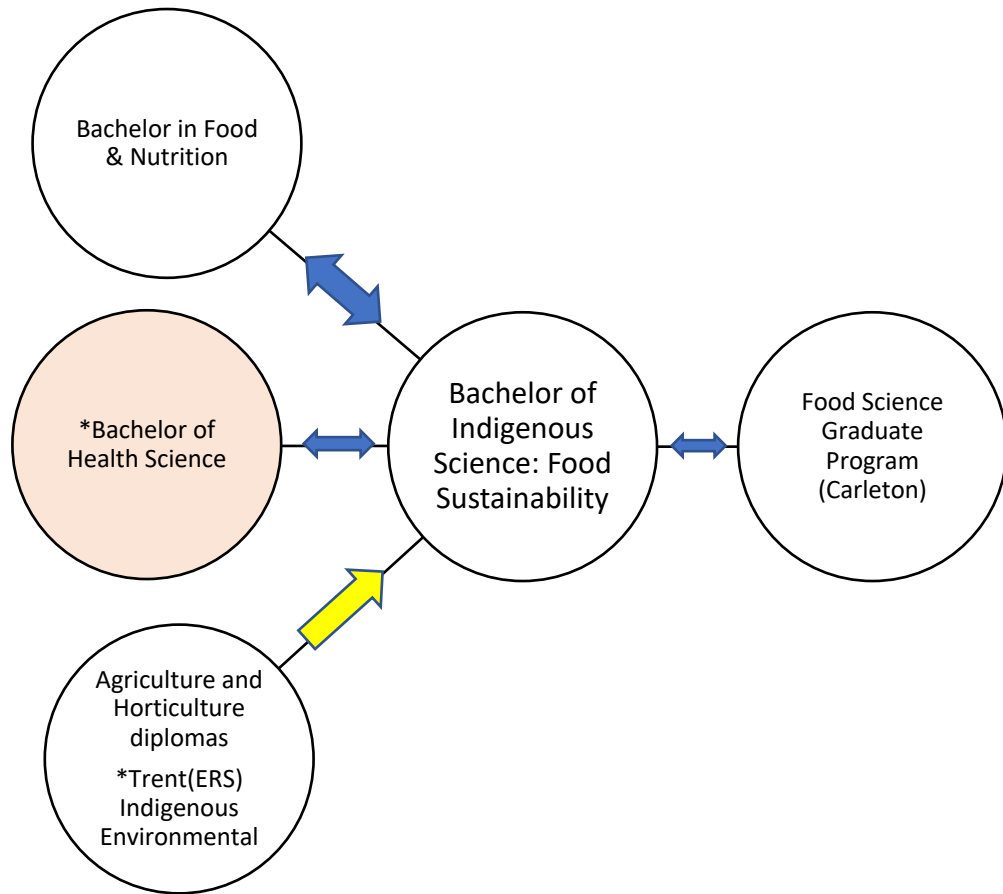


Figure 3: Pathways for the Proposed Bachelor of Indigenous Food Sustainability

The pathways into the Bachelor of Indigenous Food Sustainability are numerous and varied. Individuals from diploma level programs could ladder into the program from any Agriculture or Horticulture program across Canada. Options for pathways to be developed between the Indigenous Food sustainability and other undergraduate programs in Food and Nutrition may also be available. FNTI of also offering a Bachelor of Health Science which would afford possibilities of transfer between the programs and/or combined classes for possible dual credentials or block credit transfers.

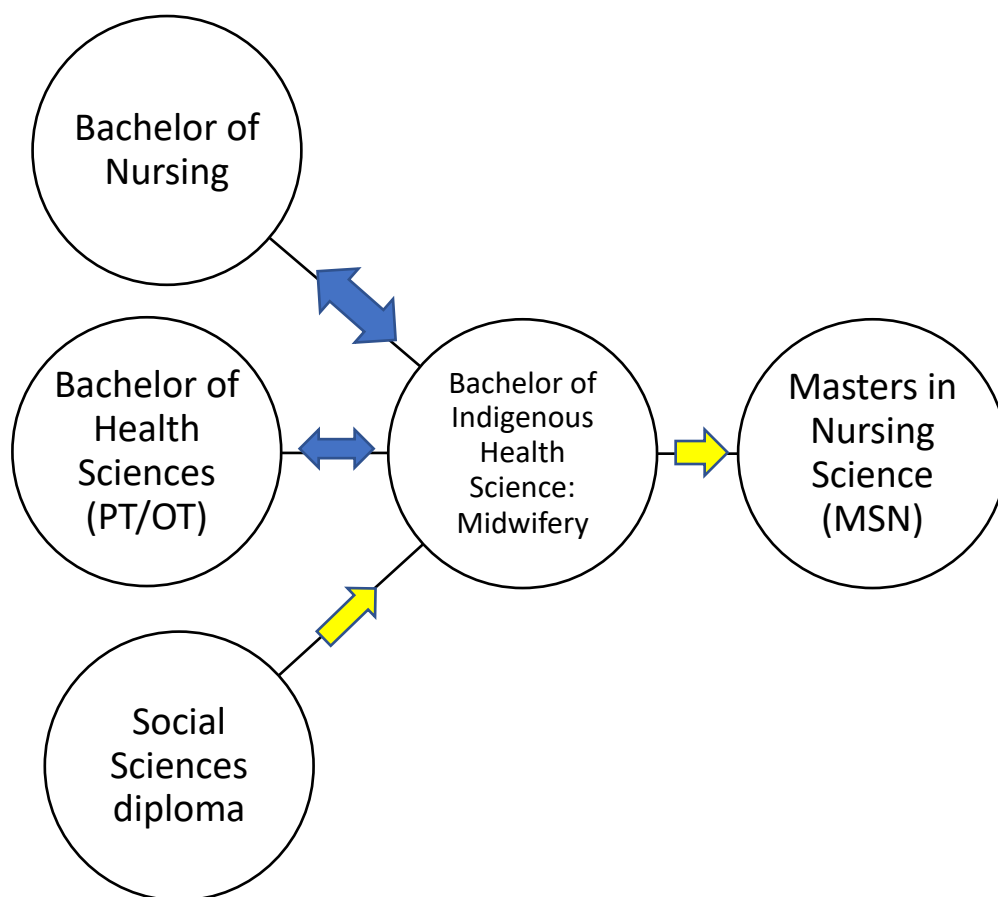


Figure 4: Pathways for the Bachelor of Indigenous Health Science: Midwifery

There is a direct affinity between the Bachelor of Nursing degrees and the Health Science: Midwifery program. Direct pathways between schools of nursing and FNTI’s midwifery program would be easily articulated. The same holds true between the undergraduate Health Sciences programs. With curriculum mapping a number of Social Science programs such as Social Work and Early Childhood Education, Personal Support Worker and Social Services Worker could provide some transferability to and from the Indigenous Health Science Midwifery program.

Indigenous articulations and relationship building

Creating and strengthening the 4C initiative requires ongoing and sustained relationships with local community members and colleagues from other Nations, Indigenous Institutes, Colleges and Universities. In previous ONCAT projects FNTI along with our academic partners (Trent University and Confederation College) developed a specific articulation agreement (Appendix 3) that was led by Algoma University. This newly developed articulation provides a much broader responsibility than criteria for academic transfer. This articulation agreement asks collaborators to articulate the wrap around supports that will be available to the learners as they move between and among the post secondary program offerings. This has proved quite responsive to date and will be used as the foundational

document for our documentation and partnerships related to these newly developed Indigenous programs.

In addition to articulation, including a variety of knowledge sources brings meaning and context to the relationship building and the learning. Collaborative partnerships at the operational level may provide opportunities for faculty and students to be introduced to new and germane role models. These new collaborations can increase faculty complement, provide guest speakers and perhaps expand support to all levels of engagement.

Lessons learned and suggested considerations

In order to ensure rigour and quality assurance the project sought to review existing curriculum materials from other post-secondary institutions. An online search as well as face-to-face enquiries were conducted of both College level and University level programs hoping to access course descriptions and Intended Learning Outcomes for the affinity programs. College level content was widely available and easy to access via institutional websites. University level course content is not available at all unless someone internally to the institution is willing to share their course material. With respect to this project, the alignment of curriculum between exit and entry affinity programs will be critical. Mapping all content from the learners existing institution with our program and vis versa will only assist in ensuring the learner is well prepared and success is built into the program. Without transparency of curriculum content between institutions the learners may be in jeopardy and set up for failure in their transfer efforts. Further work needs to be carried out to create specific alignments between FNTI and other post-secondary institutions. Respective of an articulation agreement, alignments need to include shared resources, open access to course materials, and extensive collaborative course and program mapping. It would important to include the office of the Registrar in all of these processes.

The ability to build and strengthen institutional relationships takes time and extensive travel. The Covid-19 pandemic shelter in place order came in mid-project limiting integral face-to-face meetings however activities were carried out utilizing a virtual resource. Relationship building was further somewhat limited as all work that was required had also migrated to a virtual environment and individuals were functioning in semi-crisis mode.

We also realized that in order for FNTI learners to transfer easily to another PSE in Ontario the other PSE's had to recognize our 4C curriculum as integrate to all of our undergraduate degrees and diploma. Additional time and resource will be required to fully apprise Ontario's PSE's of our innovative Indigenous approaches.

An ongoing theme that surfaced throughout the work was the ability to track the transfers and the pathways with the integration of the 4C elements. Receiver institutions would be required to accept and assess these credits and the recommendation to transfer. Rigorous and detailed tracking mechanisms would need to be created that aligned with existing processes. Again, this would require time and resources to create.

Addendum – April 2021

Pathways, articulation and relationship building

FNTI has continued to build the new Bachelor level degrees culminating in accreditation within the next year. These programs include Bachelor's degrees in Indigenous Justice, Indigenous Social Work, Science (Food Systems) and Health (Midwifery). There are clear affinity programs across the Post Secondary sector where strong pathways and articulations can be created. Ongoing relationships building efforts continue with the goal of formalizing partnerships. Face-to-face meetings continue to be limited to virtual meetings and will require ongoing additional time to formalize.

In previous ONCAT projects FNTI along with our academic partners (Trent University and Confederation College) developed a specific articulation agreement that was led by Algoma University. The agreement includes that a wrap around support process must be in place in the receiving institution. In the future articulation agreements clauses can now include support for block transfer for the FNTI Common Cultural Curriculum Courses (4C).

Retrospective analysis

As new undergraduate programs continue to be shaped the integration and operationalization of a common cultural curriculum has become more evident. Each program is unique and requires a variety of pedagogical approaches to ensure success. Completing this project has afforded opportunities to examine the possibilities prior to accreditation. There are options for electives, collaborative interdisciplinary learning and micro-credentialling that have been recognized and are now included in the creation, research and development process. This work has also enabled us to analyze some pilot testing for experiential learning inclusion in our Bachelor of Health Science: Food Sustainability program which will be extremely useful in the current development of a dedicated virtual access program.

FNTI has engaged in discussions with other Registrar colleagues to discuss transfer initiatives and access options.

This project has provided the foundation for the subsequent ONCAT project which is a collaborative among 3 Indigenous Institutes. Subsequent to the second ONCAT project we have continued to build tangible and concrete access and pathways initiatives that re-imagines how we engage with prospective learners.

Momentum and Awareness

The results of this project, while somewhat modified have been extremely beneficial in setting the stage for continued growth and collaborative action towards a more responsive educational admissions environment. While we are focused on growth and development, we are sensitive to continuing to build the momentum we have realized. We will be developing a process to inform and raise awareness of our new and innovative undergraduate programs and continue to build and enhance the Admissions processes so that all learners are included.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Reference and Resource Guide Table of Contents

Appendix 2: Sample Course Module

Appendix 3: Sample Diploma-To-Degree Exceptional Transfer Agreement

Appendix 4: Sample of Ontario Qualifications Framework Curriculum Map template

Appendix 5: Sample of Indigenous Learning Outcomes Mapping template

Figures

Figure 1: Pathways for the Proposed Bachelor of Indigenous Social Work Program (BISW)

Figure 2: Pathways for the Proposed Bachelor of Indigenous Law and Justice

Figure 3: Pathways for the Proposed Bachelor of Indigenous Food Sustainability

Figure 4: Pathways for the Bachelor of Indigenous Health Science: Midwifery