



PROJECT SNAPSHOT

Developing Northern Ontario Transfer Pathways for Massage Therapy and Kinesiology

Type: Pathway Development

Project Number: 2020-20 or P2020

Project Lead: Cambrian College

Collaborators: Laurentian University, Lakehead University

Project Summary

We are proposing bi-directional pathways for graduates of the Honours Bachelor of Science in Kinesiology at Laurentian University and Lakehead University to receive advanced standing in the Massage Therapy Advanced Diploma program at Cambrian College. The pathway would be reciprocal for graduates of the Massage Therapy program at Cambrian College who are interested in pursuing a degree in Kinesiology at either Laurentian or Lakehead.

This project will build on the successes of ONCAT Project 2018-11 between Cambrian College and Lakehead University. The project also will consider the NOSC Business Fundamentals Articulation as a potential model for new pathways. This new project proposal includes all institutions in Northern Ontario who offer the programs under consideration for new pathways, resulting in a pan-Northern approach.

Project Rationale

Currently no formal pathways exist between these programs. In addition, it is less common for pathways (advanced standing) to be in place for degree graduates pursuing a college advanced diploma. Students from the north often need to study in southern Ontario to pursue other credentials. This results in significantly higher costs and additional personal complications for those students who are mature learners with families who must also be accommodated. These new pathways will provide northern students with more options, closer to home. The new pathway from degree to diploma is unique in Ontario and may be of interest to Kinesiology and Massage Therapy graduates from southern Ontario as well.

"Previous ONCAT Projects (2014-09; 2015-01; 2015-22; 2017-24) identified the HBK as a gateway degree for current and future health professionals. Often there is considerable overlap between the content and learning outcomes of health and fitness-related diploma programs and first and second year level HBK courses, however students are currently required to complete multiple similar courses specific to each credential.

Pathways into diploma programs are equally valuable. HBK graduates have a strong background for other health professions that often require a college diploma. Traditionally, college acceptance has been based on high school performance, with the HBK credential unrecognized or minimally recognized." (ONCAT 2018-11) The Market Analysis Report completed by Cambrian College's Planning and Institutional Research department shows strong market demand for the Massage Therapy program. Cambrian is the only English college in Northern Ontario to offer the Massage Therapy Advanced Diploma and enrollment has been trending upward, demonstrating student demand for the program.

Both the national and provincial job forecasts are above average for Massage Therapists and the discipline is expected to face a labour shortage at a national level over the next decade.

Main Collaborators

The Chair of Health Sciences and Program Coordinator from the Massage Therapy program at Cambrian, along with the Manager of Pathways and the Pathways Officer. Laurentian University was represented by the lead faculty for the Kinesiology, Sports and Physical Education and Health Promotion programs along with the Manager of Admissions. Lakehead University was represented by the Director of the Kinesiology program, the Project Resource Consultant and the Project Coordinator.

Results

1. Strong collaborative working relationships were established between the faculties of the universities and the college. The opportunity for the teams to work together, share information on their respective programs and ultimately come to agreement on the pathways will result in further discussions and more creative approaches to transfer between the institutions.
2. One university to college pathway has been finalized and is moving through the university's approval process. The second university to college pathway has been drafted and the team is waiting for confirmation from their VPA that it will be appropriate to move to approval.
3. One university to college pathway has been drafted. This will allow Kinesiology graduates to develop practical skill to become a registered Massage Therapist.

Pathways Created

Massage Therapy Advanced Diploma at Cambrian College to Honours Bachelor of Kinesiology Degree at Lakehead University - currently being approved by Senate Honours Bachelor of Kinesiology Degree at Lakehead University to Massage Therapy Advanced Diploma at Cambrian College - approved and ready to admit students in Fall 2021.

Incomplete Pathways

Massage Therapy Advanced Diploma at Cambrian College to Bachelor of Science in Kinesiology at Laurentian University - a draft agreement has been developed but unfortunately completion has been impacted by the current restructuring situation at Laurentian. It is expected that the agreement will move through the approval processes after the April 30th report of recommendations.

Bachelor of Science in Kinesiology at Laurentian University to Massage Therapy Advanced Diploma at Cambrian College has been drafted but not complete due to the current situation at Laurentian University.

Student Outcomes

The intention is for the college to university pathways to be finalized as a 3 + 2 years and 3 + 3 years. This will save both time and money for students who pursue both credentials. The university to college pathway will not likely save time due to the lockstep nature of course delivery as well as the profession specific courses that are required. Having said that, the students who pursue this pathway will have a lighter course load, potentially resulting in time available to work as well as study.

This project benefits transfer students by providing several different opportunities in northern Ontario to start and finish two credentials. The relationships built between the academic teams of relatively small institutions sets the stage for cross program promotion of the pathways and creates opportunities for students to be directed to the specific individuals in partner institutions who can answer their questions, support their applications and at times allay their concerns. There are many other benefits which are outlined below related to time, finances and connection to the labour market.

Student Time Savings

The diploma to degree pathways will save the students 1 - 2 academic years of study time. The Laurentian pathway is drafted as a 3 + 2 years and the Lakehead pathway is drafted as a 3 + 3 years.

The degree to diploma pathways don't necessarily save on time other than within each semester when the course load will be lighter.

Student Financial Savings

The pathways from Cambrian to both universities will result in financial savings although they have not been specifically quantified at this time. As an example, the Cambrian to Lakehead pathway will result in a savings of 1 year of tuition - \$7,297.14 plus the cost of living expenses for one year for those individuals who would need to move to Thunder Bay to study. The average estimate for living expenses for 1 academic year is approximately \$15,000.

Student Flexibility

These pathways will improve access to students in the north to both degree and diploma programs. The impact of COVID means that there is more flexibility in delivery modalities which can make it easier for individuals in remote locations to start and continue with their studies. The established pathways will make the admission process much more seamless for these students and will help them to decide early on in their academic journey if they wish to pursue both credentials.

Student Work Alignment

The Massage Therapy program is an accredited program and graduates must be successful to become registered with the professional body. The pathway from university to college will allow individuals to become Registered Massage Therapists with a stronger background in anatomy and physiology. The students who go on to pursue the Kinesiology degree following their

registration as a Massage Therapist will position themselves for positions more broadly within the health care system. They will have opportunities in education as well as in management roles. In particular the field of Massage Therapy is indicated as a high demand area in the national labour market in years to come.

Institutional Outcomes

There have been no immediate changes to institutional practices as a result of the project. A longer term change may be co-registration options for students in both programs at Laurentian and Cambrian. Lakehead may be able to offer a bridge option to support student transfer while students are still in their Diploma program.

Sector or System Implications

Team discussions definitely highlighted the fact that universities and colleges are beginning to be much more open to creative approaches to transfer. In particular, partners from Laurentian identified a number of courses that are delivered by Cambrian that could potentially be taken by the university students regardless of whether they had made a decision to pursue the pathway. These pathways will start to pilot and support innovative approaches to registration and participation in college and university courses.

Tips/Advice

Building the working relationships between team early on is a key to success. Once those relationships are in place there is trust and respect related to the information shared and the academic quality of all programs. It allows for better, deeper discussions regarding the pathway and other innovative approaches that might be possible. From a practical perspective, getting course information early in the project helps to facilitate the mapping process and could help to mitigate issues that arise that are outside the control of the teams.

Tools and Resources

The Lakehead team developed a survey to assist with mapping Cambrian's core Massage courses to the Kinesiology core courses. In addition, the Cambrian to Lakehead program mapping is a simple and easy to understand document. These tools which were initiated by our partners at Lakehead really helped to facilitate the bi-directional nature of the pathway.