

ABORIGINAL POST-SECONDARY

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

POLICY FRAMEWORK

1996

ABORIGINAL POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION AND TRAINING POLICY FRAMEWORK

I. OBJECTIVES

The Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Policy Framework will achieve the following objectives:

- i. increase the participation and success rates of Aboriginal people in post-secondary education and training;
- ii. support capacity building toward self-government for Aboriginal people through post-secondary education and training opportunities for Aboriginal people;
- iii. establish a long-term plan to ensure that Aboriginal peoples can acquire the knowledge and skills required for effective self-government in the post-treaty environment; and
- iv. secure Federal Government commitment to maintain financial contributions for post-secondary education and training for Aboriginal peoples.

II. GENERAL BACKGROUND AND PRINCIPLES

1.1 Government Strategic Priorities

The Government of British Columbia has placed great importance on addressing the concerns of Aboriginal peoples. In 1991, the Provincial Government recognized the inherent right of Aboriginal peoples to self-government, and subsequently endorsed the recommendations of the British Columbia Claims Task Force Report and established the British Columbia Treaty Commission to settle land claims. The following year, the Aboriginal Policy Framework defined pre-treaty and treaty policy linkages that build towards self-sufficiency and self-government.

In 1993, the Province established policy forums with First Nations political organizations, approved an interim or parallel measures approach that included social and economic issues, signed a cost-sharing agreement on treaty negotiations with the Federal Government, and approved a Strategic Planning Initiative which provides direction on treaty negotiations, interim measures implementation, and relationships with Aboriginal peoples.

Discussions are currently underway with off-reserve and non-status Aboriginal groups on the formation of other policy forums. In addition, two concurrent activities are taking place in regard to Interim and Parallel measures. These include broad measures of policy, legislative, and regulatory change, characterized as a "pre-implementation of self-government in specific areas" negotiated at policy forums, and program delivery changes within Provincial policy developed by individual line ministries.

The strategic priorities of the Ministry of Education, Skills and Training supporting Provincial Government Aboriginal policy and program initiatives include increasing participation, retention, and success in post-secondary education and training for Aboriginal peoples through the development and implementation of a comprehensive policy framework.

1.2 Legal Context

Aboriginal peoples have unextinguished Aboriginal rights and on-going treaty rights that are protected in section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982. There are 197 First Nations in British Columbia whose powers and authorities are generally a matter of exclusive Federal jurisdiction [section 91(24) of the Constitution Act, 1867 (Federal jurisdiction over 'Indians and Lands reserved for the Indians').

In the area of education, because the Indian Act, section 4(3) limits the application of the Act to Indians between the ages of 7 and 17 ordinarily residing on a reserve, the responsibility for post-secondary education has resided with the Province through legislation regarding public post-secondary education and training.* Notwithstanding this, the Federal Government provides non-statutory post-secondary support to Status Indians and selected post-secondary education programs and services.

1.3. Principles

The development of the Ministry's Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Policy Framework is based upon the following principles:

Overarching

The Province envisions a society in which:

- i. Relationships between Aboriginal peoples and all British Columbians are based on equality and respect;
- ii. Aboriginal peoples can fulfill their aspirations for self-determining and self-sustaining communities; and
- iii. All British Columbians enjoy the social and economic benefits of cooperation and certainty.

* Provincial Legislation

The College and Institute Act, SBC 1979, c.53; the Private Post-Secondary Education Act, SBC 1990, c.64; the University Act, SBC 1979, c.419; the University Foundations Act, SBC 1987, c.50; and others governing the University of Northern British Columbia, the Open Learning Agency and the British Columbia Institute of Technology.

Any contracts, agreements, or policy changes agreed to by the Province and Aboriginal organizations, agencies, or Governments, prior to the conclusion of any Treaty, are without prejudice to the treaty negotiations.

Jurisdiction

The Federal Government is responsible constitutionally for 'Indians and lands reserved for Indians', for the fulfillment of its statutory and fiduciary obligations, and, as part of its overall responsibility, for the well-being of the federation and of ensuring equity between all Canadians, for programs and services it delivers in fulfillment of that responsibility.

The Province is responsible for programs and services to British Columbians within its constitutional jurisdiction and for ensuring all British Columbians are treated equitably by Government.

Fiscal

The Federal Government shall meet its statutory and fiduciary obligations to Aboriginal peoples, and shall maintain its financial contributions in program areas in which it has been involved historically.

The Federal and Provincial Governments shall maintain current funding ratios for any additional expenditures associated with achieving Aboriginal equity.

Provincial contributions are subject to fiscal considerations including affordability, accountability, efficiency, and economies of scale.

The Province will meet its legal obligations to Aboriginal peoples, and will maintain its financial contributions for skills training and post-secondary education for Aboriginal peoples in program areas in which it has been involved historically.

III. POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Definition. Post-secondary education refers to the formal academic, vocational, and career technical education delivered under provincial statute and regulation, and also includes adult basic education, upgrading, life skills, and pre-college courses taken to meet post-secondary requirements.

1. BACKGROUND

1.2 Public Post-Secondary Education in British Columbia

During the past five years, Provincial Government strategies have focused on increasing the number of Aboriginal students in post-secondary education and improving retention rates through counseling supports at public institutions. Most universities, colleges and institutes include Aboriginal representation on Boards of Governors and employ an Aboriginal Education Coordinator to provide support services to Aboriginal students. In addition, a limited number of institutions have incorporated Aboriginal perspectives into selected regular courses and offer targeted courses and programs for Aboriginal people. These programs include law, teacher training, adult education, First Nations Studies, health care and social services, trades, business, public administration, justice, and natural resources.

The K-12 system also has a substantial Aboriginal education program which provides language and culture and support services to Aboriginal students. Both the K-12 and post-secondary systems work closely together on programming which builds linkages that are critical in assisting Aboriginal students to make the transition between K-12 and post-secondary education and training.

Examples of successful post-secondary education and training initiatives include the following:

The University of British Columbia (UBC) has established the First Nations House of Learning to support Aboriginal students and to develop program enhancements throughout the University. Setting a target of 1,000 Aboriginal students by the year 2000, UBC has established a successful bridging program with high schools. UBC has created a First Nations Law Program, a Health Care Professions Program, and a Native Teacher Training Program. In addition, UBC has First Nations education advisors/coordinators in Forestry, Arts, Applied Sciences, Health Care Professions, and at the First Nations House of Learning. The Synala Honours Program at UBC receives joint funding from the Ministries of Education and Education, Skills and Training, and provides an example of an effective bridging program which brings Aboriginal students who have completed grade 11 to UBC for a summer of study and orientation to the university.

Capilano College, in partnership with the Squamish Nation, has established a Transition Program consisting of college assessments, Aboriginal delivered upgrading, on-campus college preparation courses, and a mentoring program with senior students, designed to increase success in post-secondary education.

Malaspina University-College has established an integrated Arts-One First Nations Program at two locations, one on-reserve. This program is designed to provide a foundation for further college courses. The institution has addressed relevancy concerns in curriculum by employing Aboriginal instructors and involving the Aboriginal community.

Simon Fraser University, the North Coast Tribal Council, and School District #52, in Prince Rupert, have developed the First Nations Language Teacher Education Program leading to a Bachelor of Arts degree and a British Columbia Teaching Certificate.

Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Organizations

The Association of Aboriginal Post-Secondary Institutions (AAPSI) plays a significant role in providing educational services for Aboriginal learners in British Columbia. The fifteen members of the Association are independent organizations, registered under the Society Act and the Private Post-Secondary Education Act, providing a range of post-secondary education and training programs. The enrollment of member institutions is comprised of 1500 students from First Nations across Canada.

Many of these institutions have entered into partnership or affiliation agreements with public institutions as a prerequisite to Provincial funding and Provincial certification. These partnerships ensure that courses and programs are culturally relevant in both content and delivery and under Aboriginal control and management. At the same time, the quality control mechanisms of public universities, colleges and institutes, with respect to accreditation, articulation, and accountability, are provided. The courses and programs offered through affiliation agreements reflect Aboriginal training priorities and include justice, trades, teacher training, adult education, social services, natural resources, administration, and creative writing.

Examples of successful partnership or affiliation agreements between Aboriginal institutions and public institutions include:

The Nicola Valley Institute of Technology, a First Nations controlled post-secondary institution, established in 1983, has a student body of approximately 600, and offers courses leading to credentials from several public post-secondary institutions, including the University College of the Cariboo and the University of Victoria.

The Native Education Centre in Vancouver has operated for 24 years, and offers a range of pre-college and college courses to approximately 250 students. The Centre works to combine modern education with traditional Aboriginal culture. It is affiliated with Vancouver Community College and Langara College for accreditation.

The En'owkin Centre, located in the interior of the Province, offers Adult Basic Education, pre-college, university transfer programs, and Okanagan language and linguistic courses. It is affiliated with Okanagan University College for funding and accreditation purposes. A major program of the Centre is the self-financed International School of Writing and the En'owkin Visual Arts Program which lead to certification awarded jointly with the University of Victoria.

The Secwepemc Cultural Education Society/Simon Fraser University (SCES/SFU) Program, initiated in 1988, offers university level courses from twelve academic departments within SFU's faculties of Arts, Science and Education. Students have access to first year through fourth year courses toward a Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in sociology and/or anthropology, and minors in linguistics, archaeology, First Nations Studies, or Criminology. A two year certificate program in Native Studies Research is also available.

Chemainus Native College, near Ladysmith, offers certificate level and Adult Basic Education programs, as well as a Community Economic Development Program funded through its affiliation with Malaspina University-College. Chemainus Native College is also affiliated with the Open Learning Agency, and collaborates with the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology for program delivery.

The College of New Caledonia and the Prince George Native Friendship Centre have developed an Adult Basic Education program which includes Aboriginal cultural components and results in some advanced college credits.

Other Jurisdictions

Saskatchewan. There are several Aboriginal post-secondary institutions, one of which is the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College (SIFC). This institution is affiliated on a fully integrated basis with the University of Regina, and is also fully accredited by the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada. The SIFC's mandate is to conduct research on Aboriginal education and to provide a centre of excellence for Aboriginal education. SIFC has an enrollment of approximately 1,000 students and has graduated over 1,000 students, many of whom have gone on to post-graduate education. Except for a small provincial grant, SIFC is funded by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND) and from tuition fees.

The Gabriel Dumont Institute focuses on Metis students, and is fully affiliated with the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology and with the University of Saskatchewan for teacher training and other programs. Funding is provided by the Province, as well as through courses purchased by Human Resources Development (HRD) Canada.

Manitoba. The Province has entered into agreements with the Federal Government and the public post-secondary system for the creation of Aboriginal post-secondary "Access" programs including social work, engineering, medicine, and teacher training. The unique features of these programs are strong community linkages; combinations of on-campus and community-based delivery systems; integrated upgrading which is built into the regular academic program without lengthening the four year time frame for a Bachelor of Education degree; and reliance on rigorous community-based selection processes.

1.3 Funding Sources For Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training

Status Indians are eligible for income support, tuition, and special allowances from DIAND under the Post-Secondary Student Support Program (\$38 million in fiscal 1994/95) managed by First Nations. However, the program's limited budget often results in wait lists of individuals seeking tuition support. In addition, a significant number of both status and non-status Aboriginal people are not eligible for financial support under this program.

Public institutions receive Federal project funds through DIAND and HRD through course purchases and research grants. Provincial funding through the Ministry of Education, Skills and Training is provided through annual operating and capital grants, in addition to special grants provided for Aboriginal Education Coordinators and targeted funds for selected Aboriginal programs in public universities, colleges and institutes. *Skills Now* provided a total of \$5.3 million over 2 fiscal years, in addition to a \$4.6 million base budget, in support of public institutions, partnerships with Aboriginal organizations, and programming in Aboriginal institutions.

Funding ratios for targeted project funding to both public institutions and Aboriginal organizations and institutions in 1994/95 reflected 25 percent Federal funding through Indian Studies Support Program and 75 percent Provincial funding through the Ministry of Education, Skills and Training. The current Provincial position is that no more than 75 percent of Provincial funding will be provided to Aboriginal institutions in future years. As such, it will be important that the significant funding available through the Federal Government Pathways Program is maintained and allocated to accredited post-secondary education and training.

Aboriginal organizations and institutions may receive project funding through DIAND's Indian Studies Support Program (\$1.9 million in fiscal 1994/95) and receive Provincial funding under Skills Now and the Aboriginal Programs budget through affiliation agreements (\$3.5 million fiscal in 1994/95) with public institutions.

Adult Basic Education programs, in addition to those available to Aboriginal adults in Provincial school districts through the K-12 system, are offered in both public and Aboriginal post-secondary institutions. These include a range of language, literacy, transition, and support initiatives funded through Human Resources Development Canada and the Pathways Program (\$33 million in fiscal 1994/95). The Federal Government is approaching the final year (Spring 1996) of the five year Pathways strategy which was designed to increase Aboriginal control of training through the creation of Aboriginal Management Boards which set funding priorities and allocations according to Federal Canadian Jobs Strategy program guidelines. While Pathways has advanced Aboriginal involvement from advising to one of managing delivery, it does not include control of program design. Aboriginal post-secondary education organizations and institutions have expressed concerns regarding an inability to access funds management, an inability to take advantage of Province-wide opportunities, and limited control because of Federal program criteria.

The Federal Government has begun a national review of the Pathways Program which includes on and off-reserve access, self-government, Liberal Red Book statements, a devolution model, delivery costs, and linkages to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples and "Social Reform" discussions. The review is scheduled to conclude in 1996.

2. CONSTRAINTS, BARRIERS

2.1 Systemic Barriers

Despite the recent initiatives of Federal, Provincial, and Aboriginal Governments, a large gap remains in post-secondary participation rates and completion rates for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. Based on 1991 Census data, non-Aboriginal people are three times more likely to attend university and seven times more likely to graduate. Of younger Aboriginal adults surveyed in the Province, 38 percent reported some post-secondary education, while 10 percent had less than Grade 9. Among older adults, 27 percent had some post-secondary and 43 percent had less than a Grade 9 education.

Major impediments influencing the participation and completion rates of Aboriginal learners in post-secondary education include lack of Aboriginal involvement in the decision-making process, overlapping Federal and Provincial jurisdictions, cultural variations, systemic bias, lack of relevant programming, financial limitations, and geographic distance from post-secondary centres. Participation and success rates for Aboriginal learners increase dramatically when support services are built into delivery methods.

New strategies, therefore, must provide for support systems which recognize, strengthen, and incorporate Aboriginal culture and tradition in the delivery of post-secondary education programs. The unique history, culture, values, and traditions of Aboriginal peoples and their learning needs must be reflected in strategies which allow the adult learner to incorporate individual experience into the process of learning.

Strategies must also provide for community-based development and delivery systems which enable the post-secondary system to respond to Aboriginal peoples as distinct societies capable of identifying their unique learning needs. At the same time, emphasis must be given to education and training programs in areas where labour market opportunities exist, in order to increase autonomy and self-reliance within Aboriginal communities.

3. POLICY FRAMEWORK

3.1 Vision

Post-secondary education participation, retention, and success rates for Aboriginal peoples will at least equal that of non-Aboriginal people, and will be attained within a post-secondary education system in which both public institutions and Aboriginal organizations and institutions play appropriate roles and are supported by the combined resources of the Federal and Provincial Governments.

3.2 Goals

The Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Policy Framework will be defined within four strategic goals: Relevance and Quality, Access, Affordability and Accountability.

Relevance and Quality

To ensure that high quality post-secondary education programming is responsive to the needs of Aboriginal learners, is linked to labour market opportunities within Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities, and is sensitive to the culture of Aboriginal peoples.

Access

To increase the number of Aboriginal people entering and completing post-secondary education to a rate at least equivalent to that of the non-Aboriginal population and to promote choice for Aboriginal students in location, method of delivery, and programming.

Affordability

To ensure that the Provincial fiscal framework and Federal-Provincial cost-sharing are considered in determining the delivery modes for Aboriginal post-secondary education.

Accountability.

To ensure that post-secondary education governance structures are representative and sensitive to Aboriginal peoples needs, while maintaining educational quality and mobility of students, and demonstrating participation, retention, and success outcomes.

3.3 Mandate

Within the Provincial policy framework, the public post-secondary system will retain responsibility for all its constituents, including Aboriginal learners, in achieving objectives for successful participation in post-secondary education and training. However, this framework also recognizes that the Aboriginal population constitutes diverse cultures and that the public post-secondary system, alone, cannot meet the needs of all Aboriginal learners.

Specifically, the policy framework is based upon assumptions that it will:

- Reside within the existing post-secondary education system and legislative framework;
- Recognize the role of both public institutions and Aboriginal institutions and organizations in achieving strategic priorities;

- Support an appropriate balance of Aboriginal post-secondary education and training opportunities based upon current number of students served, geographic distribution of institutions, regional population and participation rates, appropriate configuration of educational programming, and fiscal considerations; and
- Utilize existing resources and maintain Federal contributions.

3.4 Strategies

This policy framework sets-out three fundamental strategies which will:

- a) Strengthen public post-secondary institutions in meeting the needs of Aboriginal peoples;
- b) Stabilize partnership agreements between public and private deliverers of post-secondary education for Aboriginal peoples; and
- c) Provide for designation of public Aboriginally controlled institutions.

3.4.1 Public Post-Secondary Institutions

Two program elements are proposed:

Eliminating Barriers

Student support services are essential in public institutions if Aboriginal peoples are to successfully pursue developmental, applied, and academic programs. Provincial funding for student services provided by Aboriginal Education Coordinators improves retention rates and helps to eliminate the barriers facing the Aboriginal learner in an unfamiliar cultural setting. At the same time, it is important that awareness training be given so that biased attitudes and behavior can be addressed. However, responsibility for eliminating barriers to successful participation should reside not just with the Coordinators, but with all institutional personnel. Institutional hiring practices must also reflect a sensitivity to employment equity for Aboriginal people within the institution. Funding provided to public institutions for Coordinators also includes outreach activities for those institutional regions with large Aboriginal populations or remote access problems.

Institutions will be required to demonstrate a commitment to increasing access for Aboriginal people by allocating resources within the institution's base budget. This will include submitting a strategic plan and annual report identifying measures and outcomes related to increased participation and success rates.

Aboriginal Advisory Committees will be required in all institutions in order to provide a liaison with the Aboriginal community. Committee responsibilities will include providing guidance regarding student recruitment, program promotion, curriculum design, cultural issues and content, and program evaluation, including program relevance to employment in the region. All Aboriginal program matters should be referred by an institution's internal Education Council or Senate to the Aboriginal Advisory Committee before recommendations are forwarded to the Board of Governors.

Criteria for Coordinator and Liaison funding to public institutions include:

- College region Aboriginal population and participation rates;
- Geographic size of college region, distribution of Aboriginal population, and number of satellite campuses;
- Allocation of base funding by the institution to Aboriginal student support services;
- Institutional governance structures supporting Aboriginal student success; and a
- Strategic plan and annual report identifying measures and results for increased participation and success rates.

Performance indicators for success include:

- Increases in the number of Aboriginal students actively seeking counselling and developing education and career plans;
- Increases in the number of Aboriginal students entering and successfully completing different levels of post-secondary education and training;
- Data collection which ensures that participation and success rates for Aboriginal learners are monitored and assessed and that employment placements are monitored and incorporated into program reviews;
- Reviews of each institution's effective use of, and commitment to, an Aboriginal Advisory Committee;
- A demonstrated effort to link with local school districts to provide transition into academic programs and bridging between secondary and post-secondary career/vocational programs: and
- A demonstrated link between colleges and universities to provide transition into baccalaureate programs.

Program Relevance - Skills for the Economy

New programs are required in order to prepare Aboriginal people with the occupational competencies and skills needed for today's labour market. Programs offered in post-secondary institutions must extend beyond the traditional social science and public administration focus to areas such as technology and commerce, natural resources and environmental sciences, and rural health.

In addition, theme units relevant to the history, culture, and social experience of Aboriginal people should be integrated into programming that is flexibly structured and provides students with entry and exit options which lead from certificate, to diploma and baccalaureate degrees.

Funding for new programs and curriculum development will be allocated from the Ministry's Aboriginal Programs Budget, and will be subject to budget increases consistent with the Ministry's annual appropriation. Requests for new programs will be submitted in accordance with annual institutional budget request procedures.

Criteria for new program and curriculum approval include:

- Matching specific job opportunities within a college region to the introduction of a new program;
- Delineating the skills and competencies which result from the education or training program;
- Providing work experience, transition planning, and career exploration/job strategies;
- Providing a combination of library, study, and research skills appropriate to the student;
- Providing a combination of student success orientation skills and personal development skills appropriate to the learner; and
- Demonstrating collaboration with local school districts to ensure transition from secondary to post-secondary education and to eliminate overlap of services.

Performance Indicators for success include:

- Students experience career-related work placements;
- Students successfully upgrade to Grade 12; or
- Students complete transition, university, or career technical credit courses;
- Students are hired into a related field; and
- Increases in full and part-time students spaces in programs relevant to Aboriginal learners.

3.4.2 Partnerships through Affiliation Agreements

It is important that relationships between public institutions and community Aboriginal organizations and institutions be developed and reinforced in a manner which prevents what, in some cases, have been regarded by Aboriginal peoples as paternalistic relationships. Affiliation agreements have the potential to offer a flexible means of providing the accreditation and accountability standards of a public institution with the intrinsic and educational value of direct delivery by Aboriginal organizations.

Clear Provincial guidelines developed through collaboration between Aboriginal organizations, specifically the Association of Aboriginal Post-Secondary Institutions, and representatives of the Advanced Education Council of British Columbia, representing Boards of Governors and Presidents of public institutions, will set out both program and administrative guidelines upon which agreements will be based.

Existing affiliation agreements will be strengthened by requiring increased accountability on the part of public institutions for effective relationships with Aboriginal organizations, and increased accountability for quality and student outcomes measurement by Aboriginal organizations.

Within this context, innovative programs delivered by Aboriginal institutions will be encouraged. New program areas of articulation and credit transfer between public post-secondary institutions and Aboriginally controlled post-secondary institutions will be identified and formalized through the British Columbia Council on Admissions and Transfer, the Provincial organization responsible for ensuring transfer credit between post-secondary programs and institutions.

Funding for new partnership programs will be provided on a consistent formula basis and allocated from the Ministry's Aboriginal Programs budget. Budget increases will be in accordance with the Ministry's annual operating level established by Treasury Board. Requests for new partnership programs will be submitted through annual institutional budget request procedures.

Criteria for partnerships between Aboriginal institutions and public post-secondary institutions include:

- the institution and Aboriginal organization demonstrate collaboration in providing career counseling and assessments for Aboriginal learners;
- curriculum is skills and competency based, focusing on theme units culturally relevant to Aboriginal learners;

- programs provide work experience, transition planning, and career exploration/job strategies;
- programs and courses provide appropriate accreditation and meet provincial articulation guidelines;
- programs include student success orientation skills and personal development skills, appropriate to the learner;
- provision is made for library, study, and research skills appropriate to the learner; and
- proposal indicates partnership arrangements for the use of library resources and equipment, such as computers.

Performance indicators for success include:

- students experience placement in relevant employment;
- increased numbers of students successfully complete a range of post-secondary education and training programs;
- students are hired into positions within the structure of their bands and tribal councils;
- full and part-time learners have access to education and training through community based delivery; and
- new entrepreneurial activities are undertaken in Aboriginal communities.

Curriculum Relevance. The potential for collaboration in the development of curriculum has been established through funding provided to the Association of Aboriginal Post-Secondary Institutions for the Education Resource Centre.

The Centre's mandate is to develop effective instructional materials and programs for Aboriginal adults in British Columbia. Consequently, the Centre offers services in program development suited to local communities, serves as a resource and clearing house for books, curriculum material, and videos, and delivers the Native Adult Instructor Diploma Program (NAID).

The Centre is administered by a Board comprised of six members from AAPSI, one member from the Ministry, and two representatives from the public post-secondary education system. An Advisory Council, comprised of one representative each from the First People's Cultural Foundation, the First Nations Education Steering Committee, and the Aboriginal Education Coordinators in the public post-secondary system, will play a supportive role for the Centre.

Aboriginal Post-Secondary Bridging Program. A large number of Aboriginal youth do not complete high school, with the result that access to post-secondary education increasingly depends upon the ability to complete bridging and transition programs to meet post-secondary entrance requirements. Many of these programs are delivered by Aboriginal organizations independently or through partnership and affiliation agreements with public post-secondary institutions. A newly defined bridging program will provide Aboriginal students with the upgrading required to access post-secondary training and assure entry into career programs following upgrading.

Funding will be provided to projects, on a matching dollar basis, that create opportunities for Aboriginal learners to participate in bridging or transition programs offered by Aboriginal institutions or organizations in partnership with public institutions.

Criteria for bridging programs include:

- appropriate assessment and career counseling processes and student support;
- programming which provides uninterrupted learning flow from bridging to regular courses, and work experience components;
- program relevancy with labour force opportunities and evidence of community support;
- identification of partnership/affiliation or institutional accreditation;
- identification of matching funds; and
- evaluation and results reporting.

Performance indicators for success include:

- increased utilization of post-secondary assessment and career counseling services;
- increased numbers of Aboriginal learners qualifying for entry into post-secondary training and career programs;
- increased number of Aboriginal learners successfully completing post-secondary programs;
- reduced unemployment rates for local Aboriginal youth; and
- continued community support and participation.

3.4. Establish Provincial Aboriginally Controlled Institutions

Under this initiative, the public post-secondary system will retain responsibility for increasing participation and success rates in public post-secondary education. At the same time, the important role of Aboriginally controlled institutions will be recognized by establishing a framework by which to designate an Aboriginal post-secondary institution as independent under the College and Institute Act.

Establishing an accredited, independent Aboriginal institution allows Aboriginal peoples to share in decision-making to a degree consistent with the Government-to-Government relationships currently being negotiated. At the same time, institutions will be accountable for achieving goals of increased participation, program relevance and quality, affordability, and accountability.

Designation under the Act will be determined in accordance with criteria established by the Province. The application of these criteria will ensure that Aboriginally controlled institutions achieve articulation and equivalent accreditation standards with public post-secondary institutions.

Funding to designated Aboriginal institutions will be provided through a formula consistent with public institutions which includes support and administrative services, allocated according to established Ministry guidelines. Institutions will become eligible for capital funding after a five year period. Recognizing the responsibility of the Federal Government to maintain a 25 percent funding ratio, the Province will begin negotiations with the Federal Government toward the costs of publicly designated Aboriginal institutions. In addition, the Province will enter into discussions with Aboriginal peoples and the Federal government, regarding the establishment of a Provincial Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education Endowment Fund, to obtain corporate and other donations and investments for any Aboriginal institution designated under the College and Institute Act.

Criteria for designation as an independent accredited Aboriginal institution under the College and Institute Act require that the institution has:

- goals which provide the foundation for developing autonomy and self-reliance and have the support of Aboriginal leadership;
- appropriate governance structures to a degree consistent with that required of public institutions under the College and Institute Act;
- an established affiliation agreement with a public institution for a minimum period of 5 years;
- an established student population of 300 for a minimum period of five years;
- demonstrated standards required for articulation with public institutions and recognized levels of accreditation;

- an institutional evaluation demonstrating accountability to the learner through quality curriculum standards and teaching practice; and
- demonstrated educational practices and a statement of purpose with a formalized educational plan of programming to achieve its mandate, goals, and objectives and fiscal plans for achieving these purposes.

Requests for designation will also be assessed in the context of Province-wide criteria which include:

- geographic distribution of Aboriginally controlled institutions and numbers of students served and the extent to which programs for Aboriginal learners are available from public and private institutions;
- participation rates and the extent to which participation is being met by public post-secondary institutions or partnership agreements within college regions;
- fiscal considerations including available funds within a fiscal year; and
- Federal-Provincial cost-sharing above current expenditures.

Through the guidelines and criteria, provision is made to allow smaller institutions, which are not eligible for a stand alone designation, to form a consortium with a Provincially designated Aboriginal institution, under a common governance structure, subject to approval by the Lieutenant Governor In Council.

Provincial recognition of the role of Aboriginal management of post-secondary education and training has been established by Cabinet approval in 1995, of two new public institutions, the Institute of Indigenous Government, located in Vancouver, and the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology in Merritt, British Columbia.

The Institute of Indigenous Government (IIG)

At the 23rd Annual Assembly of the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs (UBCIC), in October of 1991, a resolution was passed directing the UBCIC to develop an indigenous-controlled post-secondary institution, the Institute of Indigenous Government (IIG), to provide specialized education in self-government skills and knowledge for Aboriginal peoples. On June 11, 1993, the UBCIC and the British Columbia government established a *Joint Policy Council*, and adopted as an agenda item the development of the IIG as an accredited, indigenous-controlled post-secondary institution. As a result, on May 26, 1995, an Order of the Lieutenant Governor in Council was signed, designating the IIG as a Provincial Institute under the College and Institute Act, section 5 (1)(f).

The mission of the Institute of Indigenous Government is to provide an accredited specialized program of post-secondary education, skills-training, and research opportunities dedicated to empowering Indigenous Peoples to exercise effectively their right of self-determination, in their territories, in ways which fully reflect Indigenous philosophy, values, and experience throughout the world.

Governance for the IIG is provided by a Board of Governors, with a minimum of 8 and a maximum of 23 representatives of the Indigenous Nations in British Columbia, appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council upon nomination by the UBCIC. In addition, the UBCIC Chief's Council appoints an Elders Senate "to advise the Board about the Indian way."

The IIG's overall program focus is Indigenous Government Studies, with four principal areas of specialization identified, including: Political Development and Leadership; Indigenous Government Administration; Economic and Social Development; and International Indigenous Relations. Plans anticipate the delivery of four distinct program streams, including a general community-based and delivered program of credit and non-credit courses, a one-year certificate program, a two-year program leading to an Associate Degree in Indigenous Government Studies and a four-year program leading to a Baccalaureate in Indigenous Government Studies.

Nicola Valley Institute of Technology (NVIT)

NVIT was formed in 1983 by the Coldwater Band, Lower Nicola Band, Nooatich Band, Shackan Band, and Upper Nicola Band of the Nicola Valley in British Columbia, and has grown from 12 students in one program in 1983 to approximately 250 full-time and part-time students enrolled at the Merritt campus in 1995/96. An additional 350 full-time and part-time students are enrolled in community-based and extension courses across Canada. The student population is roughly 80 percent First Nations people.

NVIT was designated a Provincial institute under the College and Institute Act by order of the Lieutenant Governor in Council on September 1, 1995. As a Provincial institute, the Board of Governors will be appointed as elected as set out in the Act. NVIT will also elect an Education Council to advise the Board on matters of educational policy.

The mission of NVIT is to provide high-quality post-secondary education relevant to the diverse and evolving needs of Aboriginal communities, in an environment that fosters student success.

As a public post-secondary institution, NVIT will grant fully accredited certificates, diplomas and associate degrees in its own name. Courses previously accredited through other public institutions will continue to receive transfer credit as NVIT courses. A guide to course articulation with the College of New Caledonia, the University College of the Cariboo, and the University of Victoria is provided with NVIT's yearly program calendar, with over 150 courses listed. Several programs offered ladder into degree programs at Universities. Credentials available to NVIT students include: Academic Studies Diploma; Certificate or Diploma in Business Administration; Diplomas of First Nations Public Administration; Aboriginal Community Economic Development; Fine Art; Forestry; Fish, Wildlife, Grassland and Recreation; Social Work, Sexual Abuse Worker; and a Social Work Degree. Other programs include: Native Adult Basic Education; College Preparation; Transition to College; and Sexual Abuse Training of Trainers.

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES:

The core values which guide Government planning are reflected in this Framework:

- Government is committed to ensuring that people and communities have the opportunity to shape their lives and issues affecting them: the Framework maximizes participation and decision-making, and emphasizes solutions initiated by Aboriginal peoples to post-secondary education barriers.
- Government is committed to sustaining the environment and communities: Aboriginal peoples are equally committed to this goal: the Framework will provide the skills to accomplish this independently in Aboriginal communities.
- Government is committed to openness, accountability and fiscal responsibility: the Framework ensures accountability in the expenditure of public funds for Aboriginal post-secondary education through provision of clear criteria for accreditation and funding of Aboriginally controlled institutions; for funding programs and services in public institutions; and for partnerships between public institutions and Aboriginally controlled organizations and institutions.
- Government is committed to social equality: the Framework enhances equitable access for all Aboriginal peoples and will support education programs which address the unique issues affecting Aboriginal women and Aboriginal people with disabilities.

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- Government is committed to a fair distribution of economic growth: the Framework ensures a planned and equitable distribution of programming throughout the Province.
 - Government is committed to working with communities, business, and labour to meet our economic challenges: the Framework ensures new program proposals will be evaluated against labour market criteria, and partnerships with communities, business and labour will be encouraged and supported.
 - Government is committed to ensuring that British Columbians have access to the education and training they need to prepare them for full participation in the Province's economy: the Framework emphasizes and supports movement from economic dependence to independence and self-management for Aboriginal peoples.