

Aboriginal Service Plan
2020/21 – 2022/23



University of Northern British Columbia | March 9, 2020 Final Submission |

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Executive Summary

We are pleased to provide the University of Northern British Columbia's (UNBC) Aboriginal Service Plan (ASP) for 2020/21, which highlights our achievements over the past year and provides a summary of community and student engagement, and lessons learned. Future plans and anticipated outcomes upon which UNBC's ASP programs are based are documented individually for each of our four ASP programs using the *2020/2021 Aboriginal Service Program Plan Template* (documents appended).

We gratefully acknowledge prior funding and the detailed feedback we received from the Ministry of Advanced Education regarding our previous ASP submissions. We have demonstrated progress in responding to this feedback as we continue to create, build, strengthen and renew relationships with northern, rural, remote and First Nations communities and implement community-identified programs to support Indigenous learners' access, retention and success in postsecondary education.

In November 2019, the Province of British Columbia passed into legislation the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). UNDRIP is an international human rights instrument adopted by the United Nations in 2007 protecting the rights "that constitute the minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of the [I]ndigenous peoples of the world" (Article 43, p. 36). This commitment by the province follows the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's *Calls to Action* (2015), Canada's adoption of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* in 2015, endorsement of the UNDRIP in 2016 and the release of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls *Final Report* (2019), all of which serve to focus attention and facilitate concrete action to redress persistent social, educational, economic and health inequities experienced by First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples in Canada. Against this broad socio-political backdrop, UNBC reaffirms our commitment to the values inherent in these documents, to advancing Reconciliation and closing equity gaps in relation to access, retention and outcomes in postsecondary education for Indigenous learners.



Achievements, Progress and Successes

Achievements, progress and successes during 2019/20

This past year saw the continuation of four programs designed to support Indigenous learners throughout their academic careers. They are: the UNBC Office of Indigenous Initiatives (UNBCOII); Indigenous Student Recruiter (ISR); UNBC Indigenous Student Orientation (UNBCISO); and University 101 (each described separately in the appended *2020/2021 Aboriginal Service Plan Program Plan Template* documents). Across all ASP programs, supports, activities and services, our priority remains creating what Indigenous students and faculty describe as a “home away from home” to support the transition from home community to university, and to provide a positive, safe space to gather for Reconciliation-related dialogue and relationship building across all campuses. UNBC remains committed to strengthening its processes for implementing, coordinating, and continuously improving the delivery of ASP programs in harmony with other student recruitment, retention and academic success supports. Continuing our existing suite of ASP programs will help us achieve these goals.

UNBC achieved important milestones in relation to the UNBC Office of Indigenous Initiatives (UNBCOII) program with the appointment of an Interim Assistant Provost, Indigenous Initiatives (IAPII). Dr. Roseann Larstone, a Métis researcher currently affiliated with the National Collaborating Centre for Indigenous Health (NCCIH), was appointed to this leadership position effective January 2020. Dr. Larstone will work to increase institutional capacity within this integral portfolio. Activity is underway to establish a permanent support team for the UNBCOII. Dr. Larstone is implementing meetings and engagements with Indigenous learners, leaders and communities as well as UNBC’s Aboriginal Service Plan Committee and Indigenous Advisory Council to propel work forward on our Indigenous Action Plan Framework and the ASP while a permanent candidate search is underway.

Following Dr. Larstone’s appointment, UNBC celebrated the opening of the new Office of Indigenous Initiatives. The establishment of this Office builds on existing institutional structures and processes, and provides leadership, coordination and strategic alignment of Indigenous processes to eliminate systemic barriers to postsecondary education for Indigenous learners across our campuses.

The vision for the UNBCOII is that it will serve as a central point of connection and communication for the northern, rural, remote and First Nations communities in northern and central British Columbia, ensuring that our institution continues to fulfil its functions and deliver on our commitments. The UNBCOII will connect First Nations learners, organizations, agencies and communities with UNBC resources and personnel, as well as faculties, departments, units and divisions internally to ensure we remain responsive to community-identified needs; connect the correct people in responding to community-driven priorities; and provide timely, holistic wrap-around services to support Indigenous learners’ success.

Upon reaching the above milestones, we immediately undertook a focused engagement process with Indigenous communities in the regions served by UNBC as well as with students, faculty and staff at the Prince George and Regional campuses (see summary of community engagement below). These engagements yielded a wealth of insights to inform the development of our Indigenous Action Plan framework described in UNBC’s Aboriginal Service Plan for 2019/2020 and which is on-track to be completed by June 2020.

In addition to building capacity within the UNBCOII, significant progress in supporting Indigenous education was also demonstrated over the past year through the UNBC Indigenous Student Recruiter initiative following the hiring of Ms. Shannon McKay to this position. During 2019/20, Ms. McKay attended 63 in-person meetings and events in communities (e.g., career fairs; college visits; Strengthening Connections (SC) Tour; cultural events; independent visits) across Northern British Columbia. For the first year of the position, the goals were to: 1) increase participation on the Strengthening Connections tour by visiting northern, rural, remote and Indigenous communities according to available historical data; 2) identify as

many independent outreach opportunities separate from the SC tour as possible in order to build an annual travel calendar; 3) increase the Indigenous learner perspective/voice lent to all student recruitment activities and operations, including cross-departmental discussions and projects. An example of such projects currently in development includes a culturally relevant on-campus tour and activity program, which connects the First Nations Centre, Indigenous art and history on campus, and an on-campus Pit House guided tour component; 4) develop and deploy culturally relevant communications to self-identified, prospective Indigenous students through a variety of media, including the UNBC website, Recruitment Client Relationship Management (CRM) software, Indigenous Student Handbook, SMS texting campaigns, and posters/bulletins. The Indigenous Student Recruiter program is on-track to meet outreach, communications and recruitment benchmarks for 2020/21 (e.g., increase the number of self-identified Indigenous secondary school applicants by 15%).



Community and Student Engagement

Summary of 2019/20 community and student engagement

A focused series of community engagements were undertaken as an opportunity to both introduce the recently appointed Interim Assistant Provost, Indigenous Initiatives (see *Achievements, progress and successes* section above) and directly connect students across our regional campuses with representatives¹ from across the University to better understand immediate, on-the-ground service needs and to disseminate information regarding student-focused services and supports offered by UNBC. More importantly, these events were also invaluable opportunities to listen to and learn from students, Elders, community members, leaders and faculty and staff regarding barriers and gaps in services and supports to enhance access and retention, as well as potential opportunities for partnership and ASP activity/program development.

During our most recent engagement process, we clearly heard the types of supports that are required to remove barriers for Indigenous learners and to support in-community program delivery. We learned about and encountered first-hand some lived realities on the ground having direct and significant impacts on learners' educational experiences. For example, due to factors within the physical and geographical environment (e.g., remoteness, distance, difficulties accessing the Internet), Indigenous students attending or considering attending UNBC require means and options for participation and retention that are consistently responsive and offer flexibility in taking these realities into account. For these reasons, Indigenous learners and communities in the North require an enhanced level of direct, personalized support and attention as compared to students residing in southern, urban areas of the province. Moving forward, this work will require a commensurate level of investment at the institutional and provincial levels.

Increased in-person contact with key University representatives such as the Indigenous Student Recruiter and Regional Managers was identified as a priority by communities. Consistent, purposeful effort and presence are essential to building and nurturing the relationships of trust that will be the foundation of our work ahead in further Indigenous UNBC. Investments in travel to meet with Indigenous leaders, learners and communities will be critical in enhancing our agility, responsiveness and innovation in working directly with First Nations communities to maximize opportunities to meet the goals of the ASP: supporting Indigenous learners' access, retention, completion and transition; strengthening partnerships; and increasing the receptivity and relevance of post-secondary programs. Given the vast distances between rural, remote, northern and Indigenous communities within the regions served by UNBC, future ASP funding will be essential to support travel, not only to meet our commitments but to further increase our capacity to respond to emerging and priority needs as articulated by Indigenous learners and communities.

This year's engagement cycle included discussions with leadership from regional colleges (e.g., College of New Caledonia in the South Central Region, Coast Mountain College in the North West Region) to share ideas and identify areas of synergy in relation to potential collaborations, partnerships and the strategic alignment of Aboriginal Service Plans across institutions. We plan to continue these discussions in 2020/21.

¹ UNBC representation during the 2019/20 community and student engagement cycle included the following individuals: Provost and Vice-President, Academic; Director, Student Recruitment; Director, Integrated Planning; Acting Chair, First Nations Studies; M.Ed. Coordinator, School of Education; Associate Registrar; Regional Campus Development Liaison and Operations Managers.

A summary of our community, student, staff and faculty engagements during 2019/20 is as follows:

Community/Student Group	Engagement Activities (month/year)	Interest
Prince Rupert Student Engagement (Sm'algyax Language Cohort)	Facilitated dialogue in February 2020 at Coast Mountain - Prince Rupert Campus (17 participants)	Participants expressed interest in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Admissions/registration navigator to provide face-to-face support to students in communities. - Indigenous Liaison / Advocate to provide support for Indigenous students and communicate academic-related issues. - Information and Experiential Education Day session open to and held in community to start school year.
UNBC faculty engagement (Gitxsan language instructors)	Facilitated dialogue in February 2020 on Prince George campus (3 participants)	Participants expressed interest in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Timing of future community engagement. - Arranging wrap-around student supports (e.g., in-community advocate for admissions/registration, Fluent speakers / Elders).
Quesnel Community and Student Engagement	Facilitated dialogue in February 2020 (14 participants)	Participants expressed interest in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Optimizing the Elder in Residence program by working in partnership with UNBC and CNC to increase opportunities. - Developing a complementary Orientation program that integrates UNBC and CNC. - Offering more educational and cultural workshops in community with Elders. - Supporting students with admissions / registration in their communities.
G.W.E.S. College – Gitxsan Wet'suwet'en Education Society (Hazelton) Student Engagement	Facilitated dialogue in February 2020 (23 participants)	Participants expressed interest in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training instructors in trauma-informed teaching approaches. - Strengthening Indigenous content in UNBC's academic curriculum. - Continuing to support Language preservation through UNBC. - Offering life skills training (e.g., budgeting and managing finances, managing conflict). - Increasing counselling/mental wellness services to students.
UNBC Terrace Faculty and Staff engagement	Facilitated dialogue in February 2020 on	Participants expressed interest in:

Community/Student Group	Engagement Activities (month/year)	Interest
	Terrace campus (11 participants)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enhancing access to post-secondary courses and programs for mature students (e.g., evening online course delivery). - Offering cultural and educational workshops (e.g., Traditional Medicines). - Delivering Cultural Competency training including Truth and Reconciliation. - Delivering more custom Continuing Studies courses to mature students as pathways to post-secondary education. - Engaging UNBC graduate students as ambassadors with K-12 learners. - Arranging wrap-around supports (e.g., computer/printer access; in-community advocate; tutor; admissions/registration navigator in-community at specific times of year). - Enhancing access to UNBC's Academic Success Centre, Mathematical Academic Centre for Excellence (MACE) and Counselling services.
G.W.E.S. College – Gitxsan Wet'suwet'en Education Society (Hazelton) Student cohort engagement	Facilitated dialogue in February 2020 (23 participants)	<p>Participants expressed interest in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Language preservation (e.g., create a partnership between Language Keepers and technical experts to co-develop a series of on-line digital recordings; learning directly with Elders). - Implementing a common communication tool for student cohorts. - Enhancing Orientation to increase awareness of UNBC supports and services (e.g., Library, Counselling) - Creating experiential/traditional learning opportunities (e.g., dance, storytelling, youth camp).
Terrace Indigenous Regional Advisory Council Engagement	Facilitated dialogue in February 2020 on Terrace campus (5 participants)	<p>Participants expressed interest in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trauma informed instructor workshop/tools for teaching effected learners. - Alumni tours to middle schools and high schools to share educational experiences and inspire learners to pursue a university degree and professional careers. - Wrap around supports to enhance the success of students pursuing a university

Community/Student Group	Engagement Activities (month/year)	Interest
		<p>degree (e.g., orientation, tutoring, academic writing, mentors, Elders).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Language preservation for K-12 teachers in community as professional development opportunities (e.g. methods of integrating Indigenous language into current curriculum, refreshing pedagogy and new ways of teaching supported by Elders).
Prince George Community and Student Engagement	Facilitated dialogue in March 2020 at Prince George campus (9 participants)	<p>Participants expressed interest in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Offering an ambassador program (venue for UNBC students and alumni to share ‘real life’ experiences with learners). - Developing champions/mentors program (e.g., speaker series). - Developing knowledge products for different target audiences including learners, school districts, school counsellors (e.g., brief “career journey” videos; grants and awards booklet; pamphlets). - Creating student sharing circles. - Offering dual credit courses starting in grade 10. - Developing wrap around supports offered in collaboration between school district/post-secondary institution/local First Nation to fully bridge transitions.
Prince George Student Engagement	Prince George Campus March 2020 (~75 students)	<p>Participants expressed interest in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cultural events celebrating and showcasing art and traditional ways of knowing (e.g., potlucks, music, dance, storytelling, art). - Hosting truth and reconciliation workshops (cultural sensitivity training, blanket exercise, speakers from organizations such as Returning to Spirit). - Introducing trauma informed spaces with trauma informed practices and approaches. - Introducing more Indigenous content into courses and classes (e.g., holistic healing practices). - Creating more partnerships with First Nation communities for research, projects and practice in community. - Increasing Peer Support opportunities.



2020/2021 Aboriginal Service Plan Programs

2020/2021 Aboriginal Service Plan Programs

Activity/Program Title	UNBC Office of Indigenous Initiatives (UNBCOII)			
Continuing Program or New Program	Continuing Program			
Description	<p>The UNBC Office of Indigenous Initiatives (UNBCOII) is an innovative systemic change that privileges and centers Indigenous voices, knowledge(s), and presence in the University. The focal point of the UNBCOII is the new Interim Assistant Provost of Indigenous Initiatives (IAPII). Since January 2020 the IAPII has been working closely with departments, schools, staff and faculty across UNBC, as well as with the Indigenous Advisory Council and the UNBC Aboriginal Service Plan Committee to: plan and operationalize the ASP; coordinate ongoing meaningful engagements with Indigenous individuals, communities, and organizations; and develop an Indigenous Action Plan Framework to inform Indigenization strategies across the University.</p>			
Anticipated Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased outreach and engagement with northern, rural, remote and Indigenous communities; - Internal and external engagement strategy; - Increased strategic allocation of ASP resources; - Increased awareness and understanding of Indigenous community-identified needs and priorities supporting removal of systemic barriers to postsecondary education for Indigenous learners; - Increased number of partnerships with northern, rural, remote and Indigenous communities; - Increased awareness, availability and use of programming supporting Indigenous student access, retention and postsecondary program completion; - Increased supports, knowledge products and resources for UNBC faculty developing and delivering Indigenous-focused course content; and - Increased Indigenization strategies collaboratively developed and implemented across UNBC. 			
Future Plans	<p>This program will be pivotal in moving our relationships with northern communities forward and meeting our commitments to regional campuses and partnering First Nations communities and organizations. The UNBCOII will develop an Indigenous Action Plan Framework to set a strategic direction for Indigenization across UNBC's campuses. The program will migrate into core UNBC funding after 2021/22.</p>			
Budget		2020/21	2021/22 (Estimate)	2022/23 (Estimate)
	Total Cost of Project	\$499,341	\$499,341	\$499,341
	Ministry Contribution	\$199,341	\$199,341	\$199,341
	Institutional Contribution	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$300,000

Expense Breakdown for 2020/21 where Ministry funding is greater than \$20,000	Item	Amount	
	Outreach	\$ 30,000	Travel, engagement, events
	Indigenous Community Initiatives Program (ICIP)	\$ 30,000	Responsive community initiatives program
	Assistant Provost Indigenous Initiatives	\$139,341	1 FTE salaries/benefits

Activity/Program Title	University 101			
Continuing Program or New Program	Continuing Program			
Description	<p>University 101 is an introductory course providing an overview of university delivered over 13 weeks (one semester) in community to prospective students. The course is customized to Indigenous learners, providing an introduction to the methods of academic inquiry employed in the various disciplines and an opportunity to learn and practice the study skills and learning strategies that are required for academic success. This course will be taught with a blend of in-class and online work, experiential learning (such as field trips), and learning from Elders and other guest speakers. This course is most appropriate for Indigenous learners who are considering their first year of study at university, regardless whether they are transitioning from high school or a mature student who has been away from academic study for a period of time.</p>			
Anticipated Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased awareness of the requirements of higher education and preparedness to undertake programs of study at the post-secondary level; - Increased communication and engagement with Indigenous learners and communities; - Increased awareness, availability and use of programming supporting Indigenous student access, retention and success; - Partnered program delivery in 2 communities within UNBC's catchment area; and - Increased recruitment and enrolment of Indigenous learners at UNBC. 			
Future Plans	This program will be assessed during the third year of ASP funding to continuous improvements, changes in best practices, and the requirements for ongoing support.			
Budget		2020/21	2021/22 (Estimate)	2022/23 (Estimate)
	Total Cost of Project	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$12,000
	Ministry Contribution	\$ 8,000	\$ 8,000	\$ 8,000
	Institutional Contribution	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000
	Other or in-kind	\$0	\$0	\$0

Expense Breakdown for 2020/21 where Ministry funding is greater than \$20,000	Item	Amount	
	Instructors	\$ 8,500	1.0 FTE (salaries and benefits)
	Travel	\$ 2,000	
	Elder honoraria and supplies	\$ 1,500	

Activity/Program Title	UNBC Indigenous Student Orientation			
Continuing or New Program	Continuing Program			
Description	<p>The UNBC Indigenous Student Orientation (ISO) consists of workshops and activities offered by the First Nations Centre (Prince George campus) in partnership with the University's general orientation activities at each of UNBC's campuses. This program provides all Indigenous and non-Indigenous students with more opportunities to build relationships. It focuses on connecting first-year UNBC students with second- and third-year students to increase mentorship opportunities, foster a network of community support for Indigenous students transitioning into university and create a "home away from home", and learn about important supports and services available to help students thrive in a university environment.</p> <p>Activities having Indigenous cultural, educational and/or social-community content offered throughout the first week of classes will include but are not limited to workshops on protocols, cultural events, field trips (e.g., to visit local Friendship Centres), and connections with Elders. The ISO will enhance the existing orientation program across all campuses by building in content that celebrates and acknowledges the importance of Indigenous cultures, histories and experiences, and offers more opportunities for Indigenous students to connect with their communities and access mentorship.</p>			
Anticipated Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased awareness of ASP programming and UNBC resources for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students; - Increased peer connections, relationships and perceptions of cultural safety and community; and - Increased awareness and cross-cultural understanding of Indigenous cultures, perspectives and histories. 			
Future Plans	The First Nations Centre and Regional campuses will coordinate programming and leverage opportunities with local colleges to offer students an enhanced Orientation fostering connections, awareness and cross-cultural understanding of Indigenous cultures, perspectives and histories.			
Budget		2020/21	2021/22 (Estimate)	2022/23 (Estimate)
	Total Cost of Project	\$ 9,659	\$ 9,659	\$ 9,659
	Ministry Contribution	\$ 9,659	\$ 9,659	\$ 9,569
	Institutional Contribution	\$0	\$0	\$0
	Other or in-kind support through the First Nations Centre and Regional Campuses to coordinate and deliver enhanced Orientation activities	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000

Expense Breakdown for 2020/21 where Ministry funding is greater than \$20,000	Item	Amount	
	Traditional Welcome/Elders' Participation	\$ 800	Honoraria
	Education and Cultural Awareness Workshops and Events	\$ 7,359	Activities and events specific to the unique campus community (e.g., Bannock Break; Potluck dinner; events at local Friendship Centres; First Nations dancing and drumming; KAIROS blanket exercise, orange tee-shirt day)
	Campus Cousins	\$ 1,500	Orientation of potential Indigenous student leaders to provide mentorship/support to UNBC

Activity/Program Title	UNBC Indigenous Student Recruiter			
Continuing Program or New Program	Continuing Program			
Description	<p>The Indigenous Student Recruiter (ISR) travels to all First Nations communities in the north in order to help prospective students prepare for the transition to university. This role promotes UNBC and its programs, facilities, services, awards, and financial aid, supporting Indigenous students in preparing to enter a post-secondary education setting. The ISR helps students understand and meet entrance requirements, develop education plans that support them through their K-12 journey, successfully navigate the UNBC application and admissions processes, select program options that support their learning preferences (face to-face, online, blended modalities), and access transition programs to build skills, confidence, and insight into university life. The ISR is accountable for the successful outcomes of the ASP recruitment activities and benchmarks. The ISR participates in recruitment planning at UNBC, strategic development, and implementation of approved activities primarily responsible for domestic Indigenous undergraduate and graduate student recruitment.</p>			
Anticipated Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased awareness of educational opportunities and requirements and ASP initiatives offered by UNBC among diverse Indigenous student populations (i.e., secondary school; mature and transfer students); - Increased community outreach and strengthened relationships with Indigenous communities and organizations focused on supporting the educational success of Indigenous learners; - Increased total self-identified Indigenous prospective students, applicants, admits and registrants. 			
Future Plans	<p>This program is critical in supporting prospective Indigenous learners to pursue their educational goals by introducing them to the breadth of post-secondary programs and opportunities available at UNBC. The ISR will scale up a communications strategy to increase reach, awareness and understanding of UNBC supports, programs and services among northern and Indigenous communities. The ISR will also continue to develop a strategic annual travel schedule including established and new key locations, events, and markets in which to conduct outreach, offer support to prospective students, and disseminate information about the UNBC experience.</p>			
Budget		2020/21	2021/22 (Estimate)	2022/23 (Estimate)
	Total Cost of Project	\$186,404	\$186,404	\$186,404
	Ministry Contribution	\$ 73,000	\$ 73,000	\$ 73,000
	Institutional Contribution	\$ 13,404	\$ 13,404	\$ 13,404

	Other or In-Kind Contributions (UNBC) Program delivery Recruitment Manager (oversight, planning, training and assessment)	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000
	Item	Amount		
Expense Breakdown for 2020/21 where Ministry funding is greater than \$20,000	Indigenous Student Recruiter	\$ 73,404	Salary and Benefits	
	Travel and Supplies	\$ 13,000	Travel across Northern British Columbia (inclusive of remote communities and villages)	

The following is a summary of the Aboriginal Service Plans supported by minimum Ministry funding:

Summary of Aboriginal Service Plans Supported by Minimum Ministry Funding							
Activity/Program Title	Category	2020/21		2021/22 (Estimate)		2022/23 (Estimate)	
		Ministry	Institution	Ministry	Institution	Ministry	Institution
Office of Indigenous Indigenization and Education; Team and Community Outreach and University Readiness Program	Partnerships and engagement; Development or enhancement of programs; Student support; Delivery of programs or courses on campus or in Aboriginal communities, Aboriginal representation for faculty, staff or administration	\$199,341	\$300,000	\$199,341	\$300,000	\$199,341	\$300,000
University 101	Outreach activities and events; Student support services and initiatives; Enhancement of programs and courses; Partnerships and engagement.	\$8,000	\$4,000	\$8,000	\$4,000	\$8,000	\$4,000
Orientation	Outreach activities and events; Student support services and initiatives; Enhancement of programs and courses.	\$9,659	\$0	\$9,659	\$0	\$9,659	\$0
Indigenous Recruiter	Student support services and initiatives; Enhancement of programs or courses; Delivery of programs or courses in Aboriginal communities.	\$73,000	\$0	\$73,000	\$0	\$73,000	\$0
Total		\$290,000	\$304,000	\$290,000	\$304,000	\$290,000	\$304,000



Lessons Learned

Lessons learned

As a result of the engagement sessions described above, UNBC is keenly aware of the diversity within the student populations. We also have a better understanding of the needs of these diverse populations. For example, mature Indigenous students who often hold full- or part-time employment while attending courses and programs offered at regional campuses report that additional supports are required in-community as travel outside community often proves difficult. Some of the challenges include family obligations, lack of child care options and treacherous road travel during the winter season. In terms of addressing program delivery gaps in this context, students in more remote areas said that although online course delivery responds to some access-related issues, it is not a panacea or ‘one-size-fits-all’ solution. Inclusion of a face-to-face component within digital course delivery (i.e., having instructors travel into communities to meet students in person during the semester) was highlighted as extremely important for networking, enhanced interactions with instructors and peer-to-peer academic and social support. Examples such as these highlight the importance of strategic funding allocation via the Indigenous Community Initiatives Program (ICIP) to provide wraparound supports to enhance access and retention for students residing in rural, remote, northern and First Nations communities.

The roles of Interim Assistant Provost, Indigenous Initiatives and, by extension, the Office of Indigenous Initiatives, are pivotal in ensuring all ASP and Indigenization initiatives are strategically coordinated, aligned and implemented across the University. The Office will be central in moving our relationships forward, advancing the work of Reconciliation, meeting our commitments to regional campuses and partnering with northern, rural, remote and First Nations communities and organizations. Strategic allocation of ICIP funding for projects that are informed and guided by community perspectives will be one mechanism for delivering on our commitments to Indigenous learners and their communities. Another major deliverable referenced in the Achievements, progress and successes above is the development of our Indigenous Action Plan framework. This plan will chart a vision and set a strategic direction for Indigenization processes across UNBC’s campuses. This work will require not only setting a vision and direction for the University but also close and ongoing collaboration, implementation and monitoring with numerous stakeholders including: faculty, staff and students; Indigenous learners, communities and organizations; and external partners. It will also need to be aligned with other high-level UNBC policy frameworks.



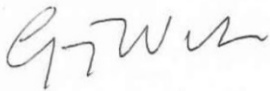
Closing Remarks

Closing Remarks

As a result of our outreach, we learned about the need to engage in proactive and continued dialogue with local colleges. For example, the College of New Caledonia (CNC) in Prince George and Quesnel offer cultural events (e.g., Aboriginal Knowledge Days) during the year, bringing together local Elders to share their time, expertise and perspectives with students (e.g., drop-in workshops focused on Indigenous arts). Future planning and engagement with CNC, as one example, would provide opportunities to increase awareness of future events and to leverage opportunities for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students across our diverse campuses.

Taken together, this year's ASP ensures the University's vision, strategic direction, and policies are coordinated and align with current ASP programming and Indigenization strategies and processes across our campuses. It also advances our learning and work toward Reconciliation, and continues to reflect UNBC's unwavering support of and commitment to Indigenous learners and their communities.

Sincerely,



Gary N. Wilson, Ph.D.
Professor, Department of Political Science
Acting Chair, Aboriginal Service Plan Committee



Roseann Larstone, Ph.D.
Interim Assistant Provost
Office of Indigenous Initiatives