



ABORIGINAL POST SECONDARY  
EDUCATION STRATEGY

*Championing Aboriginal Student Success  
in a Time of Great Opportunity*

2009



ABORIGINAL SERVICES



**ABORIGINAL POST-SECONDARY  
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*Championing Aboriginal Student Success  
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2009

**Prepared by Nipissing University Aboriginal Council on Education**

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**wolf**  
POLICY NETWORK



**ABORIGINAL SERVICES**

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## Overview

Through funding provided by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, Nipissing University has undertaken a thorough review of issues and interests related to the Aboriginal student population and surrounding Aboriginal communities.

The Nipissing University Aboriginal Council on Education (NUACE) has overseen this entire effort ensuring that the strategy development results from a partnership between Nipissing University and the Aboriginal community.

NUACE initiated an intensive strategic planning process at the beginning of March 2009. Through a designated Retreat designed to focus on planning and prioritizing outcomes, all members of NUACE engaged in this exercise.

Immediately following the Retreat, community visits with several First Nations within the surrounding area of Nipissing University were organized. The Chair of NUACE along with staff from Nipissing University attended meetings in First Nation communities and conducted a survey of questions to directly contribute to the strategic planning process. A draft strategy was compiled through research and collation of all findings from NUACE discussions and community visits.

The first draft Strategic Plan was reviewed in full at a meeting of NUACE on May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2009. A second draft was prepared for presentation and distribution to the wider Nipissing University community.

Two special presentations of the NUACE Strategic Plan were organized. Both sessions invited review, comment and discussion of the NUACE Strategic Plan with one session geared towards Nipissing University Faculty and a second with Nipissing University staff including Administrative staff. These meetings both took place at Nipissing University on May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2009. A third and final draft was subsequently prepared for final review of NUACE and invited guests from Nipissing University Senior Academic Administration and Faculty on June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2009.



This strategy includes the following components:

## 1. Introduction

## 2. Environmental Scan

The Environmental Scan includes an overview of current economic, political and legal trends relevant to Nipissing University and the Aboriginal community.

## 3. Inventory

A complete compilation of existing programs, services, activities and interests of Nipissing University in relation to Aboriginal students and the Aboriginal community.

## 4. Community Engagement Strategy

In setting out to conduct this entire initiative through the NUACE, Nipissing University has established a vigorous community engagement strategy that builds on existing structures and success. This section of the strategy will consider ways in which to strengthen the NUACE through a new Terms of Reference for presentation to the Board of Governors clarifying roles, responsibilities and key accountability mechanisms. This section will also include a summary of specific community engagement sessions conducted directly as part of this strategy development.

## 5. Analysis

Based on the information derived through the environmental scan and inventory, a general analysis of gaps and opportunities for future activities and areas of focus is established.

## 6. Strategic Action Plan

NUACE has confirmed a Strategic Action Plan for the next five years including:

- a) Vision
- b) Goals
- c) Objectives
- d) Projects
- e) Performance measurement

## 7. Implementation Considerations

The final section of the Strategy includes a full implementation plan including timelines, key milestones and budgetary considerations.

An initial step to confirm the commitment of Nipissing University to the full range of issues identified in the Strategy, is the review and adoption of a consolidated Policy expressing commitment to Aboriginal student success and Aboriginal Community Partnership. NUACE has drafted and will present for review the Nipissing University Aboriginal Student and Community Engagement POLICY.



## Introduction



The roots of Nipissing University extend back to the 1950s when Nipissing University College formed as an affiliate of Laurentian University in 1967. Nipissing University received its charter as an independent University in 1992. Today, Nipissing is a small, primarily undergraduate university with a reputation for excellence in teacher education, arts, science, business and nursing, with a welcoming, high-quality academic environment for its students based on teaching and learning, and with a developing research culture.<sup>1</sup>

A central feature of Nipissing and one which sets it apart from many other institutions is our origin, location and connection to First Nation peoples and communities.

The name itself is an Anishinabe word referring to ‘people of the little water’ and anchors the heritage of the Institution with the Nipissings or Anishnabek peoples whose home territory includes Lake Nipissing and the surrounding areas. Nipissing University is proud of its strong relationship with First Nations that has helped shape our institution.

Now as we address future challenges and opportunity, we look to our partnership with First Nations and First Nation students as a foundational element in our endeavour to retain our heritage and strengths and, at the same time, respond to the challenges of the future through forward-looking and leading initiatives that support academic and teaching excellence.

Nipissing University’s mace<sup>2</sup> pulls together the many symbolic elements important to our identity: the university’s crest, the Athenian

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1. As adapted from <http://nipissingu.ca/aboutus/history.asp>.

2. As adapted from <http://www.nipissingu.ca/aboutus/mace.asp>.



owl pictured on the crest, the Nipissing University logo, Nipissing's motto "Integritas" and the traditions of the Anishinabek who have been keepers of the land on which the university stands.

The Nipissing University mace is an expression of growth and transformation within a context of harmony and equanimity with the world in which we dwell: specifically the Nipissing landscape. From the wisdom of the Anishinabek people, the mace draws the symbolism of the four orders of creation— mineral, plant, animal and human (and the gifts of the four winds). As well, in keeping with Indigenous tradition, the mace joins mother earth and father sky as it journeys symbolically from the fragment of granite at its base, through the trees to the golden sphere of the sun and the owl of the air.

Like Nipissing University, the mace is not static; it expresses growth, movement and perpetuity. The University itself is represented by the embossed emblem, repeated to form a band, by the four coats of arms that support the crown and by the embossed silver motto "Integritas." The mace is designed to represent that which makes Nipissing University distinct: harmony, perpetuity and growth.

In embarking on this Strategic Plan, Nipissing University recognizes the leadership of the Nipissing University Aboriginal Council on Education as a central embodiment of this powerful symbolism.

As part of the broader context, this Strategic Plan includes reflection on the Mission Statement adopted in 2005, confirming Nipissing University as a learning community that:

- commits itself to the highest standards in teaching, research and scholarly activities;
- encourages students, faculty and staff to realize their full intellectual and personal potential;
- prepares students to make positive contributions as citizens and leaders;
- is committed to serving the needs of its regional, provincial and global communities; and
- commits itself to increasing accessibility to under-represented groups.





Nipissing University has also expressed commitment to emphasizing excellence in teaching and encouraging meaningful interaction between students and faculty. Further, the current Nipissing University Strategic Plan<sup>3</sup> establishes six core goals:

1. To enhance academic programs and outreach
2. To enhance student experience
3. To improve learning resources and facilities
4. To develop our people and structure
5. To enhance our profile
6. To build growth and viability

Finally, by way of establishing the broader University context, it is also important to reflect on the fact that the Nipissing University Academic Plan<sup>4</sup> has established four clusters or themes to guide growth and development in the future:

- a. Enriching the learning experience
- b. Building the research culture
- c. Sustainability and the environment
- d. Partnerships for regional and community development

*“Like Nipissing University, the mace is not static; it expresses growth, movement and perpetuity.”*

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<sup>3</sup> Nipissing University, Nipissing University Strategic Plan: 2005-2010, *Addressing our Future*, Strategic Planning Task Group, February 2005.

<sup>4</sup> Nipissing University, Nipissing University Academic Plan (NUAP) 2007/08- 2011/12: *Building a Distinctive and Sustainable Learning Community for the 21st century*, approved by Senate, June 4, 2008.



ABORIGINAL POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION STRATEGY



1

# Environmental Scan

## Environmental Scan

First Nations and the people of Canada are entering into a new period of dialogue. Through the historic breakthrough of the recognition and affirmation of Aboriginal and Treaty rights in the Constitution Act (1982), decisions of the highest court<sup>5</sup> and more recently through the Statement of Apology to the Survivors of Residential Schools by the Prime Minister (June 2008), Canada is slowly beginning to turn the page on decades of colonialism marked by false assumption, denial and oppression.

As the Ontario Government committed in its recent Speech from the Throne, all Ontarians must engage in building a “stronger, more positive relationship with Ontario’s First Nations.”<sup>6</sup> Ontario Universities have a particular opportunity and responsibility to lead this initiative. Nipissing University with its roots and on-going strong connection with First Nations has a particular advantage in moving forward with a robust plan that will serve to mutually benefit First Nations, students, the University and the community at large.

### 1. Understanding the Aboriginal Community and the Aboriginal Student

#### *Demographic Trends and Analysis*

In order to begin the planning process, it is important to establish baseline information to appropriately target future activities. The Aboriginal population is the fastest growing segment of the overall Canadian population. Using census data, we see that the provincial Aboriginal population has increased from 188,315 individuals self-identifying in 2001 to 242,490 in 2006. When we look more closely at these numbers we see that over 65% are First Nations individuals with the majority of the remaining identifying as Métis.



5 notably *Delgamuukw v. British Columbia* (1997), 153 D.L.R. (4th) 19; *Haida Nation v. British Columbia (Minister of Forests)* (2004) SCC 73, *Taku River Tlingit First Nation v. British Columbia*.

6 *Address of The Honourable David C. Onley*, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario on the opening of the First Session of the Thirty-Ninth Parliament of the Province of Ontario, November 29, 2007.

*“We must engage in building a stronger, more positive relationship with Ontario’s First Nations.”*

It is critical to point out that this data should be considered a guideline only as Statistics Canada and census data has historically included significant inaccuracies and several First Nations do not participate in census collection.

Another interesting feature of this data is that this is a population that is not dispersed evenly across the province. Rather, it is clustered within large urban areas such as Toronto and Ottawa with the vast majority residing in the Northern portion of the province. Indeed in Northern Ontario, Aboriginal Peoples make up the largest minority group and their population growth will continue to increase in demographic significance. While the percentage of youth that is in Aboriginal continues to slowly grow throughout the province, such growth will have a more dramatic affect in Northern Ontario, especially in light of the fact that the overall population is in decline – as much as one per cent per year.

Aboriginal identity population in 2006	Ontario		
	Total	Male	Female
Total Aboriginal identity population	242,490	117,585	124,900
North American Indian - single response	158,400	75,955	82,440
Métis - single response	73,610	37,025	36,580
Inuit – single response	2,035	940	1,100
Multiple Aboriginal identity responses	1,905	885	1,025
Aboriginal responses not included elsewhere	6,540	2,785	3,755

Age characteristics of the Aboriginal identity populations	Ontario		
	Total	Male	Female
Total Aboriginal identity population	242,490	117,585	124,905
0 to 4 years	19,810	10,155	9,660
5 to 9 years	21,075	10,690	10,385
10 to 14 years	23,435	11,840	11,595
15 to 19 years	22,340	11,600	10,735
20 to 24 years	18,535	8,925	9,610
25 to 29 years	17,015	7,850	9,170
30 to 34 years	16,660	7,590	9,070
35 to 39 years	17,550	8,110	9,440

Age characteristics of the Aboriginal identity populations (continued)	Ontario		
	Total	Male	Female
40 to 44 years	20,380	9,835	10,550
45 to 49 years	18,370	8,740	9,630
50 to 54 years	15,350	7,155	8,195
55 to 59 years	11,535	5,610	5,925
60 to 64 years	7,800	3,870	3,935
65 to 69 years	5,280	2,470	2,810
70 to 74 years	3,590	1,635	1,950
75 to 79 years	2,000	815	1,180
80 to 84 years	1,150	450	695
85 years and over	600	245	355

As revealed in the chart above, the Aboriginal population is very young and therefore an emerging demographic of significant consequence for all education providers.

The following represents a summary of conclusions of trends established through broad based research conducted by the Trillium Foundation<sup>7</sup> through 2005-2007:

**Aboriginal communities in Ontario have experienced demographic and educational trends very different from the rest of the province**

- The Aboriginal population in Ontario soared by 33 per cent between 1996 and 2001, compared to six per cent growth in Ontario's total population.
- The overall age of Aboriginal people in this growing population, particularly in rural and remote Ontario, is younger than the age of people in the province as a whole.
- Despite there being proportionally more young people, fewer complete secondary or Post-Secondary education.



<sup>7</sup> Ontario Trillium Foundation, *Research Brief – 103 OTF and Ontario's Aboriginal Communities: Learnings and Opportunities*, May 2007.



**Aboriginal communities in Ontario are characterized by a lack of paid work**

- Unemployment levels range from 20 per cent for Aboriginal people in urban centres to up to 80 per cent for those in remote communities.

**There are deep fiscal and structural challenges in many Aboriginal communities**

- Numerous Aboriginal people face poverty, disempowerment and isolation. Many cope with emergency situations such as unhealthy water, forest fire or flooding evacuations, suicides, sexual, alcohol and drug abuse and family violence.
- As a result, band funds are required to support community needs, leaving little money to set up other processes, organizations or projects.
- Furthermore, housing shortages on reserves require First Nation governments to prioritize accommodation rather than community building and youth work.

Clearly the costs of these fiscal and structural challenges are very significant for the Aboriginal community but so too are the costs to the Canadian economy as a whole. Beginning in 1996, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples began studying and reporting on the “cost of doing nothing.” This research and its conclusions continue to be validated by leading economists. In 2007, the Canada Living Standards Council issued a report on the growing deficit created as a result of the education gap which was confirmed by the Assembly of First Nations to have reached 12 billion per annum<sup>8</sup> in terms of lost productivity and additional support services costs directly as a result of the education gap.

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8 Assembly of First Nations, *First Nations Role in the Canadian Economy – a discussion paper for the Council of the Federation*, Ottawa: July 2007.

## **Characteristics and Challenges Facing Aboriginal Post-secondary Students**

According to the most recent study available, it is believed that roughly 3,400<sup>9</sup> Aboriginal students attend the 13 universities that participated in the Ontario Government's Aboriginal Education and Training Strategy (AETS) evaluation.

### **Aboriginal enrolment estimates, AETS-participating universities, 2005-06**

ALGOMA 113	NIPISSING 126	WATERLOO 250
BROCK 128	OTTAWA 300	WESTERN 150
LAKEHEAD 945	QUEEN'S 198	WINDSOR 100
LAURENTIAN 400	TRENT 300	YORK 300
MCMASTER 125		

**TOTAL 3,435**

At the time of the above noted evaluation, additional institutions were also identified as having Aboriginal students including Carleton University, the University of Toronto, Ryerson University, the University of Guelph, Wilfrid Laurier University, the Ontario College of Art and Design and the Ontario Institute of Technology. As such, a conservative estimate in 2006 would put the Aboriginal population in Ontario Universities at approximately 4000 or one percent of the entire provincial University student body. Such findings confirm the significant underrepresentation of the First Nation population in Post-Secondary institutions. Further, as confirmed in several studies, completion rates for Aboriginal students are also low.

Aboriginal Post-Secondary enrolment and completion rates are significantly lower than those of non-Aboriginals in Canada, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand. In Canada, statistical data indicated that the level of Aboriginal Post-Secondary education attainment was as low as a third of that of non-Aboriginals, and levels are especially low for Registered Indians.<sup>10</sup>



<sup>9</sup> Evaluation of the Government of Ontario's Aboriginal Education and Training Strategy (AETS) Final Report prepared by Educational Policy Institute, March 2006.

<sup>10</sup> *Best Practices in Increasing Aboriginal Post-secondary Enrolment Rates*, Prepared for The Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC), R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd. May 2002.

Further, the Senate of Canada, Committee on Aboriginal Issues reported in April 2009 that while Post-Secondary enrolment rates among Aboriginal students have increased over recent decades:

...the [Post-Secondary education] levels overall are not increasing as quickly among the Aboriginal population, resulting in a continuing gap. In 2001, 53.4% of non-Aboriginal people had Post-Secondary credentials (college, trade or university), versus 38% of Aboriginal learners with Post-Secondary training. From 1996-2001, it appears the gap in university attainment rose slightly. About 5% of registered First Nations people, 7% of both Métis and non-registered First Nations people, and 2% of Inuit had university degrees or certificates, compared with 18% among the non-Aboriginal population.<sup>11</sup>

Such findings have been the consistent conclusion of researchers for decades in Canada. Although improvement in terms of enrolment has been made, progress has been slow and has not kept pace with the growing demographic shift of increasing numbers of Aboriginal youth. These findings have driven considerable attention and analysis into the circumstances of Aboriginal Post-Secondary students. Governments, charitable and independent foundations and universities alike have considered the root causes as well as the possible solutions to address this situation.

As identified in research conducted by the Canadian Millennium Foundation, the steeper climb for Aboriginal students is the product of a number of barriers, making it more difficult for Aboriginal people to attain their educational aspirations. These barriers include:

- inadequate financial resources
- poor academic preparation
- lack of self-confidence and motivation
- absence of role models who have Post-Secondary education experience
- lack of understanding of Aboriginal culture on campus, and
- experience of racism on campus<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd., *Aboriginal Peoples and Post-Secondary Education: What Educators Have Learned*, Millennium Research Series Number 8. Montreal: Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation, 2004.

A more recent study helps to complete the picture of the Aboriginal student through survey research concluding that while the most significant barrier is financial, Aboriginal students also tend to be older and have significantly greater family responsibilities than other students.<sup>13</sup> In addition, as noted by Aboriginal student support services staff, Aboriginal students have a difficult time gaining access to programs due to the competitive nature of admissions to programs that do not accommodate particular needs or interests of Aboriginal students. With regard to current challenges and outcomes, research has revealed that “not only is university participation low in relation to the overall age cohort in the general population, but Aboriginal students also appear to do poorly in terms of progression, retention and graduation rates.<sup>14</sup> Clearly the factors cited here affect all aspects of Post-Secondary education from admissions to completion.

## **2. Clear Policy Rationale and Business Case for Focussed Programming**

A clear policy rationale for targeted programming and services to support Aboriginal Post-Secondary students has been established through quantitative and analytical research as referenced. Governments, both federal and provincial, across Canada, have responded to this situation.

Indeed, Nipissing University has benefitted significantly from funding available by both levels of Government. Through fiscal year 2008/09, Nipissing University directly received \$485,000 in specific provincial government funding for Aboriginal students, programs and programming.

### ***Provincial Government intervention and support***

In 1991, the Ontario Government launched a significant initiative known as the Aboriginal Education and Training Strategy (AETS) under the Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities (MTCU). This strategy began with three goals: to increase participation rates; to increase cultural sensitivity; and to increase Aboriginal involvement in institutional governance.

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13 Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation, Changing course: Improving Aboriginal Access to Post-Secondary Education in Canada, Millennium Research Note, No. 2.

14 David Holmes, Redressing the balance: Canadian University programs in support of Aboriginal students, June 2006, p. 14.



*“Nipissing has worked hard at providing a welcoming, culturally sensitive, learning environment for its Aboriginal students.”*

Nipissing University received funding from AETS starting in 1993 and has continued to receive funding annually since then. The funds continue to support the administration and operation of Aboriginal Services and Programs housed in the Office of Student Development and Services and the administration and operation of the Aboriginal Teacher Certification Program of the Faculty of Education.

Funding made available through AETS has been subject to significant review and evaluation at two points in 1996 (Devlin and Associates) and again in 2007 by the Educational Policy Institute. The average annual expenditure for AETS has been \$7 million with \$5.2M spent annually in public colleges and universities and \$0.8 M to Aboriginal Post-Secondary institutions (note however in 2005-06, an increase to \$1.8 Million for Aboriginal institutes annually was introduced). From program inception through to 2006, total AETS expenditures have been \$87M<sup>15</sup>. This funding was allocated initially on a competitive basis, and since 1996 on a fixed share basis with 53% allocated to colleges, 37% to Universities and 10% to Aboriginal institutes.

In 2004, the Ontario Government commissioned a major study on the future of Post-Secondary education generally throughout the Province of Ontario. Former Premier Bob Rae led the study and held sessions across the province including at Nipissing University. Among other recommendations, Nipissing brought forward focussed advocacy and recommendations in regard to Aboriginal students:

Nipissing has worked hard at providing a welcoming, culturally sensitive, learning environment for its Aboriginal students. It has done this through Aboriginal membership on the Nipissing Board



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<sup>15</sup> Educational Policy Institute, Evaluation of the Government of Ontario's Aboriginal Education and Training Strategy (AETS), 2007, p. 13.

of Governors, through the Aboriginal Council on Education (a Nipissing advisory body on which both Aboriginal and university members sit), through the Aboriginal Services and Programs Office (which provides academic and support counselling to Aboriginal students), and through special academic programming such as our major in Native Studies and the Aboriginal Teachers' Certificate Program which places Aboriginal teachers in Ontario schools. These initiatives are strengthened by four Aboriginal professors on our faculty. Nipissing would like to do more to encourage Aboriginal students to attend university. In particular, funds are needed to develop further Aboriginal programming and to provide additional academic and cultural support for our Aboriginal students – support that would improve retention rates. We also would like to provide more tailored and realistic financial support for Aboriginal students. With respect to the latter, more flexibility is needed in providing funding assistance to part-time Aboriginal students and to Aboriginal students facing the costs associated with traveling and living far from their homes in order to attend university. Nipissing recommends that additional provincial resources be allocated specifically to support better access and retention for Aboriginal students<sup>16</sup>.

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In February 2005, Bob Rae presented Ontario: A Leader in Learning — Report and Recommendations to the Government of Ontario<sup>17</sup>. In May 2005, the Government of Ontario introduced a budget containing substantial increases in Post-Secondary funding in the province and indicated their intention to adopt many of the major recommendations of the report. The report addressed concerns of accessibility to Post-Secondary education in the province, quality of the higher education and training that is provided, current underfunding of universities and colleges, availability of funds for eligible students, and accountability in the Post-Secondary sector. Among the recommendations, are several relating directly to Aboriginal students and corresponding with the advice provided by Nipissing University as cited above.

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<sup>16</sup> Nipissing University, *The Future of Higher Education in Ontario - the response of Nipissing University to the Post-Secondary Review Discussion Paper*, November 12, 2004.

<sup>17</sup> Bob Rae, *Ontario: A Leader in Learning*, (Toronto: Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, 2005).

The Rae report helped usher in a new era of Post-Secondary funding and support by the Ontario government. Ontario has very recently launched a series of new initiatives to support Aboriginal students. Through the 2008-09 Access to Opportunities Strategy – Aboriginal-specific initiatives, the Government of Ontario is supporting the development of Aboriginal Postsecondary Education & Training (PSET) Plans for all colleges and universities. The funding is intended to assist institutions in reaching out to their Aboriginal partners to improve access, retention and completion rates for Aboriginal learners in Post-Secondary education and training. Action Plans will also support the Ministry as it develops a new funding approach for Aboriginal Post-Secondary education based on broader performance measures that collectively measure the success of Aboriginal learners and outline strategic targets with measurable outcomes and results.

The Government of Ontario has made several commitments that involve improving Post-Secondary education and training outcomes for Aboriginal Peoples and that indicate such improvement is a priority for the Government of Ontario. The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) demonstrated its commitment to supporting First Nation, Métis and Inuit learners in Post-Secondary education through its existing Aboriginal Education and Training Strategy, the Access to Opportunities Strategy as well as other policies and programs in the area of Post-Secondary education, and employment and training.

Through these programs, the Ministry has provided funding to colleges, universities and Aboriginal institutions to develop and deliver academic, cultural and support programs and services to increase access to and success in Post-Secondary education for First Nation, Métis and Inuit learners. More specifically, the Ministry has acknowledged the importance of Aboriginal institutions in improving Post-Secondary education outcomes by increasing funding to support Aboriginal institutions from \$0.8 million in 2004-05 to \$3.8 million in 2008-09.

According to the Government of Ontario communication material, Aboriginal institutions in Ontario provide a unique access point for Aboriginal Peoples to take part in Post-Secondary and training programs, gain the necessary skills and training to participate in economic opportunities, and provide programs in response to social needs of communities. These institutions have demonstrated their capacity to work with colleges, universities, and other partners to deliver programs that are culturally-relevant, accessible to adult learners in both urban and rural/remote settings, thereby improving overall education and training outcomes for Aboriginal peoples.<sup>18</sup>

In summary, the Ontario Government has positioned its new initiatives in a recently released discussion paper including three interrelated initiatives:

1. Development of a First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Postsecondary Education and Training Policy Framework which will provide the strategic context within which all parties will work together to improve Aboriginal Peoples' access to, retention in and completion of Post-Secondary education and training programs;
2. Tripartite discussions with the federal government and First Nations/Aboriginal institutions/organizations to explore how Aboriginal institution[s] in Ontario can increase access to and success in Post-Secondary education and training for Aboriginal peoples; and
3. Development of new funding approach for Aboriginal Post-Secondary education initiatives. To be implemented for the 2009-10 academic year, this new funding approach will consolidate AETS, Access to Opportunities Strategy and other special purpose grants.<sup>19</sup>



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<sup>18</sup> Letter of Honourable John Milloy, Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities to First Nation/ Aboriginal leaders in Ontario, February 4, 2009.

<sup>19</sup> Ministry of Training, Colleges & Universities, *Funding for Aboriginal Post-Secondary education initiatives College/University Roundtables - April 21 and 22, 2009*, (Toronto: Province of Ontario, 2009).

## ***Federal Government Intervention and Support***

In terms of Federal support for Aboriginal students in Post-Secondary education, financial assistance is provided to eligible First Nation and Inuit students to help cover the costs of going to college or university through the Post-Secondary Education Program of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC). Financial assistance provides funds for:

- tuition and other compulsory student fees;
- books and other supplies;
- travel; and
- living allowances for students and their dependents.

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada allocated a total of \$76 million through the Post-Secondary Education Program in Ontario over the 2006-2007 period as follows:

- \$72 million in direct support to First Nation and Inuit Students through the **Post-Secondary Student Support Program and University and College Entrance Preparation Program**; and
- \$4 million in support of the design and delivery of college and university programs for First Nation and Inuit students through the **Indian Studies Support Program**.

According to Indian and Northern Affairs, this program provided financial assistance to almost 7,000 First Nation students in Ontario, which represents about 30% of all First Nation students funded by the program in Canada:

- 97% of those First Nation students in Ontario accessed financial assistance through the Post-Secondary Student Support Program.
- 3% of those First Nation students in Ontario accessed financial assistance through the University and College Entrance Preparation Program.



Current information suggests that the majority of First Nation students in Ontario chose college programs over other forms of Post-Secondary education:

- 46% participated in college programs;
- 38% participated in university programs; and
- 16% participated in private career college programs.

In the Federal Budget 2008, Canada announced its intention to modernize the way that government supports Canadian students to achieve their educational goals. INAC is currently reviewing its Post-Secondary Education Program for First Nation and Inuit students and has suggested that:

- Canada needs to increase the number of First Nations and Inuit students who can access funding.
- The current program does not ensure that students who most need funding get funding.
- The design and delivery of the program should address the barriers to success faced by many First Nations and Inuit students.
- Awareness among First Nations and Inuit youth of options for Post-Secondary education funding is limited, especially for those on reserves.
- In addition, this review needs to take account of the need for better information on results so that the government can improve the way it reports to all Canadians.<sup>20</sup>

The conclusion of the evaluation and the implementation of changes are not yet confirmed. However, it is anticipated that consultation and development will occur through the summer and fall of 2009 with potential implementation of new programming set for the spring of 2010.

## **Broader Economic Considerations**

### ***Higher Education Critical for Future Economy***

A recent study commissioned by the Ontario Government, *Ontario in the Creative Age*<sup>21</sup> emphasizes that the economy in general is entering a new phase which will bring greater focus and imperative on higher education. The core recommendation of the report is “to harness the full creative potential of all Ontarians.”

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<sup>20</sup> As provided in letter from Minister Strahl to all First Nations Chiefs and Councils, February 19, 2009.

<sup>21</sup> Martin Prosperity Institute, *Ontario in the Creative Age*, (Toronto: Martin Prosperity Institute, 2009).



The report also suggests that Ontario as a whole must “broaden our talent base,” dramatically increase “the percentage of our work force that has Post-Secondary education,” and “to build a province-wide geographic advantage, connecting and positioning our cities, towns, and communities to prosper.” These findings are based on an analysis of the economy of Ontario that shows a marked shift over recent decades:

Over the past twenty-five years, the creativity-oriented occupations have increased from 26 percent of the province’s work force to 30 percent, while routine-oriented jobs have declined from 74 to 70 percent.

But within routine-oriented occupations, we have seen a massive shift. Routine-oriented physical jobs, like those in manufacturing, transportation, and construction, have fallen from 29 percent to 22 percent, while those in routine-oriented service jobs have grown from 41 percent to 46 percent. Our projections show that creativity-oriented occupations and routine-oriented service occupations will continue to grow much faster than routine-physical occupations.<sup>22</sup>

In the midst of the current economic downturn, it will therefore be critical for institutions and governments alike to respond in a way that anticipates the current and future ways of employment. As noted previously in a 2005 report for the Ontario government in 2005, it was predicted that “up to 70 percent of future jobs created in Canada will require some Post-Secondary education.”<sup>23</sup>

*The core recommendation of the report is “to harness the full creative potential of all Ontarians”*

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<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>23</sup> Bob Rae, *Ontario: A leader in learning*, (Toronto: Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, 2005).

## **Resource Development and the Role of First Nations**

A key segment of the economy which continues to grow in the midst of the manufacturing decline is the resource sector. First Nations Peoples are, in many ways, key to this development in a sustainable, effective and efficient manner. Both now in law, through recent court decisions as well as policy, First Nations engagement is a key consideration of resource development.

Beyond guidelines to consultation and accommodation, the Government of Ontario has entered into a new phase of relationship with First Nations on key matters such as the new Ontario Mining Act. In addition, government bodies such as the Conservation Council have made sweeping commitments that promise to “incorporate Aboriginal values into our own guiding principles for Ontario’s economic and social development”.<sup>24</sup>

Beyond governments, the private sector is also realizing the importance of engaging with First Nations and Aboriginal Peoples. For example the Mining Association of Canada as well as the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada have signed Memorandums of Understanding with the Assembly of First Nations. According to the President of De Beers Canada:

“Canada’s mining industry is the largest private sector employer of Aboriginal people. Across Canada, mining companies and First Nations communities have agreements in place that include commitments on hiring, training, business development and environmental practices. We believe this growing relationship will be strengthened through dialogue and partnership”<sup>25</sup>

Clearly the economic environment and emerging legal and political commitments create greater opportunity for Post-Secondary education for First Nations and Aboriginal Peoples. Given the geographic location and experience of Nipissing University, partnership for the development of targeted programming in support of resource and community development appears highly likely and potentially profitable for all parties including the university, First Nations and the private sector.

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24 Green Ontario, The Conservation Council of Ontario <http://www.greenontario.org/strategy/firstnations.html>.

25 Assembly of First Nations (AFN) and Mining Association of Canada (MAC) join force to work on improving First Nations economies with signing of MoU at INTES 2009, March 9, 2009, Toronto, ON.





ABORIGINAL POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION STRATEGY



②

Inventory  
of Aboriginal  
Services and  
Programs

## Inventory of Aboriginal Services and Programs

Nipissing University provides specific programming, activities and out-reach to Aboriginal students and the Aboriginal community. The following inventory is divided in four categories to reveal the range of activity through: 1. institutional measures; 2. Aboriginal student supports; 3. Aboriginal community engagement and 4. external relations.

Description	
<b>Admissions Policies</b>	Admission policy – Consecutive Bachelor of Education program: up to 20 places are reserved for Aboriginal candidates. Undergraduate Program, 'Accessibility Admissions Policy', persons who are of Aboriginal ancestry is identified as one target group.
<b>Academic Affairs</b>	[Proposed Research chair/centre]
<b>Academic Services, Office of Student Development and Services</b>	Academic Advising outreach service monthly for Aboriginal learners, appointments and referrals made under guidance of Aboriginal Services and Programs staff.
<b>Undergraduate Program, Faculty of Arts and Science</b>	Native Studies Program (General Bachelor of Arts degree) <b>NATI 1306, Anishinaabemowin Ojibwe 1</b> <b>Description:</b> This course is intended for students with no previous knowledge of Anishinaabemowin (Ojibwe). The course will focus on oral communication skills and development using a thematic approach essential for communication. The double vowel writing system will be utilized to support oral communication. Elders and local community members will act as resource people and language mentors.



Description	
<p><b>Undergraduate Program, Faculty of Arts and Science</b> (continued)</p>	<p>Native Studies Program (General Bachelor of Arts degree)</p> <p><b>NATI 1005 Madjitang, in the Beginning ...An Introduction to Native Studies</b> <i>Description:</i> This course is an opening survey of the inner workings and underpinnings of the Native cultures of Canada using historical, philosophical, spiritual and sociological frameworks from which to gather insight into both the uniqueness and the universality that flows through Native communities to this day. Special emphasis is placed on exploring fundamental principles involving Native evolution, values, current lifestyles and world view, with an eye to observing these constructs coming from the environment or natural world.</p> <hr/> <p><b>NATI 1205 Omushkego Etuskanaysewin</b> <i>Description:</i> Omushkego Etuskanaysewin (culture and language of Mushkegowuk people) is a course which provides an overview of the Aboriginal People of the James Bay area. The history of the Mushkegowuk is examined as well as traditional values, beliefs, ceremonies and living with natural creation. An introduction to the Cree language is covered namely: the basics of conversational Cree, history of written Cree, dialects, language structure, Cree syllabics and translation of documents and conversations. The utilization of elders and local community members as resource people is emphasized in this course. The location of the course in a northern Native community is beneficial in regards to the access to the land and natural environment in the teaching of traditional skills and values. (This course was developed in partnership between the Moose Cree First Nation and Nipissing University.)</p>

**Description**

**Undergraduate Program, Faculty of Arts and Science**  
*(continued)*

Native Studies Program  
(General Bachelor of Arts degree)  
**NATI 2005 Native Kinships with Environment**

**Description:** This course examines Native cultures' responses to the rhythms and cycles of the natural world, and how human beings and the environment create a living, integrated system. Strong emphasis will be placed upon recognizing the esteemed relationships among mineral, plant, animal and human beings. This matrix is commonly understood in Native societies as possessing a bond of kinship or esteemed partnership among relatives. From a contemporary context, the politics and legalities of land and its resources will be characterized.

**NATI 2016 Cultural Production in an International Environment**

**Description:** This course is the culmination of four years of collaboration involving universities from Canada, Italy, Finland and Holland. The core focus will be on Native Canadian cultural development and sustainability through the multitude of products that originate from the processes taking place within these cultures. At the same time the course will also focus on the general social values and cultural expressions of other national and international cultures to help students develop a broader understanding and appreciation for the broad spectrum of cultural expressions. It will be noted in particular, where values and standards are shared and where cultures experience differences.

## Description

**Undergraduate Program, Faculty of Arts and Science**  
(continued)

Native Studies Program  
(General Bachelor of Arts degree)

### **NATI 2025 Native Creativity and the Arts**

**Description:** This course explores the roots of Native creativity from its earliest observable forms and expressions to the introduction and worldwide acceptance of Native creative and artistic works in the visual arts, in literature (including drama and film) and in music. In many traditional Native cultures, the creative process has been seen as an integral part of everyday life.

### **NATI 2205 Omushkego Etuskanaysewin II**

**Description:** Omushkego Etuskanaysewin II (culture and language of Mushkegowuk people) is a second-year Cree language course of the Cree people of the James Bay area. This second year course covers language structure and grammar, Cree syllabics and translation of documents and conversations. The utilization of Elders and local community members as resource people is emphasized in this course. The location of the course in a northern Native community is beneficial in regards to the access to the land and natural environment in the teaching of traditional skills and values. (This course was developed in partnership between the Moose Cree First Nation and Nipissing University.)



Description	
<p><b>Undergraduate Program, Faculty of Arts and Science</b> (continued)</p>	<p>Native Studies Program (General Bachelor of Arts degree) <b>NATI 3005 Native Spirituality and Religions</b> <b>Description:</b> This course will explore the spiritual and religious beliefs and practices of Natives of the Americas, and particularly in Canada and the United States. Native cultures exhibit certain commonalities from a global perspective, but it is recognized that there are hundreds of Native cultures with distinctive viewpoints and belief systems. Special emphasis will be placed upon the examination of major rituals and ceremonies of various Native societies from across a wide spectrum, in order to develop clearer insights into the actual beliefs of the peoples.</p>
<p><b>Aboriginal Summer Education Programs, Faculty of Education</b></p>	<p>Aboriginal Teacher Certification program Native Special Education Assistant Education Diploma program Native Classroom Assistant Diploma program</p>
<p><b>Courses on Aboriginal topics</b></p>	<p><b>EDUC 4986, Education of Native Canadians</b> (Consecutive Education program, optional course for candidates) <b>Description:</b> An examination of the cultural and social aspects of Native Canadian life relevant to education; the legal, historical and sociological aspects of Native Canadian education; an introduction to teaching in Native Canadian schools; practicum placement will be provided if possible.</p>



Description	
<b>Courses on Aboriginal Topics</b> <i>(continued)</i>	<p><b>EDUC 4445, Teaching Environmental Science, Part I</b> <b>Description:</b> This course focuses on building an awareness and knowledge of ecosystems and ecological concepts, broad environmental topics resources and networks. The topics will include: environmental literacy, links to Ministry of Education curriculum guidelines, teaching strategies for integrated studies in environmental education, Aboriginal awareness, and hands-on exploration of several aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems.</p> <hr/> <p><b>EDUC 4455, Teaching Environmental Science, Part II</b> <b>Description:</b> This course provides an in-depth, hands-on examination of environmental issues, teaching strategies, personal ethics, resources and networks. The topics include wildlife issues, Aboriginal perspectives, endangered species and spaces, old growth forests, water conservation, and the role of technology in the environment. <b>Restrictions:</b> This Group 5 Course does not lead to Ontario College of Teachers Additional Certification and cannot be applied towards a Bachelor of Arts degree. It may only be applied towards a Bachelor of Education degree or a Diploma in Education.</p> <hr/> <p><b>MUSC 2007 Aboriginal Music in Canadian Contexts</b> <b>Description:</b> This course examines Aboriginal music practices of various First Nations within Canada. The musical styles, contexts and functions of traditional, powwow and contemporary forms of music are discussed. This course may be credited towards Native Studies.</p>

## Description

### Courses on Aboriginal Topics (continued)

#### **ANTR 2035 Ethnology of North American Native Peoples**

**Description:** The course describes and compares the socio-cultural systems of the original peoples of North America as they were at the time of contact with European cultures. After an introduction to the peopling of North America and the development of North American native culture areas and languages, this course examines comparative processes of social organization and adaptation. The following Aboriginal culture areas north of Mexico are surveyed: the Southeast, the Eastern Agriculturalists and other Eastern Woodlands groups, the Plains and the Prairies, the Southwest, the Intermontane area (including the Great Basin, California, and the Plateau), the Northwest Coast, the Subarctic, and a brief examination of the Arctic. This course may be credited towards Native Studies.

#### **ENGL 3276 Studies in the Native Literatures of North America I**

**Description:** This course offers an historical and self-reflexive exploration of Native North American literature in English (with some work in translation) and its meaning for us as Canadians, both Native and non-Native. After some grounding readings and presentations from the oral tradition of Native “mythology,” the class will focus on works written in the last two centuries, with an emphasis on the modern and contemporary periods of the twentieth-century. Specific course content varies from year to year. Native Studies students who have not completed ENGL 2005 may request permission from the Department Chair to take ENGL 3276. This course may be credited towards Native Studies.



## Description

### Courses on Aboriginal Topics (continued)

#### **ENGL 3277 Studies in the Native Literatures of North America II**

**Description:** This course offers an historical and self-reflexive exploration of Native North American literature in English (with some work in translation) and its meaning for us as Canadians, both Native and non-Native. After some grounding readings and presentations from the oral tradition of Native “mythology,” the class will focus on works written in the last two centuries, with an emphasis on the modern and contemporary periods of the twentieth-century. Specific course content varies from year to year. Native Studies students who have not completed ENGL 2005 may request permission from the Department Chair to take ENGL 3277. This course may be credited towards Native Studies.

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#### **HIST 3257 History of Ontario: Selected Topics II**

**Description:** This course examines social, political and/or economic issues in one or more of twentieth century Ontario, Ontario since 1945 and/or Northern Ontario. This course may be credited towards Native Studies.

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#### **HIST 3346 First Nations in Historical Perspective**

**Description:** This course examines the First Nations in North America and their interaction with European colonial and later national governments and society. This course may be credited towards Native Studies.



Description	
<p><b>Courses on Aboriginal Topics</b> (continued)</p>	<p><b>ABCO 1006 Aboriginal Counselling Management</b>  <i>Description:</i> This course will focus on advanced administration and office protocol in both First Nations and institutional environments. Areas covered will include proposal development; report writing; rules of confidentiality; which will facilitate professional counselling practices. The student will develop skills in budgeting, human relations, program implementation, and knowledge of infrastructure, ethics and accountability. The emphasis on approaches to administration will reflect the philosophy, values, and group dynamics of Aboriginal Peoples. This course is primarily for people of Aboriginal ancestry.</p> <hr/> <p><b>GEND 2066 Colonization and Indigenous Peoples</b>  <i>Description:</i> This course will examine the central problems of colonization through a range of critical perspectives. Developing upon the position that colonization shapes lived experience as well as what counts as knowledge, topics will include the effects of colonization on sexualized and racialized embodiment; the role of nationalism; and ideas of community and belonging. This course may be credited towards Native Studies.</p> <hr/> <p><b>GEND 3066 Canada, Colonization and the Politics of Resistance</b>  <i>Description:</i> This course will investigate the politics of resistance to colonization within the Canadian context. Using contemporary as well as historical case studies, this course examines strategies of anti-colonial resistance and the possibility of alliance-building. Topics will include sovereignty, representation, responsibility and action. This course may be credited towards Native Studies and Political Science.</p>



Description	
<b>Courses offered for Aboriginal learners</b>	<b>UNIV 1011, Introduction to student success</b> (In academic year 2003-4, the course offered a section as a pilot project for Aboriginal learners only, provincial funding was used to cover costs).
<b>Aboriginal Faculty and Staff</b>	<p><b>Administrative:</b> Manager of Aboriginal Services and Programs, position identifies Aboriginal ancestry a preference Aboriginal Services and Programs Administrator, position identifies Aboriginal ancestry a preference</p> <p><b>Support:</b> Student Success Coordinator, Aboriginal Services and Programs, position identifies Aboriginal ancestry a preference Service Learning Clerk, position identifies Aboriginal ancestry a preference</p> <p>There are three faculty members who are members of First Nation communities, however there is no formal means for them to self-disclose identity, nor is Aboriginal ancestry listed in their job descriptions.</p>



## Students

	Description
<b>Student Association</b>	Aboriginal Leadership Initiative, student association developed in fall of 2008 with support from grant funding and from resources from Aboriginal Services and Programs. Students gathered as a group to identify interests, areas to work together on as a student community and put together a constitution for how the group will operate for and with students in the University community.
<b>Awards</b>	<p>Alan J. Johnson Memorial Scholarship Nov. 1 annually Awarded to an applicant of Native Canadian ancestry enrolled in the full-time Bachelor of Education Program with the highest prerequisite qualifications.</p> <p>Nipissing University Bachelor of Education Aboriginal Award Oct. 15 annually Presented annually to a full-time Aboriginal student enrolled in the Bachelor of Education who has a minimum admission average of 75% and demonstrates financial need.</p> <p>Nipissing University Aboriginal Arts and Science Award Oct. 15 annually Presented annually to a second year full-time Aboriginal student enrolled in an undergraduate degree program who has a minimum overall average of 75% and demonstrates financial need.</p>





Description	
<b>Bursaries</b>	Phyllis Kathleen Hart Memorial Bursary Oct 15 annually Awarded on the basis of financial need to Aboriginal Nipissing University students.
<b>Student Resource Centre</b>	Nei kei nah <sup>n</sup> student lounge in Aboriginal Services and Programs area for Aboriginal learners. It also houses resources for non-Aboriginal learners and University community members to view and use.
<b>Aiming Higher project</b>	Began in 2006 – a project of Eagle Village First Nation with coordination assistance provided by Nipissing University. Grant funded specialized recruitment program for Aboriginal youth in First Nation communities carried out by Aboriginal Services and Programs. Initial program was developed as a response to a First Nation community request and the current program still operates in partnership with communities.

### ***Community Partnerships***

Description	
<b>Nipissing University Aboriginal Council on Education (NUACE)</b>	Advisory Council to Board of Governors and President put in place officially in 1992. The Council holds voting seats on the two governing bodies of the University, i.e. Board of Governors and Senate. Informal relationships with Faculty members (Education, Arts and Sciences, Applied and Professional Schools) who engage with NUACE to seek guidance, and information. Some faculty members and administrative staff hold seats on the Council as resource members.

Description	
<b>Biidaaban Community Service - Learning Program</b>	A curricular community service-learning program that holds as one of its primary focuses, the improvement of literacy and numeracy among Aboriginal youth in the region. The support of ACE in the development of the proposal and the clear indication of First Nation partnerships was instrumental in obtaining funding for the entire program.

### *External Opportunities*

Description	
<b>Access to new provincial funding opportunities</b>	Aboriginal Education Office of the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities and the Ministry of Education identified increases to funding amounts for Aboriginal learners and Aboriginal education at the post secondary level.
<b>Networking: Initiative developing working relationships with businesses to link to Aboriginal students through discussion panel</b>	Northern Ontario Growth Plan, discussion panel. Leaders from the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines, local colleges.
<b>Council of Ontario Universities – Aboriginal Reference Group providing advice to Presidents and potentially direct relationship to MTCU</b>	Acting Manager of Aboriginal Services and Programs, Co-Chair of recently established Reference Group on Aboriginal education for the Council of Ontario Universities for 2009-11.

## Community Engagement Strategy

The Nipissing University Aboriginal Council on Education (NUACE) was established officially in 1992. The Council traces its roots back to 1980 when roundtable discussions were held with First Nations to help guide the development of summer Education programs for Aboriginal learners.

The Council is in place to advise the University on matters affecting Aboriginal learners specifically support services, specialized recruitment and retention programs and research opportunities. Another role is that of an advisor on the development of degree programs, research, programming and curriculum on Aboriginal and First Nation topics.

As members of NUACE are appointed by their communities or organizations, the Council provides a direct link between the University and First Nations. At quarterly meetings, the Council discusses issues related to retention of Aboriginal learners, and as well, NUACE has received requests from faculty members interested in connecting with First Nation communities to engage in research or to explore topics in research.

Through a special Planning Retreat on March 2 and 3, 2009, NUACE<sup>26</sup> had the opportunity to discuss the approach to this strategy development, to fully consider the current structures and programming and to begin the process of setting in place recommendations for the future.

As a result of the Retreat, members of the Aboriginal Council on Education resolved that a clarified and strengthened statement of roles, responsibilities and accountabilities was required. In addition, greater and on-going engagement and outreach with First Nations was required.

As a result, two key recommendations emerged regarding the Community Engagement Strategy:

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26 See Attachment 1 – Discussion Paper prepared for ACE planning Retreat, March 2009.

### **Recommendation 1:**

It is recommended that the Aboriginal Council on Education Chair and Nipissing University staff from Aboriginal Services and Programs conduct a series of First Nation community visits to broaden and solidify existing membership. These meetings will engage First Nations in the surrounding area and/or home communities of Nipissing students regarding their issues, interests and needs with respect to their current and future relationship with Nipissing University. A standard survey instrument will be developed to track all information (follows below) for all visits.

### **Recommendation 2:**

It is recommended that the Aboriginal Council on Education thoroughly review its current Terms of Reference. Following review by all members and as part of the community visits, a revised draft will be prepared and presented for approval.

## ***Community Visits Survey***

As part of the Community Engagement Strategy, the Aboriginal Council on Education Chair and Nipissing University staff will conduct a series of First Nation community visits. The purpose of the visits will be for outreach, coordination, information gathering and confirmation of broadened membership for renewed Nipissing University Aboriginal Council on Education.

The Aboriginal Council on Education has identified four directions requiring response from Nipissing University. As such, questions were organized to gather information in accordance with these four directions.

### ***I. Students:***

- a) Are you aware of support services and programming offered by Nipissing? From your experience, have students used the services? Was it helpful?
  
- b) What do you feel is required to provide a welcoming environment for students at the University?



*“University education provides the opportunity to see the world differently.”*

**II. Institutional:**

- a) Nipissing offers some specific courses and programming for First Nation and Aboriginal students – what others do you think are needed?
- b) What would be the priority for academic courses and programs based on the needs and vision of your community?

**III. Community:**

- a) Does your First Nation have research needs that might be supported through working with Nipissing researchers and Faculty?
- b) Do you think your First Nation would be interested in a formal relationship with Nipissing through the Aboriginal Council or through a specific project?

**IV. External:**

- a) What do you see as the biggest opportunities/challenges for your community regarding community and economic development?
- b) Do you think Universities can play a useful role in supporting relationships between government and First Nations and/or between industry and First Nations?

*In addition, during all Community visits, an open-ended question was asked to ensure that First Nations had a full opportunity to contribute their thoughts and perspectives:*

- a) Are there other areas, program items you would like to discuss?



## ***I. Community Visits Survey Findings and Outcomes***

The Community Visits conducted as part of the strategy development were an excellent opportunity to reach out directly to First Nations and to cultivate a broad understanding of the community needs for their students as well as interests in University governance and research.

Community Visits were conducted by the Chair of the Nipissing University Aboriginal Council on Education together with Nipissing University Aboriginal Services and Programs staff. Visits were conducted through April 2009 as follows:

Tuesday April 21, 2009

- Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve

Thursday April 23, 2009

- Timiskiming First Nation

Friday April 24, 2009

- Kitigan Zibi First Nation

Wednesday April 29, 2009

- Whitefish Lake First Nation
- Sheguiandah First Nation

In addition, comments were forwarded by Nipissing First Nation as well as additional written comments from Eagle Village First Nation. Follow-up discussions are planned with Dokis First Nation and M'Chigeeng First Nation.



### **Summary of Findings:**

*“University education provides the opportunity to see the world differently. We want every one of our students to be ready for that opportunity.”<sup>27</sup>*

*“Universities should try to appreciate the tremendous community impact of successful graduates. It often means for the first time someone from a particular family has completed a degree. Whereas it may be just one student out of four hundred for the University, it is a huge accomplishment in a small northern community.”<sup>28</sup>*

All First Nations were very pleased to host a visit by Nipissing University Aboriginal Council on Education (NUACE) and viewed this as a positive recognition of community involvement by NUACE.

### **Current Strengths:**

- First Nation leadership has great interest to increase enrolment and completion rates of youth in Post-Secondary studies and views NUACE as a key partner in encouraging and supporting student success.
- Positive recognition of opportunity for college transfer students to NU from Canadore College.
- Many First Nations expressed that they are pleased with networks supported by Aboriginal Services units of both institutions (Canadore and NU).
- North Bay with its size and proximity to the natural environment is similar to First Nation students' homes.
- Positive comments on campus size, pond and other features.
- Many positive comments about the experience of existing or previous students – “our students say they receive awesome help and support”
- First Nation leaders and staff pointed out that they “like special needs services for students and that professors can be approached and talked to about course content and for assistance”

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27 Comment made during First Nation visit by NUACE, April 2009.

28 Comment made during First Nation visit by NUACE, April 2009.

- Interest in Aiming Higher project, would like to be a site/ community for next year, additional interest expressed in gathering students from surrounding communities to bring to the event, ideas expressed around fundraising events from local level to support student visits if that helped.
- First Nations staff and leaders expressed appreciation for knowing personnel at Nipissing so they can provide direct assurances to their students that their needs are important, that someone is on the other end of the phone who knows them and will call them back.
- First Nations visited expressed their appreciation of the link to Nipissing through NUACE “Our association with NUACE has allowed our community to partake in the discussions and stay abreast to changes and issues which may concern us”

### ***Student Challenges:***

- Acknowledgement of low graduation rates of students from high school, outreach programs needed to encourage and to increase in success rate.
- Strong interest to increase graduation and completion rates of Aboriginal students to create capacity with filling human resource needs at governing band levels, many employees currently in those positions are approaching retirement and there are few eligible Aboriginal people qualified to fill them.
- Growth of numbers of students with special needs.
- Financial support is the most common barrier to Post-Secondary education, limited amounts mean that the First Nation has to decide priorities for members.
- Women face particular issues including financial ones and no support with children while studying.



### ***Institutional Supports:***

- Develop and confirm Research protocol and partnership between Nipissing University and interested First Nations – could be launched through a symposium hosted by NUACE but would be individualized based on specific First Nation interests.
- Targeted programming for “Natives” sometimes generates false negative perception that they are not rigorous academically. The institution should be cautious regarding this and ensure such perceptions are addressed through marketing and promotion that accurately describes programming.
- Distance education is a good idea but there must be an awareness that this is not for everyone and often is not ideal for Aboriginal students especially those with family responsibilities and no direct support. A balanced approach is necessary offering a variety of programming to suit the individual student.
- First Nations request direct and regular updates of information regarding opportunities.
- While the minority, some First Nations still do not have high speed internet which is a significant barrier in communication and distance learning.
- Expressed support to continue a community developed Additional Qualification in Ojibwe as a Second Language with the accreditation through Nipissing University. Currently, the community offers Part 1, and they are looking for a university to work with them to offer Part 2 and Part 3.
- Summer Teacher education programs are considered part-time and that affects their [i.e the First Nation] ability to fund students.
- Nipissing to engage with First Nations on the basis of a mutual ‘open-for-business’ approach to explore research and other programming opportunities.
- Contact North infrastructure is underutilized and there is a desire for other Post-Secondary institutions to offer programming at their facility. The courses should focus on needs for the community, which they listed as; nursing, micro-business management, growing a small business, media arts, green industries, computer science, governance and dispute resolution issues. It is their desire to see these programs as steps towards a Post-Secondary degree.
- Native Studies program should be promoted more with an emphasis on relevancy of issues in today’s society.

- Need to continue the Welcome Pow Wow but also include the region's resources and services for the students. This will make transitions to the institution easier for its Aboriginal students.
- Summer transitions program during August within the community would be very beneficial. Nipissing University's online University 101 course could be offered to high school students as a helpful tool for its students, but also as a "foot in the door" to the university.
- Some First Nations now have the technology to carry out video link to the University and are interested in exploring possibilities (e.g. school has eight smart boards).

### ***Additional Student and Institutional Supports Identified***

- Need for stronger Anishinabek presence on campus initially through simple gestures such as flying the Anishinabek flag.
- Readiness and Orientation programming identified by all First Nations as a concern.
- Some First Nations working hard on program readiness and have taken advantage of initiative offered by Northern College. The goal of the initiative is to identify career/program interests of learners and it effectively addresses some of the current students needs presented to staff when prospective PS students come to the PSSSP office. It is four weeks long that involves a total of 28 hours in class + tasks to be completed outside of the class time. Students who successfully complete the program receive .5 of a course credit. The program is funded using a combination of HRSDC monies (Training funds), Income Security and funds from the Post-Secondary Student Support program.
- Orientation to the school and to the community on first arrival to North Bay – very important because it will reach students who have not ventured far from home (First Nation) before or who have been for one reason or another adverse to leaving home.
- Nipissing University to host an Education Counsellor Day at the University with Youth Councils as participants.
- Some students experience difficulties with application processes which is sometimes enough to deter students from entering Post-Secondary settings.
- Suggestion to set up private tours and meetings and to have more direct contact with liaison people. Videoconferencing can be seen as a step towards taking down barriers, perhaps offering introductory or orientation programs.



- First Nation youth in several communities currently participate in Science Camps organized annually by Kenjegewin Teg in M'Chigeeng, interested in participating more such as sports and recreation camps.
- Science camps, with an emphasis on relevancy of a science education as well as leadership development would be appreciated.
- Desire to connect in more ways with youth, suggested Youth Councils gatherings from First Nations as a potential opportunity.
- Interest in Post-Secondary counsellors from First Nations to look at and share effective retention practices at the FN level perhaps as part of the work of NUACE.
- Interested in reaching youth at a younger age to effect change, received a grant for outreach to grade 7/8 students for fall of 2009 to begin career exploration and would like to host representatives of the University in the community to conduct workshops and presentations with grade 7, 8, 9 level students.





## ABORIGINAL POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION STRATEGY



③

Analysis

## Analysis

When carefully considering the background information, the environment scan, the inventory, and the community engagement strategy outcomes, an analysis yields summary conclusions that are instructive in the development of the Strategic Plan.

The preceding Environment Scan reveals key considerations:

- The Aboriginal population is the only segment of the population currently experiencing positive growth in Ontario, especially in Northern Ontario.
- Governments at the Federal and Provincial level are increasingly pointing out the need for increased attention and focus on the Aboriginal population in regards to education and economic opportunity.
- Given recent court decisions and government requirements for consultation and accommodation with First Nations, several industries including the resource sector, must find new ways of working with and effectively engaging the Aboriginal community.
- Nipissing University has a strategic advantage with its location (within First Nations territories), its history and its size which enables targeted programming and activity.

The preceding Inventory reveals the following:

- Significant programming and activity provides a distinct advantage, however, longevity and sustainability of all activities requires full assessment and consideration.
- Core funding for Aboriginal student support services is essential to secure stable consistent programming and demonstrable commitment.
- Research partnerships are a key area of future activity but will require appropriate guidelines and processes.

The preceding results of the community engagement sessions reveal:

- significant support for Nipissing University to continue to strengthen current services and programs, to enhance communications and involvement of First Nations.
- significant interest in developing transitional programming and supports to assist Aboriginal students entering Post-Secondary education as well as outreach programming to engage younger students.
- significant interest in partnerships for research as well as formalizing the governance role of NUACE.

Based therefore on an overview analysis of the information compiled through the development of this Strategy, it is confirmed that Nipissing University has an important opportunity to advance strategic initiatives relating to Aboriginal students.

Based on the findings compiled, such strategic initiatives should relate to the following:

1. Confirming the commitment of Nipissing University through a comprehensive **University-wide Aboriginal Student Success Strategic Plan**.
2. Confirming the role of **NUACE** through adopting a new terms of reference.
3. Confirming the commitment of Nipissing University through the adoption of **the Aboriginal Student and Community Engagement Policy**.
4. Development of centralized, strengthened presence on campus to clarify communication, to consolidate programming and services and to provide longer-term viability and sustainability.
5. Development of a comprehensive **First Nation Community Research Plan** and dedicated capacity including confirmed research protocol.



6. Development of new **Transition** Programming to address preparation needs of Aboriginal Students.
7. Consideration of new programming and program delivery options (including within First Nations) in areas of identified needs such as **Health Careers and Community Development**.

### **Strategic Action Plan**

Based on the foregoing analysis and review, it is confirmed that Nipissing University is well positioned to confirm itself as a leader providing a welcoming environment, culturally relevant education opportunity and support.

### ***Vision***

Nipissing University is committed to working in partnership with the Aboriginal community to empower Aboriginal student success, to foster greater recognition and understanding of Aboriginal communities and to identify opportunities for coordination and mutual support.

### ***Goals***

Consistent with Nipissing University's Strategic Plan, the following goals are identified specific to the Aboriginal community:

1. To ensure access, support, out-reach and a welcoming environment for Aboriginal students.
2. To promote academic programming and research that responds to and anticipates Aboriginal student and community needs.

3. To develop partnerships with First Nations and Aboriginal communities, linking programming to community needs and interests.
4. To develop partnerships to link skills with opportunity and seek funding investment from the private sector and governments to address Aboriginal community interests.

### **Objectives**

Specific objectives relating to each of the goals will be confirmed through dialogue at NUACE.

A preliminary list to be finalized includes the following:

#### **1. Student Support**

- a) to increase recruitment, retention and completion rates;
- b) to provide information to all students about North Bay and surrounding area as well as student support programming;
- c) to develop summer and transition programming targeted for First Nation and Aboriginal students;
- d) to consider additional options and opportunities to address financial student needs; and
- e) to further develop and stabilize retention and leadership programming through new funding mechanisms.

#### **2. Academic Programming and Research**

- a) to confirm opportunity for development of First Nation delivered programming (Native Studies identified as an initial consideration) and explore additional opportunities;
- b) to confirm opportunity for development of other programming specific to First Nation community and student's emerging interests and needs in fields of health, environmental science, and community planning/development;
- c) to communicate directly to First Nations on opportunities and interest;



- d) to conduct University-wide review of courses to assess relevance/appropriateness of treatment of Aboriginal history/ knowledge to be launched in coordination with NUACE;
- e) to continue to develop and expand language programming;
- f) to develop research protocol and dedicated capacity initially with a research plan and potentially the development of dedicated capacity through a Research Chair/Centre; and
- g) to consider measures to address awareness and understanding of post-Residential school impacts.

### **3. Partnerships with First Nations**

- a) to explore program delivery options in partnership with First Nations;
- b) to assist with advocacy and promotion of the importance of Post-Secondary education and success;
- c) to establish effective dialogue and communication to bring forward research interests and needs;
- d) to consider opportunities to link with younger students through camps or other out-reach; and
- e) to consider opportunities to confirm presence on campus initially through flying the Anishinabek flag, confirming the presence of Elders and other longer term measures.

### **4. Partnerships to link skills with opportunity**

- a) to explore opportunities for private endowments specific to resource sector and specific resource development projects that impact First Nations; and
- b) to explore three-way partnerships in environmental, community and resource development linking business, university and First Nation interests.

## **Outputs**

In order to support the achievement of objectives, specific projects will be identified and prioritized through dialogue at NUACE, and throughout the consultation process. These tangible and specific projects will be the outputs that support the achievement of the outcome envisioned in the vision and goal statements of the strategy.



Outputs and specific projects will be considered for all objectives but as the view of NUACE is to ensure a coordinated overall strategic vision and plan, outputs have been first identified that relate to the overall plan.

### 1. **Terms of Reference**

Formal acceptance of **Renewed Terms of Reference for NUACE** by Nipissing University solidifying the role, responsibilities and mandate of NUACE within University governance and administration to improve awareness, communication and reporting.

- Draft follows on pp. 53-56

### 2. **Policy**

Formal acceptance of **Aboriginal Student and Community Engagement Policy** establishing the broad commitment and responsibility of the University to work towards and support implementation of the policy statement in support of Aboriginal student success and Aboriginal community engagement.

- Draft follows on pp. 57-67

### 3. **Central Presence**

Development of a feasibility study for a consolidated presence on campus such as a **First Nations Office and/or Indigenous Learning Centre** to bring together all of the various programming, research and services and embody the commitment and future plans of Nipissing University in implementing the policy and strategic plan:

- including consideration of new funding mechanisms that would assist in stabilizing core funding for core programming and student support services; and
- consideration of options and opportunities to create a position within Academic Affairs reporting to the Vice President Academic and Research to ensure overall consolidation and strategic planning/decision-making in relation to Aboriginal students, programming and engagement.

#### 4. Partnership Programming

New development and confirmation of **academic programming through partnership with First Nations** to first identify interest and second to explore delivery options that respond to community need.

- consistent with direction through NUACE explore condensed programming, CO-OP opportunities and bridging programming with partners including Canadore College.

#### 5. Research Protocol

Development of general **Nipissing University First Nation Research Protocol** and individual **First Nation Research plans** to match research priorities with community research needs and interests where possible.

- will also serve as a communication tool raising profile of interests and opportunities for research partnerships.

*“Nipissing University is committed to working in partnership with the Aboriginal community to empower Aboriginal student success, to foster greater recognition and understanding of Aboriginal communities and to identify opportunities for coordination and mutual support.”*





ABORIGINAL POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION STRATEGY



④

Renewed  
Terms of  
Reference

## Renewed Terms of Reference

As a tangible outcome of initial efforts towards the development of the Strategic Plan, existing members of the Aboriginal Council on Education (ACE) confirmed the need to strengthen and to clarify its role and responsibilities within Nipissing University governance. As such the following Terms of Reference were developed to reflect the views, interests and considerations by the ACE collective and are proposed for consideration.

### 1.0 Preamble

- 1.1 In recognition of the commitment to advance a partnership relationship between Nipissing University and the Aboriginal community, the Nipissing University Aboriginal Council of Education (herein after referred to as NUACE) is hereby established.

### 2.0 Vision

- 2.1 The NUACE exists to empower and to champion Aboriginal student success in all aspects of Nipissing University governance, academic and research programming.

### 3.0 Mandate

- 3.1 NUACE is mandated, through direct participation in Nipissing University governance, to review, recommend, assess and advocate for all programming and activities specifically designed to support Aboriginal students and to promote engagement with the Aboriginal community.

### 4.0 Roles and Responsibilities

- 4.1 NUACE has a direct relationship with the Office of President providing regular reporting and recommendations on all matters affecting Aboriginal students and the Aboriginal community at large.
- 4.2 NUACE has direct participation within Nipissing University governance structures including as a member of the Board of Governors and the University Senate.



- 
- 4.3** NUACE engages regularly within the Board of Governors and the Senate and will provide an annual report assessing current activities and providing recommendations for future activities.
- 4.4** NUACE will develop and oversee the implementation of a specific Aboriginal strategic action plan linked with the overall Nipissing University Strategic Plan as periodically updated identifying specific goals, outcomes, and reporting mechanisms
- 4.5** NUACE serves as the primary resource on all matters affecting Aboriginal students and the relationship between Nipissing University and the Aboriginal community at large.
- 4.6** NUACE facilitates consultation and engagement with the Aboriginal community and provides advice and recommendations to faculty and management on an on-going basis.

## **5.0 Objectives**

- 5.1** NUACE's strategic plan will identify, track and report on achievements regarding all aspects of Aboriginal student success and Aboriginal community engagement.

NUACE will pursue the following objectives:

### **5.1.1 Student Needs:**

To ensure access, support, out-reach and a welcoming environment for all Aboriginal students.

### **5.1.2 Institutional Needs:**

To promote academic programming and research that responds to and anticipates Aboriginal student and community needs.

### **5.1.3 Community Needs:**

To develop partnerships and to link programming to community needs and interests.

#### **5.1.4 External:**

To develop partnerships to link skills with opportunity and seek funding investment with the governments and the private sector.

### **6.0 Membership**

**6.1** NUACE consists of a majority of representatives from First Nation communities as well as additional members in accordance with the description provided below (6.1.1-6.1.4). All members must receive specific accreditation through authorized letters of appointment ensuring on-going accountability and reporting to their respectful communities.

Membership is as follows:

#### **6.1.1 First Nations**

All First Nations are eligible for membership. Those First Nations within the surrounding areas served by Nipissing's campuses and/or home communities of Nipissing students are especially encouraged to consider membership.

#### **6.1.2 Métis Communities**

Recognized Métis communities are also eligible for membership especially those within the surrounding area and/or home communities of students.

#### **6.1.3 Aboriginal advocacy and service delivery organizations**

Aboriginal organizations with a direct mandate relating to Aboriginal youth or education and training are eligible for membership.

#### **6.1.4 Aboriginal students**

Representatives of the Aboriginal Student Association may also be members of NUACE in addition to being regularly invited guests to ensure their perspective and experience is integrated in all NUACE activities and actions.



### **6.1.5 Faculty**

Each Faculty within Nipissing University may appoint one member to NUACE to ensure on-going coordination, interaction and information exchange.

**6.2** Membership also includes an Elder designated to support the work of NUACE in all of its activities and meetings.

**6.3** The President and other Senior Officers of Nipissing University Administration are invited to attend all meetings of NUACE and serve as permanent ex-officio members.

**6.4** From time to time, as required and/or requested by NUACE members, resource people are invited to NUACE for a particular purpose to ensure informed decision-making and appropriate access to information at all times.

## **7.0 Meetings**

**7.1** Two general meetings of the NUACE will be held at appropriate times in the Academic calendar, generally September and April. In between general meetings, working groups may be struck as required from time to time to address particular matters or specific projects and to report to the next scheduled general meeting.

## **8.0 Resources**

**8.1** Nipissing University is committed to supporting NUACE through the provision of assigned human resources (the Aboriginal Services and Programs Administrator acting as NUACE Secretary) and to work with NUACE to identify additional resources and funding to create stable, sustainable, and continuous programming to the greatest extent possible.



ABORIGINAL POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION STRATEGY



⑤

# Aboriginal Student and Community Engagement Policy

## Aboriginal Student and Community Engagement Policy

This policy will consolidate and expand Nipissing University's programs, services, community partnerships, and programs for and with Aboriginal Peoples. Nipissing University will collaborate with Aboriginal communities and partners in Post-Secondary education to improve access by Aboriginal learners to Nipissing University's learning opportunities; to increase Aboriginal learner success rates; and, to ensure program relevance to the current and future priorities, needs and interests of Aboriginal communities and partners.

### **Purpose**

Ontario's *New Approach to Aboriginal Affairs* commits the Government of Ontario to working with Aboriginal leaders and organizations to improve education outcomes among Aboriginal students. The Ontario Ministry of Education has identified Aboriginal education as one of its key priorities, with a focus on meeting two primary challenges by the year 2016 – to improve achievement among First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students and to close the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students including in the area of advancement to and completion of Post-Secondary studies. It is recognized that to achieve these goals, effective strategies must be developed to meet the particular educational needs of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students.

This policy is written in part as a response to this new Government direction, as well in appreciation of findings established through the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples and more recent studies of the Council of Ministers of Education and the Canadian Millennium Scholarship Foundation. All confirm and advocate for the development and implementation of policies, programs, and services that address equitable access, recruitment, retention, and completion rates for Aboriginal People in the Post-Secondary education.

The purpose of this policy is, therefore,

- to ensure the provision of a positive, welcoming learning environment that encourages full access, participation and success for Aboriginal students; and



- to ensure and promote respectful, appropriate engagement through partnership with the Aboriginal community in all research and program development.

### **Definition**

In this policy “Aboriginal person” means a member of a First Nation, Métis, or Inuit community. First Nation includes “Status,” “Treaty,” or “Registered” Indians as well as “Non-Status,” and “Non-Treaty” Indians.

### **Scope**

Nipissing University acknowledges and confirms a central and collective responsibility to implement and support this policy. Nipissing University affirms the Nipissing University Aboriginal Council on Education (NUACE) as having responsibility and authority to oversee implementation, review and evaluation of this policy.

### **Policy Statement**

Nipissing University will, under advisement of the Nipissing University Aboriginal Council on Education (NUACE):

- promote and support a holistic life-long learning approach as integral to all aspects of Aboriginal student success;
- continue to provide and develop programs and initiatives that increase the admission, retention and completion rates of the Aboriginal students through social, academic and cultural support strategies;
- enhance and increase academic programming specific to the Aboriginal students and directly responsive to Aboriginal community needs;
- increase the overall engagement, sensitivity and understanding of the Aboriginal worldview and cultural expression on campus including through utilizing resource people and special events under the direction NUACE;
- maintain Nei keh nah<sup>n</sup> (Aboriginal Student Support Services and Lounge) as a focal point for culturally appropriate support services, and a gathering place for Aboriginal students and community members;

- explore development of a Centre for Indigenous Learning/ First Nations Office to ensure dedicated, sustained capacity needed to develop and maintain linkage and trust with the Aboriginal community, and to consolidate programming, curriculum, research, support services and cultural activities across the University confirming a strong, permanent presence on campus;
- promote collaborative research and learning partnerships within the campus community and its Aboriginal partners. Appropriate efforts will be made to recognize and acknowledge Aboriginal cultures, values, languages and ways of knowing;
- promote the teaching of Aboriginal perspectives and content in courses and programs where appropriate, following appropriate protocols and practices recognizing Aboriginal cultures, values, languages and ways of knowing;
- develop and promote national and international indigenous relations; and
- continue to recognize NUACE's role and voting representation within its governing bodies.



### **Responsibilities and Revisions**

The role and composition of NUACE are confirmed within the NUACE Terms of Reference (September 2009). NUACE, having overall responsibility for implementation, review and evaluation, will, in accordance with this mandate, propose recommendations for review and amendment as required. NUACE will ensure that all University faculty, staff and governing bodies are informed of this policy and any proposed revisions.



## Aboriginal Student and Engagement Policy: Expanded with Rationale/Comments

### **Introduction**

This policy will consolidate and expand Nipissing University's programs, services, community partnerships, and programs for and with Aboriginal Peoples. Nipissing University will collaborate with Aboriginal communities and partners in Post-Secondary education to improve access by Aboriginal learners to Nipissing University's learning opportunities; to increase Aboriginal learner success rates; and, to ensure program relevance to the current and future priorities, needs and interests of Aboriginal communities and partners.

### **Rationale**

The policy formalizes work currently being done with Aboriginal communities by the University with students, through Aboriginal Services and Programs, and through the Aboriginal Council on Education.

It also acknowledges the long-standing relationships created to establish our successful Aboriginal education programs in the Faculty of Education.

The policy provides a framework to achieve the *Nipissing University Strategic Plan: 2005-2010, Addressing Our Future*, (February 2005), objectives of increasing the University's profile (Goal 5, Objective 18.3).

The policy also provides additional support for the existing Accessibility Admissions policy that recognizes admission of Aboriginal students and populations into the Faculties of Arts and Science and the Faculty of Education.

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### **Statement**

Nipissing University will, under advisement of the Aboriginal Council on Education (NUACE):

### **Rationale**

Formal recognition of the role that the Nipissing University Aboriginal Council on Education has served since 1992 for the University, and a commitment to the continuation of the role of an Aboriginal community advisory body.



## Statement

- continue to provide and develop programs and initiatives that increase the admission, retention and completion rates of the University's Aboriginal students through social, academic and cultural support strategies;

## Rationale

Supports the University's mission statement, "Nipissing University is a learning community that commits itself to increasing accessibility to under-represented groups," 2005.

Acknowledges and supports the statement in the ***Nipissing University Strategic Plan: 2005-2010, Addressing Our Future***, (February 2005), "...commits itself to increasing accessibility to under-represented groups, needed to meet Goal 6 Objective 19 (ii) Increase the Universities enrolment to a larger sustainable scale"

Enables response to program development that meets a growing segment of the population as detailed by the 2006 Census of Aboriginal Peoples, there are just over one million Aboriginal Peoples in Canada and forty eight percent (48%) of that population are under the age of twenty four (24). Finally, also according to the statistics in the Census of 2006, eight out of ten Aboriginal Peoples live in Ontario. Thus as a leader in supporting a growing population of young Aboriginal People, Nipissing University can increase accessibility to Post-Secondary education.

Enables response to community needs and acknowledges that needs of Aboriginal communities will increase due to self-government initiatives by First Nations.



## Statement

- enhance and increase academic programming specific to the Native Studies Program;

## Rationale

Supports Nipissing University's mission statement "commits itself to increasing accessibility to under-represented groups"

Acknowledges and supports the statement in the *Nipissing University Strategic Plan: 2005-2010, Addressing Our Future*, (February 2005), needed to meet Goal 6 Objective 19(ii) Increase the Universities enrolment to a larger sustainable scale"

Allows for development of new programs that attract Aboriginal learners.

Supports the development of the existing discussion of the development of an Honours program for Native Studies.

Enables supports for the potential for future expansion to a graduate level program.

- 
- increase the overall engagement of and sensitivity of the campus community to the diversity of Aboriginal students and cultures;

As more Aboriginal students apply and become part of the Nipissing community, it is imperative that the campus community become aware and fully understand the heritage and culture of Aboriginal people to ensure student and academic success of the learners and to enrich the campus community.



## Statement

## Rationale

	<p>Supports the statement in the <i>Nipissing University Strategic Plan: 2005-2010, Addressing Our Future</i>, (February 2005), Section 2.3 Values, Community and People.</p> <p>Enables improved cross-cultural communication and understanding and supports the mandate of Aboriginal Services &amp; Programs.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• maintain Nei keh nah<sup>n</sup> (Aboriginal Student Support Services and Lounge) as a focal point for culturally appropriate support services, and a gathering place for Aboriginal students and community members;</li></ul>	<p>Sustains continued support services for Aboriginal students that assist students' transition into Post-Secondary studies and the University and ensures culturally sensitive service and guidance that responds to Aboriginal communities.</p> <p>Supports the statement in the <i>Nipissing University Strategic Plan: 2005-2010, Addressing Our Future</i>, (February 2005), Goal 2: To Enhance Our Student Experience, Assess and improve our student retention strategies.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• promote collaborative research and learning partnerships within the campus community and its Aboriginal partners. Appropriate efforts will be made to acknowledge Aboriginal cultures, values, languages and ways of knowing;</li></ul>	<p>Provides a link to Aboriginal and First Nation communities through a community advisory body and, provides access to a knowledge base that has predominately been ignored or undervalued by non-Aboriginal society.</p>



## Statement

## Rationale

Supports Goal 1, Objective 3  
“Develop a vibrant research culture by providing the necessary support systems and infrastructure,” of the *Nipissing University Strategic Plan: 2005-2010, Addressing Our Future*, (February 2005).

Will assist the University to take advantage of the research opportunities with Aboriginal peoples, populations and communities associated with current demographic trends, land development and resource management opportunities. Research of this type will also address Goal 5 “To Enhance Our Profile and attract more Aboriginal students to Nipissing University” as listed in the current University Strategic Plan.

- promote the teaching of Aboriginal perspectives and content in courses and programs where appropriate, following appropriate protocols and practices recognising Aboriginal cultures, values, languages and ways of knowing;

There is an opportunity at hand in a growing competitive market in Aboriginal programming for the University to develop new curricula and programs. Algoma University has developed a Bachelor of Arts degree program in Anishinaabemowin (Ojibwe) & Indigenous Studies and Shingwauk Kinoomaage Gamig is an evolving Anishinaabe Post-Secondary Institution (University) associated with the University of Sudbury and Algoma University.



## **Statement**

## **Rationale**

As well with the increasing population in the numbers of Aboriginal Peoples across the country, as described in an earlier section of the rationale, by including relevant curricula developed in partnership with Aboriginal Peoples, communities and cultures, Nipissing will be helping to adequately prepare its students, today and tomorrow for entry into the work force or graduate studies for working as a partner with Aboriginal society in Canada.

- 
- develop and promote national and international Indigenous relations;

Nipissing University is situated in the middle of the territory of the Anishinabek Nation, and through acknowledgement of the location and the surrounding Nations, their heritage, practices and cultures; the University can take the opportunity to recognise the numerous Nations in Canada and extend an invitation to Indigenous cultures throughout the world to learn from their Elders and heritage both in their homeland and at the Nipissing University campus. This will broaden the University's definition of globalisation.

- 
- assist in the development of a Centre for Indigenous Learning to direct and coordinate all Aboriginal programming, curriculum, research, support services and cultural activities across the University; and

Nipissing University has already made significant strides towards the development of programs specific to the needs of Aboriginal communities such as the summer Aboriginal Education programs, a Native Studies degree program to name a few. As the University grows, so should the programming.





**Statement**

**Rationale**

The Office/Centre will enable the University to speak with one voice in all Aboriginal matters, to coordinate programs, services and future actions. It will streamline requests and programming expansions in all departments to present an effective way of working with Aboriginal communities, issues and peoples to continue to ensure a partnership of trust and reciprocity with Aboriginal communities.

The policy will provide leverage to engage business investment in the following: Aboriginal Education to meet future labour market demands in Canada, and achieving the overall goal of improving education attainment levels of Aboriginal Peoples as stated by federal and provincial governments.

- continue to recognize NUACE's voting representation on its governing bodies.

Recognition and inclusion of Aboriginal input on the two governing bodies of the University has been in place since 1992, as well NUACE provides an advisory role to the University. The continued recognition of the seats will help to ensure the advancement of the goals of the University for Aboriginal education in the community, the area as well as at provincial and federal levels.

## Statement

## Rationale

Allows for a more direct and respectful opportunity for dialogue between program areas and Aboriginal communities and, the University can ensure it achieves Objective 15 of ***Nipissing University Strategic Plan: 2005-2010, Addressing Our Future***, (February 2005) “ Build the reputation of Nipissing University and it’s profile with all stakeholder groups.”



## Performance measurement

In order to ensure a long-term and effective planning process, NUACE has designed a system of performance measurement for the overall Strategic Plan itself and will develop specific indicators relating to objectives and outputs.

For the Plan, core indicators used by NUACE to evaluate and review progress on the plan will include:

1. NUACE purpose and activities meet community needs.
2. NUACE frequently evaluates, by soliciting community input, whether its mission and activities provide benefit to the community.
3. NUACE has a clear, meaningful written mission statement which reflects its purpose, values and people served.
4. NUACE members and Nipissing University staff periodically review the mission statement and modify it to reflect changes in the environment.
5. NUACE develops and maintains a written strategic plan to achieve its mission.
6. All NUACE members, including staff, students and faculty participate in the planning process.
7. The plan is developed by researching the internal and external environment.
8. The plan identifies the changing community needs including the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.
9. The plan sets goals and measurable objectives that address these critical issues.
10. The plan prioritizes the organizations goals and develops timelines for their accomplishments.
11. The plan establishes an evaluation process and performance indicators to measure the progress toward the achievement of goals and objectives.
12. Through work plans, human and financial resources are allocated to insure the accomplishment of the goals in a timely fashion.
13. The plan is communicated to all stakeholders – First Nations, Métis and Aboriginal service providers, students, staff, and faculty.



## Data Base Development

In addition, NUACE members will discuss options for strengthening data collection through the development of a comprehensive Aboriginal student data collection and tracking methodology that respects community and individual privacy at the same time as assuring the greatest possible accuracy.

Beginning in the Fall of 2009, a working group of NUACE will be established on Data Collection. This working group will aim to consolidate existing data sources through admissions as well as that collected through Aboriginal Services and Programs. Data base development will be based on the following questions and will rely on self-identification of students:

“Aboriginal person” means a member of a First Nation, Métis, or Inuit community. First Nation includes “Status”, “Treaty”, or “Registered” Indians as well as “Non-Status” and “Non-Treaty” Indians.

The first task of the working group will be the development of an important Information Campaign to explain and appropriately situate the issue of data collection in order to address concerns and fears that may exist. Nipissing University will commit to a process that utilizes information as a means to encourage student participation, to facilitate role models and to generally encourage enrolment at Nipissing University as opposed to simply tracking individuals for financial or other purposes.

NUACE members, many of whom are, or are directly linked with First Nation Directors of Education, will fulfill an important validation function of Nipissing University Aboriginal student data.

## Implementation Plan

NUACE to discuss and confirm targets for achievement of objectives, to establish evaluation and reporting process and identify resource requirements.

### **Phase One: Development**

*March 2009-June 2009*

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Strategic Planning Retreat

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Completion of Environment Scan

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Completion of Inventory

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Completion of Community Engagement Strategy

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Completion of Draft Renewed Terms of Reference

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Completion of Draft Aboriginal Student and Community Engagement  
POLICY

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Presentation to University Administration and Faculty

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Completion of Strategic Plan including objectives,  
timelines confirmed

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Final review by NUACE

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**Phase Two: Implementation**

**September/October 2009**

Presentation to Board of Governors/Senate

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NUACE Terms of Reference adopted and implemented with meeting cycle and working groups established as required on key objectives

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Aboriginal Student and Community Engagement Policy adopted and implemented

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Data Base development and tracking through NUACE working group

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Research Plan

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**Phase Three: Review and Next Steps**

**April 2010**

Development of feasibility study for centralized presence

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Development of Draft Research Protocol and consider expanded opportunity for partnerships with First Nations and/or other institutions

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Development of options/plans for additional partnership programming

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*“Universities should try to appreciate the tremendous community impact of successful graduates.”*

