



A Commitment to Aboriginal Student Success

Aboriginal Strategic Plan

2015 – 2019



Enji Giigdoyang, The Office of Aboriginal Initiatives • Nipissing University

Approved by the Nipissing University Aboriginal Council on
Education (NUACE) January 29, 2015



Nipissing University's deep attachment to its natural surroundings is reflected in the colours of its institutional logo: the blue and green within the logo reflect the colours of the water and the forest of the immediate area.

As a smaller university, Nipissing University strives to provide a collegial setting that is attentive to individuals, and which enables members of all groups within the university community to achieve their personal potential.



The art featured to the left, that is used throughout the Office of Aboriginal Initiatives' print material, captures these two facets of the Nipissing University experience. The circle symbolizes unity, while the eagle represents a "looking forward" to the future, with courage and determination.

Within the context of a stunning natural environment, Nipissing embraces all of its students — past, present, and future — while providing them with a nurturing and personally-enriching education.

Enji Giigdoyang, the Office of Aboriginal Initiatives, and the Nipissing University Aboriginal Council on Education acknowledge that Nipissing University is located on the traditional territory of Nipissing First Nation.



Welcome to Our Shared Commitment

Welcome to A Commitment to Aboriginal Student Success, the Aboriginal Strategic Plan 2015-2019 of Enji Giigdoyang, the Office of Aboriginal Initiatives, at Nipissing University. Through this strategy we look to improve opportunities for Aboriginal students to live, learn, and work in a community of choice that is welcoming, supportive, culturally relevant and academically excellent. This is the extended sense of community that Aboriginal students and their families look to us to provide.

The second decade of the 21st century can be considered the beginning of the Era of Reconciliation between Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal peoples, systems and societies in Canada. Enji Giigdoyang embraces reconciliation as a framework for strengthening Nipissing University's leadership in the development of strategies and shared efforts to promote, support and achieve success for Aboriginal students and Aboriginal communities. Enji Giigdoyang is confident that our efforts will continue to promote, support and achieve success for Aboriginal learners and in University-Aboriginal community relationships.

Reconciliation overall means that we have to convince all Canadians that this is their story too and that they have also been raised to believe the "mis-truths" that were taught in the residential schools. Its about establishing a respectful relationship between Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal peoples where we each show respect to each other and mean it, feel it and believe it.

- Justice Murray Sinclair, Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

Consistent with Nipissing University's overall strategic directions, the 2015 Aboriginal Strategic Plan: A Commitment to Aboriginal Student Success calls on the university to "welcome Aboriginal students, families and communities and commit to making a difference in the lives of Aboriginal peoples" by

- Providing an exceptional Aboriginal student experience;
- Expanding access to and facilitating culturally supportive academic and research opportunities; and
- Building meaningful partnerships with Aboriginal communities.





How We Got Here

Enji Giigdoyang, the Office of Aboriginal Initiatives, acknowledges the contributions of the Nipissing University Aboriginal Council on Education since its formation, as an advisory body to the President, that has helped guide the university's engagement with Aboriginal communities and supported Aboriginal student success.

In 2009 Nipissing University adopted Championing Aboriginal Student Success In A Time of Great Opportunity, an Aboriginal Post Secondary Education Strategy, led by the Nipissing University Aboriginal Council on Education (NUACE). That strategy clearly articulated a university wide commitment to Aboriginal student success and strengthened relationships with Aboriginal communities. Enji Giigdoyang, the Office of Aboriginal Initiatives, and the university have successfully implemented several of the goals within that strategy.

Nipissing University's Strategic Plan 2015-2019 includes the goal to "Create bridges to success, especially for students from northern communities, and Aboriginal, first-generation, and international learners." In terms of support for Aboriginal students and communities, Nipissing University has instituted a number of approved policies, structures, processes and programs.

Increasingly First Nation and Aboriginal perspectives are included in the University's governance structures. The Chief of the Nipissing First Nation sits as a member of the Board of Governors. The Nipissing University Aboriginal Council on Education (NUACE) advances and supports Aboriginal student success in Nipissing University's governance, academic and research programming. The NUACE serves as a resource on Aboriginal post-secondary education and gives voice to the diverse perspectives of regional Aboriginal communities. Its members include First Nations, Métis organizations, Aboriginal advocacy and service organizations, Aboriginal students, and an Elder (non-voting). The President, Senior Administration, and Faculty representatives are ex-officio members.



The Aboriginal Student and Community Engagement Policy approved by the Board of Governors in February 2011 supports the consolidation and expansion of programs, services and community partnerships that improve access to learning opportunities, ensure relevance to Aboriginal priorities, needs and interests, and increase student success rates. The policy environment it sets out provides a sound basis for the strategic directions and goals within the Aboriginal Strategic Plan 2015-2019. In particular it calls for the:

- Provision of a positive, welcoming learning environment supportive of Aboriginal students;
- Support of a holistic life-long learning approach to Aboriginal student success;
- Continual development of admission, retention and completion programs, initiatives and strategies;
- Enhancement of Academic programming responsive to Aboriginal students and communities;



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- Teaching of Aboriginal perspectives and content in courses and programs;
 - Increase in understanding of the Aboriginal worldview and cultural expression;
 - Promotion of respectful, appropriate engagement partnerships with the Aboriginal community;
 - Development of collaborative research and learning partnerships;
 - Building of national and international Indigenous relationships;
 - Recognition of the NUACE's role in governance; and
 - Centralization of capacity to deliver culturally appropriate support services, provide a gathering place, maintain linkages with the Aboriginal community and consolidate programming, curriculum, research, support services and cultural activities across the university.

In 2010, Enji Giigdoyang, the Office of Aboriginal Initiatives, was established as a department at the university. In 2011, the lead position for the Office of Aboriginal Initiatives was made a senior position reporting directly to the President. Enji Giigdoyang oversees Aboriginal programs and services, a focal point for personal, academic, and cultural support services that assist First Nation, Métis and Inuit students achieve success in their studies. It is the point of contact for faculty, staff and students and helps to develop partnerships that support a coordinated framework for reciprocal engagement between Nipissing University and Aboriginal communities. Key initiatives include the Aboriginal Advantage Program, in collaboration with the Faculty of Arts and Science, which provides access and transition for Aboriginal learners, and robust experiential learning opportunities through Biidaaban Community Service-Learning and Wiidooktaadwin: Aboriginal Mentorship Initiatives.

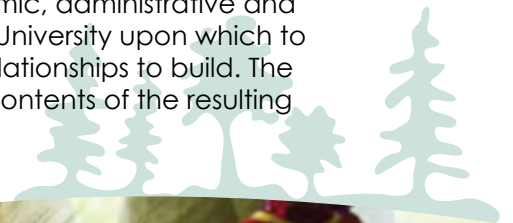
The Nipissing University Aboriginal Council on Education, with the Office of Aboriginal Initiatives, has examined its performance since 2009. Based on the strides made towards the strategic priorities of the 2009 Aboriginal Student Strategy, the current opportunities for meaningful partnerships with communities and potential for impact regionally through increased Aboriginal student enrolment, the NUACE and Enji Giigdoyang have engaged in this strategic planning process as a guide for collaborative strategies to build Aboriginal student success at Nipissing University in the next five years.

At the national level, there is recognition that changing demographics (an increasingly young and growing Aboriginal population) and gaps in Aboriginal educational attainment have created the conditions for great opportunity. Supportive data is emerging from the Government of Canada's 2011 National Household Survey and the Aboriginal Peoples Survey 2012 regarding changing demographics and Aboriginal peoples' educational attainment. The Council of the Federation (COF), comprised of the 13 provincial and territorial Premiers, the provincial and territorial Council of Ministers of Education Canada (CMEC), and the provincial, territorial and federal Forum of Labour Market Ministers (FLMM) have all identified Aboriginal education and workforce outcomes to be priority issues deserving targeted activity and support. In 2011 the Ontario Government released its Aboriginal Postsecondary Education and Training Policy



Framework that reinforces the case for supporting Aboriginal Initiatives. All of this points to progress provincially and nationally around Aboriginal student success, and the need for additional commitment from administrators, faculty, staff, students, Aboriginal communities and external stakeholders to address the issues and find solutions that affect Aboriginal educational success.

The renewal of the Enji Giigdoyang, Office of Aboriginal Initiatives', Aboriginal Strategic Plan was conducted in 2013 and 2014 through a series of facilitated dialogues with the Nipissing University Aboriginal Council on Education, Aboriginal students and alumni, faculty, administrative staff, and senior leadership in the University's academic, administrative and governance structures. The findings identified successes within the University upon which to build, changes to adapt to, long standing issues to address, and relationships to build. The approach strengthened a collective sense of ownership over the contents of the resulting Aboriginal Strategic Plan 2015-2019.





Our Shared Vision

The work of Enji Giigdoyang, the Office of Aboriginal Initiatives, is guided by, and contributes directly to the Nipissing University Strategic Plan 2015-2019.

Nipissing University's Vision:

Nipissing University will provide an exceptional and personalized student experience within a collegial and diverse learning community.

We will focus on excellence, innovation, and creativity in scholarship and teaching. Graduates will embrace lifelong learning and will make a difference locally, nationally and internationally.

Nipissing University's Mission:

Nipissing University will exemplify the highest standards in scholarship, teaching, and research.

In addition, Nipissing University will encourage students, faculty and staff to realize their full intellectual and personal potential to the benefit of our local, national and international communities.

Nipissing University will recognize our particular role in supporting northern communities, and our Aboriginal, first generational and international learners.



Guiding Enji Giigdoyang Principles

Enji Giigdoyang's vision and mission for Aboriginal peoples, families and communities at Nipissing University are rooted in four principles that guide our actions:

Our practice and approach at Enji Giigdoyang, the Office of Aboriginal Initiatives, centre on building respectful and reciprocal relationships with Aboriginal communities and within the university as a whole.

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Enji Giigdoyang honours the reclamation of Indigenous cultures, lands, voices and ways of knowing. We support the ethical inclusion of indigenous knowledge in classrooms and curriculum.

•

Enji Giigdoyang recognizes reconciliation as an ongoing process, a way of understanding history, community, and action. Reconciliation frames our collaborative endeavors with academic faculties, administration, support services and other sectors.

•

Enji Giigdoyang, the Office of Aboriginal Initiatives, recognizes the historical under-representation of Aboriginal peoples within post-secondary institutions as learners, staff and faculty. Enji Giigdoyang supports increased Aboriginal representation on campus within a welcoming, culturally supportive environment.



Enji Giigdoyang's Vision and Mission

The Vision of Enji Giigdoyang, the Office of Aboriginal Initiatives, is that:

Nipissing University welcomes Aboriginal students, families and communities and commits to making a difference in the lives of Aboriginal peoples.

Our mission is to support Aboriginal student success. In order to do this, Enji Giigdoyang, the Office of Aboriginal Initiatives:

- Provides supports for Aboriginal students to thrive;
- Expands access to and facilitates culturally supportive academic and research opportunities; and
- Builds meaningful partnerships with Aboriginal communities.

There has been remarkable consistency over the years within the university's Aboriginal, academic, governance and administrative documents in the call for a strategic focus on people, facilities, academics, research, relationships and resources. In the Aboriginal Strategic Plan 2015-2019, Enji Giigdoyang aligns with Nipissing University's overall three strategic priorities: The Student Experience, Academic and Research Excellence, and Community Engagement, and sets out the distinct directions necessary to respond to the uniqueness and diversity of the Aboriginal students and communities in this region and provincially.

A Commitment to Aboriginal Student Success, the Aboriginal Strategic Plan 2015-2019 calls for Enji Giigdoyang, the Office of Aboriginal Initiatives and the university community to work collaboratively, within a framework of reconciliation to:

- Provide an exceptional Aboriginal student experience;
- Expand access to and facilitate culturally supportive academic and research opportunities; and
- Build meaningful partnerships with Aboriginal communities.

Academic faculties, administration, student support services and departments across the university will be situated in ways to facilitate change through collaboration with Enji Giigdoyang and the Nipissing University Aboriginal Council on Education. With the spirit of shared purpose, we can create a campus environment that "welcomes Aboriginal students, families and communities and commits to making a difference in the lives of Aboriginal peoples."



IV

The Aboriginal Student Experience

In addition to more obvious factors, such as poverty, lack of high school completion and academic preparedness, discrimination, and the difficulty and expense of relocation that is often necessary to pursue training or postsecondary studies, a large segment of the Aboriginal population may also face other less overt barriers, such as the challenge of entering into the postsecondary education system as an adult learner, the absence of Aboriginal role models, and institutional insensitivity to Aboriginal histories, cultures, world views, values, and knowledge systems.

- Ontario Aboriginal Postsecondary Education and Training Policy Framework

The goals of the Nipissing University Strategic Plan 2015-2019 include "Creat(ing) bridges to success, especially for students from northern communities, and Aboriginal, first generation and international learners" and "Encourag(ing) diversity in our student body, faculty, and staff." Enji Giigdoyang engages and supports Aboriginal students through a series of recruitment, academic transition, student support and university wide liaison functions within First Nation and Aboriginal communities, on campus, in outreach to local and regional schools, and through our relationship with the Nipissing University Aboriginal Council on Education (NUACE). There are many points of contact and opportunities to support and engage Aboriginal learners at the K-12 and post-secondary levels locally and regionally through our programs and services. This outreach and ongoing programming positions Enji Giigdoyang well as a point of contact with on-the-ground knowledge of regional learners' experiences. This knowledge coupled with advice from the Nipissing University Aboriginal Council on Education ensures that we are community-informed and responsive in our approaches.

One fifth of all Aboriginal people and First Nations communities in Canada are located in Ontario (301,430 First Nation, Métis and Inuit people¹ and 134 First Nations). While this is only about 2.4% of the province's population, there are large urban Aboriginal communities in Toronto, Ottawa, Sudbury, Kenora (18% of population), Midland (12.9% of population) and Sault Ste. Marie (10.3% of population)². The Aboriginal population continues to be younger and is growing six times faster than the non-Aboriginal population. As a result, Aboriginal youth continue to make up an increasing proportion of the population entering the work force.

Despite increasing Aboriginal educational success rates, there continue to be challenges. For example, high school completion rates are 60.2% for First Nations; 73.6% for Métis and 41% for Inuit³. High school completion rates continue to be higher for Aboriginal people living off-reserve (i.e. 72% First Nation, 77% Métis, 42% Inuit). In Ontario the gap in high school completion rates is greatest when comparing non-Aboriginal to First Nation on-reserve populations, and this gap has increased over time (e.g. 18% in 1996; 30% in 2001; and 38% in 2006). Post secondary qualifications are held by 48.8% First Nation, 54.8 % Métis and 35.6% Inuit. In Ontario 98,240 Aboriginal people have some form of post secondary qualification with 26,200 (26.7%) of those being university related. Significantly, 92.5% received their certificate, diploma or degree in their province of residence.

1 Based on number of people declaring an 'Aboriginal Identity' on the 2011 National Household Survey conducted by Statistics Canada

2 Aboriginal Peoples Survey, November 2013 conducted by Statistics Canada

3 Aboriginal Identity Population aged 25 to 64 – 2011 National Household Survey

Nipissing University has developed an Aboriginal self-identification mechanism where students and applicants are asked to voluntarily self-identify their Aboriginal identity or ancestry, at the time of application or registration for classes (in addition the Ontario Universities' Application Centre's process). While these processes have been in place for several years at Nipissing University, Aboriginal self-identification has not been promoted resulting in potentially, lower numbers being reported than the actual number of Aboriginal students on campus. At present Aboriginal-specific data are not currently collected, analyzed, and reported on in a systematic manner across Ontario's universities, and at an institutional and provincial level this makes it difficult to get a clear, concise picture of Aboriginal participation and success rates.

At present the available data, as reported to the Multi-Year Accountability Agreements for Universities with MTCU annually, demonstrates that the Aboriginal student population at Nipissing University has grown each year over the last four years.

Year	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Full Time	249	246	247	235
Part Time	11	62	62	114
Totals	260	308	309	349
New Admissions	58	70	82	80

Depending on the year and how the student population is calculated (e.g. headcount based on actual students on campus on a certain date, full time equivalents based on the average taking 5 courses per semester, part time students, etc.), the self-identified Aboriginal student population represents approximately 5-8% of the total student population. Although exact retention rates are not known at the time of this report, most attrition occurs in the first year, and it has been estimated that 70-75% of the general student population successfully transitions from first to second year and of those, between 85-95% will graduate.

It is clear that Aboriginal students at Nipissing University bring with them an incredible diversity of experiences (culture, language, geography, academic, life, career, etc.). There is a diverse range of Nipissing University degree and diploma programs into which self-identified Aboriginal students have enrolled.



Strategic Priorities

The Aboriginal Student Experience

Enji Giigdoyang, the Office of Aboriginal Initiatives, will build upon and develop strategies to support an exceptional student experience, including the support of Aboriginal student success through a range of programs, services, and collaborative approaches.

1. In partnership with Aboriginal communities, define Aboriginal student success.
2. In collaboration with university departments and academic faculties, develop an Aboriginal enrolment strategy and strengthen Aboriginal admissions policies.
3. The development of strategies to evaluate, strengthen, and document programs and services that support Aboriginal student success across the Nipissing University student experience.
 - Support the development of an Aboriginal self-identification strategy to be implemented.
 - Continuing to strengthen strategies that support first-year and college-transfer students.
 - Develop clearer data and measurements on the Nipissing University Aboriginal student experience.
 - Implement evidence-based practices supporting Aboriginal student retention.
 - Learn from our current commitment to community service-learning, mentorship, experiential learning, and culturally supportive services, strengthening and expanding programs and services.
 - Identify and address barriers to Aboriginal student success (i.e. Access to family student housing, childcare, etc).
 - Develop strategies to engage graduate students.
4. Continue to support Aboriginal students in the learning continuum through targeted outreach programming with K-12 First Nations, Metis and Inuit learners, clarifying and formalizing existing relationships with school boards and Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organizations.
5. Develop strategies to engage Aboriginal alumni.
6. Support reconciliation and relationship-building between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students.

"Everyday I ask myself, did I help one of the students?"

- Lorna Redwood, Mushkegowuk Council



Academic and Research

The Ontario government recognizes that Aboriginal world views and cultures and the diversity of Aboriginal knowledge systems reflect valid ways of knowing the world and have a place in the development and delivery of postsecondary education and training programs, services, curriculum, and evaluation mechanisms...

Acknowledg(ing) the importance of the presence of Aboriginal staff and faculty, across all disciplines in postsecondary education institutions, including their ability to serve as mentors and role models to Aboriginal learners and to contribute to improving receptivity to and understanding of Aboriginal knowledge, including Aboriginal histories, identities, worldviews, values, and cultures.

- Ontario Aboriginal Postsecondary Education and Training Policy Framework

While the university has not developed a cohesive academic plan across faculties to increase Aboriginal research or academic courses and programs with Aboriginal content, significant strides in these directions have occurred at the level of departments and programs. Select first-year university courses were delivered in First Nation communities directly in 2013-2014. This in addition to the current Native Studies Program and the Summer Aboriginal Education Programs (Aboriginal Teacher Certification Program, Teacher of Anishnaabemwin as a Second Language, and Native Classroom Assistant Diploma Program), which have a thirty-year history at Nipissing University. The Summer Aboriginal Education Programs are currently being re-developed to meet new Ministry requirements, which may allow for the strengthening of Aboriginal content in the new programs that will be launched in 2015. Currently, there is a call for applications for a Chair in Indigenous Education within the Schulich School of Education. As well, as part of the University's Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), the History Department has developed specific objectives and strategic recommendations to support Indigenous learners, and to spur "...faculty in our department [to] mobilize Indigenous epistemologies, honour Indigenous experiences, and seek to support healing and reconciliation."



The 2013/14 Common Book Common Ground program contributed to dialogue, understanding and increasing the university's capacity to incorporate Aboriginal perspectives. First year students were invited to read a book selected by a panel of faculty, students and staff, which was incorporated into existing courses and promoted through campus events. The insights gained from the 2013/14 selection of *Speaking my Truth: Reflections on Reconciliation and Residential School* have created opportunities to more effectively engage the entire university community in a respectful dialogue on sensitive matters such as decolonization, exclusion/inclusion and expressions of Indigenous identity.

Enji Giigdoyang currently has an ongoing role in the review of research involving Aboriginal peoples and communities. This is a response to repeated calls from First Nations communities for a more respectful and responsive approach to research relative to Aboriginal peoples, communities, cultures, histories and ways of knowing. Research involving Aboriginal peoples and communities must include a Community Engagement Plan – required prior to the submission of Research Ethics Board applications.

(see www.nipissingu.ca/departments/aboriginal-initiatives/research/pages/appendix-f.aspx)



With the advice of Nipissing University Aboriginal Council on Education and in collaboration with academic faculties, Enji Giigdoyang will support the expansion of academic and research strategies that support Aboriginal student success and address priorities of Aboriginal communities.

1. The development of collaborative strategies between Enji Giigdoyang, academic faculties and departments, in order to support Aboriginal student success across the Nipissing University experience.

- Continue commitment to access and academic transition programming with support from and in collaboration with academic faculties.
- Continue to support students enrolled in the Summer Aboriginal Education Programs (Aboriginal Teacher Certification Program, Teacher of Anishnaabemwin as a Second Language Program and Native Classroom Assistant Diploma Program), working closely with the Principal of Aboriginal Programs in the Schulich School of Education.
- Support academic faculties' strategies to increase Indigenous content, histories, and knowledges in courses and academic programs.
- In collaboration with academic faculties and in partnership with Aboriginal communities, develop strategies for campus, community-based, and/or blended delivery of academic programs for Aboriginal learners.
- Engage with the incoming Chair in Indigenous Education.

2. Continue to support ethically responsible research with Aboriginal peoples and communities by:

- Continuing to work with the Research Ethics Board on the protocols surrounding Research Involving Aboriginal Peoples and Communities in Canada – Community Engagement Plan.
- Participating in round tables, facilitating dialogue and hosting scholars in the field of ethical research with Aboriginal peoples and communities.
- Working with the NUACE and Aboriginal communities to develop a community-based research framework that can be coordinated with other research efforts being undertaken within the university.

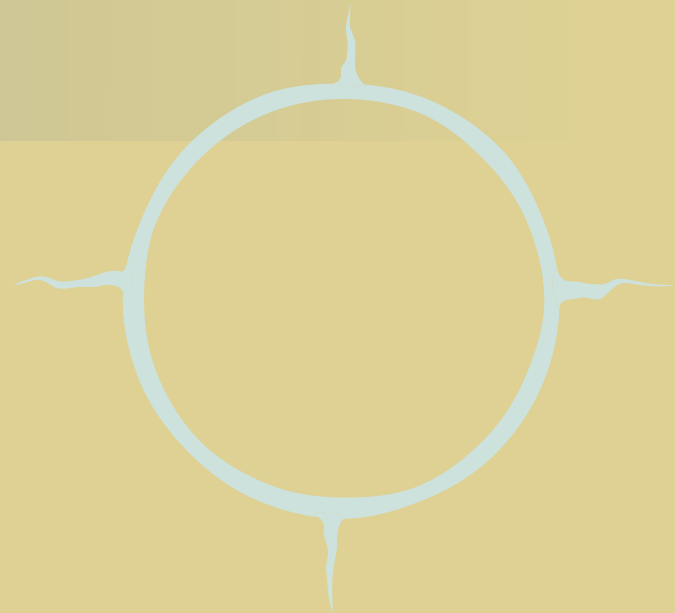
3. In partnership with the NUACE, participate in the development of goals and governance for a proposed Institute for Indigenous Learning.

4. Identify opportunities to support and participate in university development initiatives:

- Pursue external sources to contribute to capital projects, program development and professional development.

"What we need (in an Aboriginal Strategic Plan) is a blanket that embraces us rather than smothers us."

- *Native Studies Chair, Professor Terry Dokis*





VI Aboriginal Community Engagement

We are looking at replacing the legacy of the residential schools with a vibrant new learning culture in every First Nation, grounded in our proud heritage, identity and language . . . To get there, we need to work with every university and college, with school boards, corporations and foundations and indeed all people in Canada.

- Former National Chief Shawn A-In-Chut Atleo

The Nipissing University Strategic Plan 2015-2019 acknowledges that "Connections between Nipissing University and the communities we serve are vital. Our campuses each have strong connections locally, as well as to Aboriginal communities...."and outlines a strategic priority of "Embrac(ing) the communities we serve and develop(ing) meaningful partnerships of mutual benefit." There are indications of a growing interest amongst both Aboriginal communities and university faculties for initiating and/or expanding academic and research initiatives with Aboriginal communities.

Enji Giigdoyang can build upon its experience, expertise and relationships in this area to support the university's efforts to engage with First Nations and Aboriginal communities in a spirit of reciprocity. Enji Giigdoyang has developed community-informed practices and promising approaches when working with First Nations and Aboriginal communities. Enji Giigdoyang focuses on direct Aboriginal community involvement, decision-making and experiential learning within an intergenerational learning community that engages Aboriginal children as young as elementary school, their parents as university students, professionals in various fields as role models, community leaders, Elders, and cultural workers. This intergenerational learning community differentiates Nipissing University, creating a strengthened sense of belonging for Aboriginal peoples on campus.

Strategic Priorities

Aboriginal Community Engagement

In collaboration with the Nipissing University Aboriginal Council on Education, Enji Giigdoyang will support increased understanding and meaningful partnerships between Nipissing University and Aboriginal communities.

1. Enji Giigdoyang will continue to support NUACE's role as an advisory body to the President that engages with and responds to the interests of Aboriginal students and regional communities.
2. Establish community-based processes to guide the expansion of reciprocal relationships between the University and Aboriginal communities.
3. Document Enji Giigdoyang, the Office of Aboriginal Initiatives', community engagement practices as promising approaches.
 - Incorporate successes and lessons learned from the university's governance, academic, research and support services sectors.

The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities believes that facilitating positive outcomes for Aboriginal people in postsecondary education and training is a responsibility shared by all levels of government, a number of ministries, and various communities, and supported by cooperation within and between postsecondary education institutions and community-based organizations.

- Ontario Aboriginal Postsecondary Education and Training Policy Framework

VII

Our Shared Commitment

With the spirit of shared purpose, we can collaboratively create a campus environment that “welcomes Aboriginal students, families and communities and commits to making a difference in the lives of Aboriginal peoples.” We offer that working collaboratively within a framework of reconciliation will build upon our current relationships and commitment and strengthen our future endeavors as a university community engaged with Aboriginal peoples and communities.

The ongoing efforts identified within the Aboriginal Strategic Plan 2015-2019 address long-term issues and come with needed investment to grow this area. Enji Giigdoyang, the Office of Aboriginal Initiatives, has been successful in accessing external funding opportunities to complement investments being made by the university.

The Office of Aboriginal Initiatives is situated to support efforts to increase the university's investment in Aboriginal success by leveraging access to external funding targeted to specific capacities. This will include specific consideration of improvements to current programming and staffing; the development of a strategic enrolment plan for Aboriginal students; and staying connected to the implementation of university's strategic and operational plans in the university.

Enji Giigdoyang looks forward to working on the implementation of the Aboriginal Strategic Plan in partnership with Aboriginal communities, the Nipissing University Aboriginal Council on Education, the Board of Governors, and the university at large.



Appendix A

Summary of Aboriginal Strategic Plan 2015 - Vision, Mission, Guiding Principles, Strategic Priorities

Vision

Nipissing University welcomes Aboriginal students, families and communities and commits to making a difference in the lives of Aboriginal peoples.

Mission

In order to support Aboriginal student success, Enji Giigdoyang, the Office of Aboriginal Initiatives:

- Provides programs and services for Aboriginal students to thrive;
- Expands access to and facilitates culturally supportive academic and research opportunities; and
- Builds meaningful partnerships with Aboriginal communities.

Guiding Principles

Our practice and approach at Enji Giigdoyang, the Office of Aboriginal Initiatives, centre on building respectful and reciprocal relationships with Aboriginal communities and within the university as a whole.

•

Enji Giigdoyang honours the reclamation of Indigenous cultures, lands, voices and ways of knowing. We support the ethical inclusion of indigenous knowledge in classrooms and curriculum.

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Enji Giigdoyang recognizes reconciliation as an ongoing process, a way of understanding history, community, and action. Reconciliation frames our collaborative endeavors with academic faculties, administration, support services and other sectors.

•

Enji Giigdoyang, the Office of Aboriginal Initiatives, recognizes the historical under-representation of Aboriginal peoples within post-secondary institutions as learners, staff and faculty. Enji Giigdoyang supports increased Aboriginal representation on campus within a welcoming, culturally supportive environment.



Strategic Priorities

The Aboriginal Student Experience

Enji Giigdoyang, the Office of Aboriginal Initiatives, will build upon and develop strategies to support an exceptional student experience, including the support of Aboriginal student success through a range of programs, services, and collaborative approaches.

1. In partnership with Aboriginal communities, define Aboriginal student success.
2. In collaboration with university departments and academic faculties, the development of an Aboriginal enrolment strategy and strengthened Aboriginal admissions policies.
3. Develop strategies to evaluate, strengthen, and document programs and services that support Aboriginal student success across the Nipissing University student experience.
 - Support the development of an Aboriginal self-identification strategy to be implemented.
 - Continue to strengthen strategies that support first-year and college-transfer students.
 - Develop clearer data and measurements on the Nipissing University Aboriginal student experience.
 - Implement evidence-based practices supporting Aboriginal student retention.
 - Learn from our current commitment to community service-learning, mentorship, experiential learning, and culturally supportive services, strengthening and expanding programs and services.
 - Identify and address barriers to Aboriginal student success (i.e. Access to family student housing, childcare, etc).
 - Develop strategies to engage graduate students.
4. Continue to support Aboriginal students in the learning continuum through targeted outreach programming with K-12 First Nations, Metis and Inuit learners, clarifying and formalizing existing relationships with school boards and Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organizations.
5. Develop strategies to engage Aboriginal alumni.
6. Support reconciliation and relationship-building between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students.

Strategic Priorities

Academic and Research

With the advice of Nipissing University Aboriginal Council on Education and in collaboration with academic faculties, Enji Giigdoyang will support the expansion of academic and research strategies that support Aboriginal student success and address priorities of Aboriginal communities.

1. The development of collaborative strategies between Enji Giigdoyang, academic faculties and departments, in order to support Aboriginal student success across the Nipissing University experience.
 - Continue commitment to access and academic transition programming with support from academic faculties.
 - Continue to support students enrolled in the Summer Aboriginal Education Programs (Aboriginal Teacher Certification Program, Teacher of Anishnaabemwin as a Second Language Program and Native Classroom Assistant Diploma Program), working closely with the Principal of Aboriginal Programs in the Schulich School of Education.
 - Support academic faculties' strategies to increase Indigenous content, histories, and knowledges in courses and academic programs.
 - In collaboration with academic faculties and in partnership with Aboriginal communities, develop strategies for campus, community-based, and/or blended delivery of academic programs for Aboriginal learners.
 - Engage with the incoming Chair in Indigenous Education.
2. Continue to support ethically responsible research with Aboriginal peoples and communities by:
 - Continuing to work with the Research Ethics Board on the protocols surrounding Research Involving Aboriginal Peoples and Communities in Canada – Community Engagement Plan.
 - Participating in round tables, facilitating dialogue and hosting scholars in the field of ethical research with Aboriginal peoples and communities.
 - Working with the NUACE and Aboriginal communities to develop a community-based research framework that can be coordinated with other research efforts being undertaken within the university.
3. In partnership with the NUACE, participate in the development of goals and governance for a proposed Institute for Indigenous Learning.
4. Identify opportunities to support and participate in university development initiatives:
 - Pursue external sources to contribute to capital projects, program development and professional development.

Strategic Priorities

Aboriginal Community Engagement

In collaboration with the Nipissing University Aboriginal Council on Education, Enji Giigdoyang will support increased understanding and meaningful partnerships between Nipissing University and Aboriginal communities.

1. Enji Giigdoyang will continue to support the NUACE's role as an advisory body to the President that engages with and responds to the interests of Aboriginal students and regional communities.
2. Establish community-based processes to guide the expansion of reciprocal relationships between the University and Aboriginal communities.
3. Document Enji Giigdoyang, the Office of Aboriginal Initiatives', community engagement practices as promising approaches.
 - Incorporate successes and lessons learned from the university's governance, academic, research and support services sectors.



Appendix B

Aboriginal Student and Community Engagement Policy

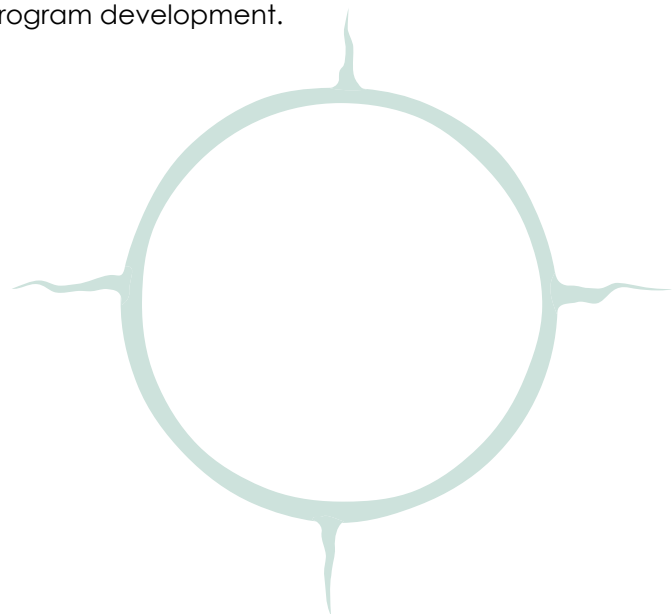
This policy will consolidate and expand Nipissing University's programs, services, community partnerships, and programs for and with Aboriginal Peoples. Nipissing University will collaborate with Aboriginal communities and partners in Post-Secondary education to improve access by Aboriginal learners 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 of the NUACE;
- maintain Nei keh nahn (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.



Appendix C

Aboriginal Profile Data for Ontario

The available data from the NHS 2011 indicates that:

- Over one-fifth (21.5%) of the total Canadian Aboriginal population resides in Ontario, which represents approximately 2.4% of the province's population;
- The largest numbers of Aboriginal people live in Toronto, Ottawa-Gatineau (Ontario part), and greater Sudbury while Aboriginal people made up 18.0% of the total population of Kenora, 12.9% of the population of Midland and 10.3% of the population of Sault Ste. Marie.
- In Ontario, the Aboriginal population had a median age of 31 years compared to 40 years for the non-Aboriginal population.



As much of the analytical work on the NHS 2011 is still to be completed it will be important to continue to incorporate the latest findings as they become available on following key trends identified based on 2006 data:

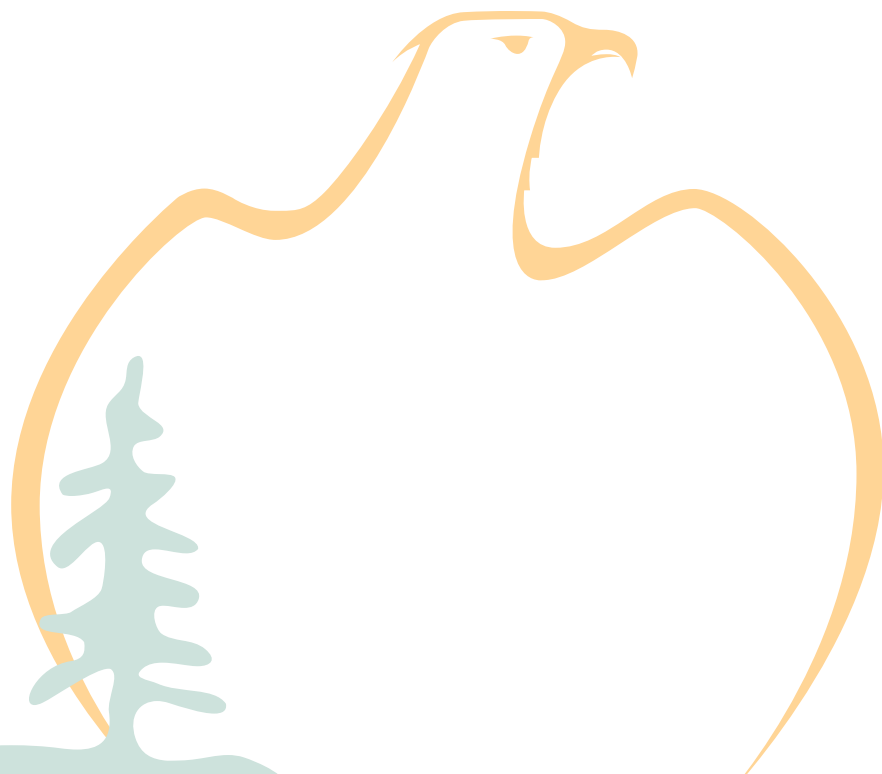
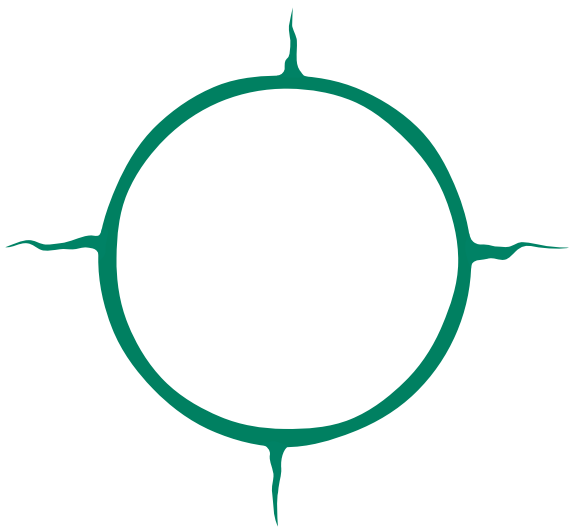
- Aboriginal people have a population growth rate that is nearly six times faster than the non-Aboriginal population (45 % vs 8 % non-Aboriginal);
- There are proportionately more youth within the Aboriginal population (42% under the age of 24 vs 33% non-Aboriginal) and as a result, Aboriginal youth will make up an increasing proportion of the population entering the work force;
- Despite increasing Aboriginal educational success rates there continue to be challenges. For example in Ontario the gap in high school completion rates is greatest when comparing the non-Aboriginal to First Nation on-reserve populations and this gap has increased over time (e.g 18% in 1996; 30% in 2001; and 38% in 2006).



Ontario specific Aboriginal data available from the National Household Survey (NHS) 2011 indicates that the total population in Ontario who identify as being Aboriginal ('Aboriginal Identity') is 301,430 while 441,395 individuals state that they some degree of 'Aboriginal Ancestry'.

Ontario Aboriginal Population – NHS 2011		
	Aboriginal Identity	Aboriginal Ancestry
First Nation	201,100	345,870
Métis	86,015	97,045
Inuk/Inuit	3,360	6,175
Total	301,430	441,395

According to the NHS 2011 the presence of postsecondary educational qualifications nationally is proportionately higher amongst those without Registered Indian status (52.1%) compared to those with Registered Indian Status (42.3%). As well those with Registered Indian status living off reserve had higher college and university graduation rates (40.1%) than those living on reserve (19.5%).



Across Canada 48.4% of Aboriginal people aged 25 to 64 had a post-secondary qualification, with 13.3% of those being a university certificate, diploma or degree. This compares with 64.7% for the non-Aboriginal population aged 25 to 64.

A November 2013 report based on Statistics Canada's Aboriginal Peoples Survey⁴ indicates comparable data for high school completion by off-reserve Aboriginal peoples: 72% of First Nations people living off reserve, 77% of Métis, 42% of Inuit aged 18 to 44 had a high school diploma or equivalent.

Ontario Highest certificate, diploma or degree – 2011 National Household Survey⁵

	Aboriginal Identity	Registered or Treaty Indian	Non-Registered/ Treaty population
Total Pop 15 years and over	227,235	107,215	10,366,455
PSE certificate, diploma or degree	98,240 (41%)	43,965 (43.2%)	5,673,375 (55%)
University related	26,200 (26.7%)	11,110 (25.3%)	2,864,210 (50.5%)
Below Bachelor	5,505 (5.7% or 21%)	2,760 (6.3% or 14.2%)	424,385 (4% or 7.5%)
Bachelor	13,730 (14% or 52.4%)	5,685 (13% or 29%)	2,439,825 (14.5% or 26.6%)
Above Bachelor	6,965 (7% or 26.6%)	2,665 (6% or 13.7%)	930,440 (9% of 16.4%)





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