

Pathways for Indigenous Learners:

Collaborating across Aboriginal Institutes, Colleges, and Universities

Centre for Policy in Aboriginal Learning, Confederation College

Executive Summary

The Centre for Policy in Aboriginal Learning (CPAL) (Confederation College), in partnership with Trent University (Trent) and the First Nations Technical Institute (FNTI) undertook a project, entitled, Pathways for Indigenous Learners: Collaborating across Aboriginal Institutes, Colleges and Universities. This work aims to address a gap in supporting and advancing learning opportunities for Indigenous learners, and learners pursuing Indigenous Studies, through the creation and formal recognition of Indigenous specific learning pathways. Earlier phases of this work resulted in the successful development of an Indigenous learner’s pathways across partners, where articulation agreements, academic bridging and comprehensive “wrap around” supports for learners were key components of the pathways model. Building off the success of the earlier phases of this work, this project entered into a “Phase III”, by expanding partnerships with additional interested Colleges and Universities across Ontario’s postsecondary, including partnerships with Algoma University, Algonquin College, Canadore College, Lakehead University, Lambton College, Northern College, Mohawk College and Sault College. Representatives from partnering institutions, who form the steering committee, met in person throughout the year to explore and identify opportunities for partnership, collaboration, and pathways development across their institutions.

This Phase of the project relied upon shared group values, practices, and processes to guide the different stages of this work, which included: formal partnership and relationship building, building a common ground, and collaborative and informed action in the creation of pathways for Indigenous learners across partnering institutions.



Figure 2: ‘Circles of Influence’: An illustration of our process of creating pathways and forming partnerships for Indigenous Learners

In the exploration and creation of pathways for Indigenous Learners across partnering institutions, pathways were defined as the direct transfer of credits from one program to another, in line with the definition used Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development, Government of Ontario. However, partners were encouraged to consider pathways broadly, so that they were mindful of wholistic wrap around supports and services that would be available to learners throughout a pathway.

Partners sought to create pathways that were obvious in terms of alignment across programs or that were reflective of the enrolment of their Indigenous learners within their institutios. Partners also sought to create pathways that would help to address current gaps in Indigenous education, or that would help to meet needs of Indigenous communities.

This work resulted in a diverse list of 18 pathways that vary in type (e.g. diploma to degree, dual diploma, etc) across 9 institutions, with additional formal and informal partnerships around supporting Indigenous learners. The pathways and partnerships identified offer opportunities for learners to build upon their education in the fields of Indigenous Studies, Social Services, Environmental Studies/Science, Business, Education, General Arts and Science, Governance, Nursing, Social Sciences, History, Aviation and Language.

The next steps of this work are to continue to build upon the support for and implementation of pathways for Indigenous learners across our institutions, and to expand the circle to include additional interested partners.