

Expanding the Circle: Pathways for Indigenous Learners across Ontario

Executive Summary

In 2013, The Centre for Policy and Research in Indigenous Learning (CPRIL) (Confederation College), 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. Funded by the Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer (ONCAT), 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. Results of the first phase of this project included the creation of three pathways for Indigenous learners across partnering institutions, and a model for partnership and collaboration that could be shared. In 2016 the project expanded to include a 2nd Circle of partnerships with 8 additional postsecondary institutions. Building off of the success of this work, the project expanded again in 2017 inviting 5 additional postsecondary institutions to join, resulting in collaboration that now represents 16 postsecondary institutions across Ontario.



The objectives of this phase (2017/18) of the project were as follows:

- (1) To expand and share information on the project model by inviting additional postsecondary institutions to join
- (2) To develop additional pathways for Indigenous learners that include plans for streamlining wrap-around supports and for supporting sustainability of a pathway
- (3) To build capacity on this pathways project through developing a series of principles for creating pathways for Indigenous learners across Ontario

Approximately eighteen (18) pathways for Indigenous learners were identified in this phase of the project, resulting in a total of approximately forty (40) pathways for Indigenous learners identified to date across 1st, 2nd and 3rd Circle partners. The pathways are unique and diverse, spanning across the fields of Indigenous Studies, Social Services, Environmental Studies/Sciences, Business, Education, General Arts and Science, Leadership and Governance, Nursing, Engineering/technology, and Language.

The project's steering committee also co-developed six overarching principles for Pathways for Indigenous learners that fall under the following categories: *Pathways*, *Wrap-Around Supports*, *Capacity Building*, *Respect and Equity*, *Data Collection*, and *Resources*. Further, recommended steps that could be taken to strengthen Indigenous pathways are identified for each principle.

In the next phase of this project the steering committee will work towards identifying indicators for measuring and monitoring the success and sustainability of their implemented pathways.