# A TOOLKIT TO SUPPORT THE CREATION OF PATHWAYS FOR INDIGENOUS LEARNERS

Centre for Policy and Research in Indigenous Learning













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## INTRODUCTION

## History and Background

In 2013, Indigenous educators from Confederation College, First Nations Technical Institute (FNTI), and Trent University established a partnership with the purpose of increasing access to postsecondary education for Indigenous learners across the province of Ontario. In particular, the "Pathways for Indigenous Learners" project was launched, and agreements were signed that established three postsecondary pathways across the partnering institutions in the fields of Indigenous Studies, Social Work, and Environmental Studies. These pathways were grounded in a commitment to Indigenous learners, and included unique elements such as: relationship-building between partnering institutions to encourage prospective learners to access new and existing pathways; curriculum-mapping based on Indigenous Learning Outcomes; a wrap-around support services model; and a transition program named "Biishkaa", coordinated by Trent University (CPRIL, 2013-2016). In 2013, presidents from each partnering institution met in person at FNTI to sign a Memorandum of Understanding demonstrating their support for this work. Further, each partnering institution received beaded panels as seen in Figure 1, to further signify the partnership.

This project has grown to include "Second Circle" and "Third Circle" partners; the full circle of partners now includes 16 colleges and universities and an Indigenous Institute from across Ontario. Representatives of these organizations also constitute the project Steering Committee. Shared values, practices and commitments, relationship-building, and collaborative and informed action ground the Steering Committee's partnership model. . Moreover, this project is grounded by Indigenous methodology. Ceremony has informed much of the project activities; members are committed to working with an open heart and an open mind in relationshipbuilding and to establishing mutual respect and an understanding of our responsibility to this work.



Figure 1 – A Visual of First, Second and Third Circle Partners

Throughout this work, we have defined pathways as the direct transfer of credits from one program to another. However, our characterizations of a "pathway" necessarily consider the learner's entire postsecondary journey—entering into a program, transitioning between programs, and exiting a program, plus all of the wrap-around support services that would be available throughout the learner's pathway experience.

## Why Pathways for Indigenous Learners?

The idea for this project grew out a relationship between three unique postsecondary institutions—Confederation College, First Nations Technical Institute, and Trent University—and out of their commitment to creating opportunities and increasing access to postsecondary education for Indigenous Learners through the creation of pathways. Historically, there have been relatively few pathways for Indigenous learners, or at least, a lack of formal recognition of such pathways. Indigenous learners would have to advocate for themselves in terms of the recognition and transfer of credits, while simultaneously navigating postsecondary systems that often present systemic barriers to access and success. Our pathways work is grounded by the need to remove such barriers, while also striving to close the gap in completion of postsecondary education between Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners. Additionally, pathways create an opportunity to increase efficiencies, and to maximize funding for postsecondary education for Indigenous learners, whether they are relying upon personal finances, Band funding, Ontario Student Assistance Program support, or scholarships and bursaries.

## Key Characteristics of our Pathways

Indigenous learners will be encouraged and supported to pursue postsecondary education pathways that resonate with themselves, that meet their learning needs, and that support their self-determination. This is the position that grounds the work we do create pathways for Indigenous learners.

## Pathways for Indigenous Learners Steering Committee Position Statement

Through pathways, we seek to maximize opportunities for learners. For instance, many of our pathways are 2 + 2 agreements, and several offer joint admission. Students can thereby gain both a diploma and a degree within four years. Furthermore, a joint admissions agreement provides learners with a guarantee that they will be able to begin their education ina College while looking forward to entering a university program if they meet certain requirements which provides them with a destination to strive towards.

It is critical that all of our pathways are accompanied by a wrap-around approach to support services. A wrap-around support model integrates a ranges of services that support the wholistic well-being of a learner (e.g. social, spiritual, mental, emotional, relational, financial and physical). See Figure 2 for an

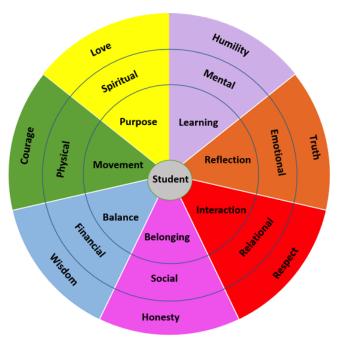


Figure 2 -The Wrap-Around Support Model

example of a wrap-around support model.

Our model for creating pathways also relies upon building and maintaining relationships between everyone involved in a pathway. This includes building relationships between key personnel of a single institution who support pathways implementation (e.g. faculty members, support services staff, pathways coordinators), as well as relationships with learners who pursue any existing pathways. The ultimate goal for a pathway is to create a learning journey whereby learners are welcomed into an institution and know who to reach out to if they require support.

Lastly, our model requires the regular monitoring of created pathways in order to ensure accountability for keeping them alive, sustainable, and successful. Monitoring practices include ongoing relationship-building and relationship maintenance, implementing mechanisms such as a monitoring tool, and scheduling annual meetings with key individuals involved in a pathway.

## Purpose of the Toolkit

With this toolkit, we aim to engage and support others in creating pathways for Indigenous learners. While not necessarily a step-by-step guide, the main purpose of the toolkit is to share knowledge, approaches, and processes that have worked for our group of educators, institutions, and organizations. In particular, we have consolidated existing and new templates and processes that can assist individuals and institutions in creating and supporting pathways for Indigenous learners within their own institutions. Furthermore, we have identified a need to develop a series of "checklists" to guide our work and ensure that we are following through on everything that is needed to create our pathways. This document provides a number of these "checklists", and other useful tools and approaches to help guide others in their work. Through this toolkit we also share information on existing pathways, and also have resources for prospective and interested students.

## AYAAKWAMISIISWIN: A MODEL FOR CREATING PATHWAYS FOR INDIGENOUS LEARNERS

## Overview of the Model

Ayaakwaamisiiwin is an Anishinaabemowin word that means to be carefully prepared for what you encounter, to be ready and able to overcome whatever bumps or barriers you may experience so that you can move forward. This applies to Indigenous learners following a pathway; it applies to the pathways in place; and it applies to an institution supporting a pathway. For the learner, it means that they have everything they need to navigate a pathway and succeed, and they are equipped to overcome any obstacles that they may face. For the institution, it means that they have everything in place to support a pathway and they are equipped to respond to the needs and experiences of Indigenous learners. Ayaakwamisiiwin reflects all of our elements and processes for creating and supporting pathways for Indigenous learners.

The key elements of our model for creating pathways are:

Relationship-building and Partnership Building Common Ground Collaborative and Informed Action Accountability

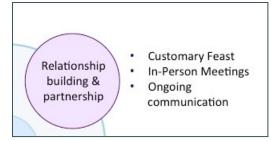


Figure 3 – An illustration of Ayaakwamisiiwin, a model for creating pathways for Indigenous learners.

It is important to note that this work is grounded and guided by Indigenous methodologies, as ceremony has informed many of our project activities. For instance, each phase of our work began with a customary feast; partners would come together to share a meal, reflect on previous work, and to discuss the work ahead. Additionally, each partner offered to the group a presentation of what they and their institution would bring to the work rather than what they hoped to take away through their participation. Through these processes, members demonstrated their commitment to working with an open heart and an open mind in establishing learning journeys. Further, relationship-building and establishing mutual respect and understanding of our responsibility and accountability to the work are integral characteristics of our project's model. Lastly, important practices of the group included sharing meals at every meeting, alternating host institutions for each meeting, opening and closing the meetings with a prayer, and closing meetings with round table reflections.

## Phase One: Relationship-Building

Relationship-building is foundational to the work that we do. This begins with building and maintaining relationships between partnering institutions and all who are involved in the implementation of a pathway (e.g. academic units, registrars, support services staff, marketing and recruitment, etc.). Relationship-building and maintenance also help to support accountability to



the work, which has been critical to the success of our pathways. As we learned from previous research (see CPRIL "Coming Full Circle", 2019 and "Shifting the Landscape", 2018), pathways take time, resources and coordination. They involve many people within partnering institutions and often have multiple phases to reach implementation. It is essential that everyone who is involved in a pathway is accountable for their own contributions and responsibilities.

There have been a number of shared practices and group values that guided and reinforced our relationship-building and ultimately the work of creating pathways for Indigenous learners. First, the Steering Committee was centred by a shared commitment to supporting and creating equitable opportunities for Indigenous learners across our postsecondary institutions. Additionally, members of the Steering Committee dedicated themselves to working with an open heart and mind and with transparency, in order to build and maintain a sense of mutual respect and understanding. Furthermore, each phase of this work was launched in a customary way, in the form of a feast. During this meeting, all project partners were brought together to share a meal that was

## FNTI sees it role in the sector as one that's grounded in formal and informal relationships. As the institutes continue our work as learner centred, community driven organizations, it is those relationships with students, their communities and sector partners that animate our work. It is the student's expectation that we use these relationships to ensure that their experience is as seamless as possible. We owe

## ADAM HOPKINS, VICE PRESIDENT, ENROLMENT MANGAEMENT AND STUDENT SERVICES

mainly comprised of local foods, in order to begin the process of relationship-building. Additionally, members of the Steering Committee illustrated their commitments to the project through their attendance at and participation in regular, in-person meetings. In-person meetings have emerged as a critical best practice for this work, as they foster relationships and create a time and a space for collaborationIn-person meetings provide a time and a space "to get work done" and to facilitate the development of critical alliances.

them no less.

Relationship-building and maintenance also extends to Indigenous learners within our institutions. For

The successes of pathway development amongst the institutions as part of the "Pathways for Indigenous Learners" project can be attributed significantly on relationship building. This trait has been a mainstay of our deliberations as it accounts for dialogue, discussion and commitment to the mandate of the committee. Building relationships has been essential in the engagement and sustainability of the pathway agreements and paves the way for future pathway development and implementation.

DAVID MARASCO, UNIVERSITY REGISTRAR, ALGOMA UNIVERSITY

instance, through relationshipbuilding, staff and faculty within institutions can communicate and market pathways to prospective transfer students, as well as invest time in understanding and addressing the barriers they may be facing in pursuit of their path through postsecondary education.

There are additional strategies to formalize relationship-building and commitment to the work, such as establishing Letters of Intent or Memorandums of Understanding between partnering institutions. These processes are not required but

our research has identified them as wise practices for securing buy-in and support from senior leadership

within an institution, in terms of their commitment to the development and implementation of pathways for Indigenous learners (CPRIL, "Coming Full Circle", 2019; "Shifting the Landscape", 2018).

## Phase Two: Building Common Ground

The objective of building common ground is to establish mutual understanding of each other's institution and its

Table 1 – Sample Layout for Environmental Scan

role in this work. Building common ground establishes a place of transparency from which to work and supports understanding of differing systems and processes across



distinct institutions. Building common ground occurred throughout our ONCAT-sponsored pathways projects, and was facilitated by activities such as asset-mapping, resource-sharing, group discussions, and workshops. Thus our model relies upon a number of tools and practices that facilitate building common ground both internally and externally.

To begin, external analysis (such as an Environmental Scan, see below for example) helps to identify and understand socio-political considerations for the broader postsecondary landscape that might impact the development and implementation of pathways. Furthermore, external analysis also helps to identify gaps, and consequently, opportunities to create particular pathways, as well as potential institutions to consider for partnerships.

Institutions	Programs	GPA Required for Admission	Notes	Links
e.g. Sending and receiving institutions	e.g. Programs involved	e.g. GPA required to remain eligible for the pathway	e.g. Key details or unique features of the pathways (e.g. credentials earner, type pf agreement, joint admission, etc)	e.g. Website links

Next, internal analysis helps to develop a deep understanding of a postsecondary environment by identifying all the assets of an institution—that is, elements that can help to, or pose challenges to, the implementation of a pathway. In particular, internal analysis helps to identify institutional strengths and weaknesses as related to implementing and supporting pathways for Indigenous learners. These findings can be shared with prospective partnering institutions in order to find alignment and affinities for pathways and partnership development. This type of internal analysis can also be utilized by the institution to support decision-making and strategic planning. We relied upon the process of asset mapping for our internal analysis.

In our model, asset maps are to be used as a starting point for developing pathways as they summarize not only the programs that are available within the institution but all of the assets that will support the success and implementation of a pathway. For instance, such information includes all wrap-around supports that are available to learners, processes for recruiting Indigenous learners, data on student characteristics, and so on. Moreover, the asset maps are considered to be living documents in that they can constantly grow as more assets are identified and/or developed over time.

To be specific, institutional assets span a number of areas including the following:

Programs and Courses (i.e., that have a focus on Indigenous knowledge/pedagogy, culture, knowledge, etc, or where there are Indigenous learners enrolled, or that are delivered within communities)

Services/Support, Resources Learner Demographics Staff

Learner Recruitment
Outreach and Transition
Decision-Making
Institutional Setting
Indigenous Student Funding
Sources

Link to Community
Institutional Documents (i.e.,
Does your institution have
documents or polices that reflect
your institution's commitments to
Indigenous education and
learners, the Truth and
Reconciliation Commission's Calls
to Action and the United Nations
Declaration on the Rights of
Indigenous Peoples?)
Percentage of core funding

dedicated to Indigenous

education (i.e., What percentage

I found the process of completing the asset map to be very beneficial to our organization. It allowed for the open discussion amongst the various schools and departments in order to get an accurate overall picture of our Indigenous footprint at the college. Once completed it is a very powerful tool to utilize for both academic and student services in developing and implementing future goals and strategic directions.

As well, the process allows for some relevant introspection such as

- are we where we want to be as an institution
- · are there gaps
- · wow... perhaps we should showcase this more!

I do feel that completing the asset map is critical piece to the onward development of new pathways for Indigenous learners across institutions.

-Leslie MacGregor, Associate Dean, Learning Resources Division, Confederation College

of your institution's core funding is spent on Indigenous Support Services or for Indigenous staff and faculty?)

Other (Is there any other useful information that could help to inform our process of creating or supporting pathways for Indigenous Learners?)

Please refer to Appendix C for the full asset map.

Lastly, in addition to relying upon tools for internal and external analysis, we always created space and time for open group discussions on topics that may impact the work that we do to create pathways. Such topics of conversation included institutional or systemic racism and other institutional challenges, the nature of appropriate supports for Indigenous learners, competition among postsecondary institutions, and the current landscape of Indigenous education and learning in Ontario and Canada, to name a few.

## Phase Three: Collaborative and Informed Action

Overall, relationship-building and partnership, and building of a common ground help to facilitate the process of collaborative and informed action, or in other words, the creation of pathways and partnerships for Indigenous Learners. With a thorough understanding of one's own institution, each others institutions, and of the postsecondary landscape, prospective partners are well positioned to make

Workshops
 'Speed Dating':
 Exploring pathways
 Action Planning:
 Creating pathways

informed decisions in terms of pathways development. With assets maps in hand, institutions are able to meet with one another with thorough evidence for determining where there are opportunities for partnerships in terms of alignment and affinities for pathways and support for Indigenous learners.

We relied upon several processes and tools (and templates), to support the identification and implementation of pathways and partnerships for Indigenous learners. Depending on the size of a group, and number of participating institutions, one may need a method to support maximizing the exploration of opportunities for partnership and pathways to development. Our group, which represented 15 postsecondary institutions, relied upon the method of speed-dating, or speed-networking to explore opportunities for pathways creation and partnership across all of our institution (see below).

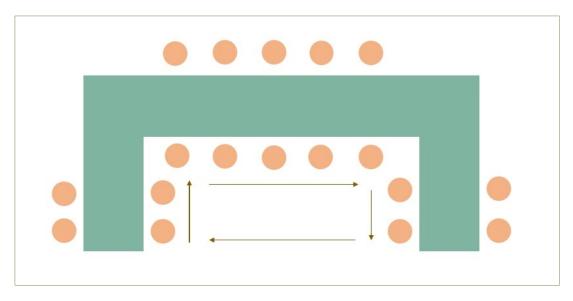


Figure 4 – The Speed Dating or Speed Networking Process

## Action: Speed Dating

In Figure 4, the orange circles represent people sitting around a table (in green). People sitting around the outside of the table remained seated in the same spot, while the people sitting in the inside of the table rotate right (indicated by the gold arrows), ensuring that they meet with every potential partner sitting on the exterior. We recommend setting five-minute meeting limits, so in this case, there would be nine meeting sessions, for five minutes each, resulting in an approximately 45 minutes of speed dating.

The worksheet below can be used by each institution of partner to help gather information on potential areas for partnership and collaboration, and next steps.

Table 2 – Speed Dating Work Sheet

Name: e.g. Confederation College			
Institution	Potential Areas for	Next Steps	
	Partnership		

See Appendix D for a full template of a worksheet to facilitate speed dating and action planning.

## Action: Pathways Development

Once potential pathways are identified, there are a series of steps and processes to follow for pathways development and implementation that vary across postsecondary institutions. In this section, we have summarized some of what we have learned from our partnering institutions. We have also created a series of checklists to help guide others in their own work of creating pathways. For instance, once partners have identified and confirmed pathways that they wish to pursue, there a number of steps to follow in terms of the actual development of a pathway. See the table below, Pathways Development Checklist, as well as Appendix E (Pathways Template), for the steps, and for foundational information required for development of a pathway.

Table 3 – Pathways Development Checklist

General Steps	Notes
Institutions involved	
Affinity programs identified	
Type of pathway	
Key individuals involved	
Pathways coordinator or	
representative, programs coordinators	
and faculty, other decision makers (e.g.	
Vice President Academic, Registrar,	
etc)	
Pathways elements	
Environmental scan of other existing	
pathways	
Curriculum mapping	
Confirmation of transfer credits and	
number of courses that must be	
completed at sending institutions	
Confirmation of minimum GPA required	
for eligibility	
Wrap around supports plan	
Relationship building and	
communication plan established	

Monitoring plan established	
Development of Articulation Agreement	
Internal Processes for Pathways	
Implementation (e.g. see table **)	
Pathways implementation and promotion	
(e.g. see table **)	

In addition to the "Pathways Development Checklist", we have adopted several processes and templates to supporting gathering information on the key details of a pathway including pathways requirements and eligibility, number of credits transferred, grade point average required, a wrap-around supports plan, and mechanisms for relationships building. These tools include the following:

*Program Affinities Table*: Affinity tables help to outline the alignment between two programs, or more specifically, the transferability of credits from one program to another. Affinity tables also provide a place for gathering information on the credits that are available to transfer, the length of the receiving institution, the year (standing) within a program that a student would be entering into at a receiving institution, and other similar agreements that exist, provincially.

Table 4 - Sample Affinities Table

Sending Program and Institution	Receiving Program and Institution	Length of Sending Program	Agreement of credits transferred	Other provincial agreements

Pathways Template: Pathways templates can be another useful tool to outline key details and foundational information of a potential pathway. Our template summarizes a range of key pathways details such as programs and institutions involved in a pathway, transferrable credit, required GPA, wrap-around supports plan, key contacts at partnering institutions, plan for supporting the sustainability of a pathway, etc... Refer to Appendix E for a sample of a completed Pathways Template.

Curriculum Mapping Tools: Each institution, or possibly even each program, likely has its own processes for curriculum mapping, and/or processes for determining the number and types of credits that will be recognized from one program by another. For instance, for one of our original pathways between Confederation College's Aboriginal Community Advocacy program and Trent University's Indigenous Studies program, we relied upon methods of mapping Indigenous learning outcomes between the two programs to determine the alignment between courses and the number of credits that could be transferred. This process led to the development of 2+2 articulation agreement.

Articulation Agreements. Articulation Agreements are official documents that summarize key information and pathways requirements between partnering institutions. Through this work we have created a series of Articulation Agreements. Most recently, we created a unique articulation agreement that incorporates many elements of our pathways model. In particular, within the

agreement we have outlined commitments to and mechanisms for support. We have also embedded the wrap-around supports model within the document, making explicit our shared commitment to ensuring wholistic support for learners in pursuit of the pathways. Finally, we integrated a commitment to continual monitoring of the pathway to ensure it remains a living opportunity for students. Overall, this "loving agreement", as it has been referred to, is a unique way to ensure institutional commitment to a pathway.

## Action: Pathways Implementation

Once the details of a pathway have been confirmed, the next phase involves the review, and approval, or signing of a pathway, and then its implementation. Accordingly, we have summarized a series of steps to consider for pathways implementation. While we recognize that processes for pathways implementation varies across postsecondary institutions, we have provided a general list of necessary steps for three types of institutions as a reference: college, Indigenous Institute, and university. These tools can be adapted and modified as necessary for specific institutions.

Table 5 – Pathways Implementation Checklist

Relationships and Accountability	
Sources of information: Internal and external to the institution	
Relationships established between internal and external pathways partners (i.e.,	
academic units, registrars, recruitment personnel, student services, prospective	  -
Indigenous Learners	
Capacity Building within partnering institutions	
Wrap around support streamlined	
Transition plan created/ plan for the hand off	
Pathway signed off and implemented	
Resources are in place	
Pathways marketed to students	<u> </u>
Annual review complete	
A plan for follow up with alumni who completed the pathway is established	<u> </u>

**Example Processes for Pathways Implementation**: Processes for pathways development, approval and implementation varies across postsecondary institutions in Ontario. Refer to the table below for examples of processes for pathways implementation across three different postsecondary institutions. In the onset of the pathways development, it is critical to clarify the processes in place for each partnering institution, as well as the timeline for approval and implementation as this could impact the time it takes to bring a pathway to life.

Table 6 – Summary examples of pathways implementation across three different postsecondary institutions

College	Indigenous Institute	University
e.g. Algonquin College	e.g. First Nations Technical Institute	e.g. Algoma University
A new pathway is identified.	(This process is referencing future pathway development for	Identify a college program of high affinity that may be

College	Indigenous Institute	University
Academic Manager communicates the proposed pathway to Academic Development	standalone FNTI degrees, which have not been approved by IAESC. As such, there will be changes to this process)	suitable for additional transfer credits and course recognition
Conduct a needs analysis Prepare gap analysis document, including gap analysis, bridging requirements (as applicable), and modified program of study, Review gap analysis document with Registrar's Office, populate pathway information to Recruitment (create the opportunity). Prepare draft Articulation Agreement	Identify FNTI program that may be suitable for transfer pathway, and which will receive 2+2 recognition or equivalent	Concept Phase – the Office of the Registrar meets with the Department at the college [Dean, program coordinator] to identify established similarities in the learning outcomes and program objectives
Pathway Review Draft Articulation Agreement and gap analysis reviewed by Dean, Academic Development. Draft reviewed by Senior Vice-President Academic.	Concept phase – The Registrar and Program Coordinator meet to identify similarities in learning outcomes and program objectives	Commitment by both institutions to collaborate and develop a pathway agreement, thereby, continuing the dialogue at the respective institutions
Pathway Approval Approval by Chair of the receiving program; notification to the Chair of the sending program  Approval by Dean of the receiving program; notification to the Chair of the sending program  Approval by the Dean, Academic Development and the Senior Vice President of Academics	Senior leadership at both institutions either renew their commitment to the existing MOU or create new MOU. Institute to Institute pathways and partnerships will be birthed through ceremony, and Institute to College/University will use this process where appropriate	Meeting with academic unit[s] to begin the formative consultation review of the potential pathway agreement and assess the potential impact
Pathway implementation Communicate the approval of the pathway to the Registrar's Office and confirm implementation timeline  Pathway stored in the Pathway Database and on ONTtransfer database if applicable	Formal meeting between academic units to identify potential pathway agreement, assess potential impact.  Academic units are responsible for aligning learning outcomes, course objectives, mapping equivalencies and evaluating admission requirements for maximum transfer.  FNTI will be responsible for assessing any cultural knowledge PLAR, which will be documented on transcripts for students entering or exiting FNTI programs.	Academic units are responsible for the review of the college curriculum map including learning outcomes [VOS], course objectives, competencies, creation of course equivalency tables, evaluating the admission requirements for maximum transfer, AU courses that remediates any gap and other information that may be applicable. For example, number of graduates from said college diploma and success rates. Academic units are also responsible for the academic quality

College	Indigenous Institute	University
	Agreement is reviewed and approved by FNTI leadership team.	assurance aligned with articulation agreements including academic integrity through the TC evaluation and course equivalency process.
	Complete and finalize agreement, create tool kit that outlines specifics for students interested in pathway. Identify pathway on ONTransfer and renew any ceremonial protocol as required.	Finalize the articulation agreement with the college including transfer credits allowed, specific grade requirements, cumulative GPA for maximum transfer, etc.
		Institutional processes include approval process from the academic unit, to the Faculty, Quality Assurance Committee [Institutional Quality Assurance Program], Academic Planning & Priorities Committee and finally Senate

A final but crucial consideration in the development of a pathway, and for bringing a pathway to life, is to establish relationships with all those involved in marketing and promoting pathways, and ensuring that supports are in place to meet the needs of the learners who wish to pursue the pathway. A great example of this is illustrated by the narrative below concerning the previously mentioned Confederation College and Trent University pathway.

The Indigenous Studies pathway between Confederation College and Trent University is a great example of relationship-building. In the development of this pathway faculty and support services staff from Trent University met with faculty, staff and prospective pathways students at Confederation College in Thunder Bay, ON, to provide information on the pathway, student life at Trent University, and to understand some of the concerns that students might have, such as adjustment to student life at a university, moving logistics and costs, and finding a place to live. Through this reciprocal process, they were able to address barriers that may have prevented students from following a pathway, and also provided students with a familiar face, a person to contact when they made the move to Trent. This example also illustrates the importance of wrap-around supports, which our research also indicated as critical to supporting the sustainability of our pathways.

## Phase Four: Accountability to our Pathways for Indigenous Learners

The final phase of our project model focuses on supporting accountability to our pathways. Overall, there remains a gap across the postsecondary sector in terms of monitoring transfer and mobility, in particular on where students go after completing a pathway, and on their experiences while pursuing a pathway. In response to this gap, the Pathways for Indigenous Learners Steering Committee sought to build a tool to



facilitate monitoring the pathways that are implemented. Establishing a plan, or process for monitoring pathways also helps to ensure that all of the required elements are considered in the development and implementation of pathways, such as the development and maintenance of critical relationships with students and between partnering institutions. Monitoring pathways also help to ensure that pathways stay alive and utilized, relevant, successful and sustainable.

A literature review and environmental scan as to methods for tracking student transfer and mobility, as well as key informant interviews, informed the development of the provided tool for monitoring pathways for Indigenous learners (CPRIL, "Coming Full Circle", 2019). Specifically, the monitoring tool was built in such a way as to address the gaps and barriers in relation to implementing and supporting pathways for Indigenous learners. The metrics and "checklists" that were developed fall under the following four themes: Relationships and Accountability, Student Experience, Academic/ Mainstream Metrics and Wrap-around Supports, as indicated in Table 8.

It must be noted that this tool is based upon a broad definition of "success", in order to capture both western and Indigenous notions of what it means to succeed in postsecondary education. When measuring success, it is important to include empirical measures such as pathways enrolment, retention and completion rates as well as measures that address the student experience, self-determination, and autonomy.

Table 7 – Pathways Monitoring Tool

Relationships and Accountability Sources of information: Internal and external to the institution	Notes	Academic/ Mainstream Metrics Sources of information: Academic units/ faculty, the Registrar	Notes
Relationships established between internal and external pathways partners o Academic units o Registrars o Recruitment o Student services o Prospective Indigenous Learners		# of applicants Enrolment Academic performance at sending institution Academic performance at receiving institution Persistence/ retention Graduation	

Capacity Building Wrap around support streamlined Transition plan created/ plan for the hand off Pathway signed off and implemented Resources are in place Pathways marketed to students Annual review complete Plan for follow up with alumni established		Next steps (e.g. employment or future studies)	
Student Experience Sources of information: Students, Faculty, Student Services	Notes	Wrap Around Supports Sources of information: Student services	Notes
The transition Barriers experienced and addressed Satisfaction and success		Plan and follow through for ongoing check ins Wrap around support provided and received	

Refer to Appendix G for an example of a completed Monitoring Table for our Aboriginal Community Advocacy (Confederation College) to Indigenous Studies (Trent University) Pathway.

## CONCLUSION

Our work in creating pathways for Indigenous learners has resulted in a wide range of outcomes for supporting pathways development, Indigenous learners, and Indigenous education across the province of Ontario. Through this phase of our collaboration, we have gained a deeper understanding of the challenges to implementing pathways as well as the limitations that exist within our own model. As educators, in moving forward we must ensure that we are establishing mechanisms that guide, as well ensure, our accountabilities and commitments to building successful pathways for Indigenous learners. Important mechanisms include creating opportunities and spaces for relationships building among all those who are involved in a pathway, as well as implementing tools, such as our evaluative tool, to inform and monitor our work.

With this toolkit, we hope to share our lessons learned and practical resources with other postsecondary institutions, Indigenous organizations, educators, and learners so that the expansion of Indigenous learner mobility can continue to grow.

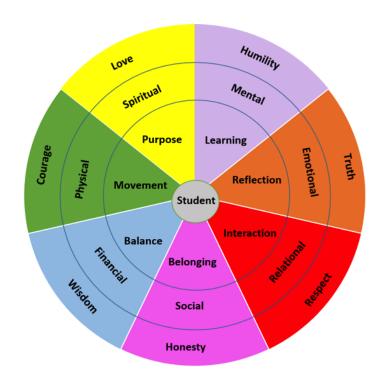
## OTHER HELPFUL RESOURCES

Table 8 – Existing Pathways for Indigenous Learners

Pathway	Partnering Institutions	Pathways details
Environmental Technician to Environmental Studies/ Sciences	Confederation College, Trent University	2 + 2 Agreement
Aboriginal Community Advocacy to Indigenous Studies	Confederation College. Trent University	2 + 2 Agreement
Aboriginal Community Advocacy to Community, Economic and Social Development	Confederation College, Algoma University	2 + 2 (Joint admission)
Aboriginal Community Advocacy, Indigenous Learning	Confederation College, Lakehead University	2 + 2 Existing pathways that have been updated to maximize student supports, and to minimize barriers (e.g. joint admissions, wrap around supports model)
Aboriginal Community Advocacy, Political Science	Confederation College, Lakehead University	2 + 2 Existing pathways that have been updated to maximize student supports, and to minimize barriers (e.g. joint admissions, wrap around supports model)
Aboriginal Community Advocacy, Sociology	Confederation College, Lakehead University	2 + 2 Existing pathways that have been updated to maximize student supports, and to minimize barriers (e.g. joint admissions, wrap around supports model)
Social Service Worker to Indigenous Social Worker	Sault College, Laurentian University	
Mental Health and Addiction Worker, BA (3 Years) Indigenous Studies, and BA (4 Years) Indigenous Studies with Specialization	Canadore College, University of Sudbury	
Social Service Worker, BA (3 Years) Indigenous Studies, and BA (4 Years) Indigenous Studies with Specialization	Canadore College, University of Sudbury	
Community and Justice Services, BA (3 Years)	Canadore College, University of Sudbury	

Pathway	Partnering Institutions	Pathways details
Indigenous Studies, and BA (4 Years) Indigenous Studies with Specialization		
Indigenous Wellness and Addictions Prevention, BA (3 Years) Indigenous Studies, and BA (4 Years) Indigenous Studies with Specialization	Canadore College, University of Sudbury	
Police Foundations, BA (3 Years) Indigenous Studies, and BA (4 Years) Indigenous Studies with Specialization	Canadore College, University of Sudbury	
Early Childhood Education, BA in Folklore and Ethnologie (3 Years)	Canadore College, University of Sudbury	

Figure 5 – Wrap-Around Support Model Expanded Version



Quadrant	Example type of support Service
Spiritual – Purpose – LOVE	Access to Elders on campus or Indigenous
	Student Navigators)
Mental – Learning – HUMILITY	Academic Bridging Courses)
Emotional – Reflection – TRUTH	Counseling services
Relational – Interaction – RESPECT	Promotional materials, meeting with students)
Social – Belonging – HONESTY	Summer orientation, student events)
Financial – Balance – WISDOM	Budgeting workshops, scholarships and
	bursaries)
Physical – Movement – Self direction –	Housing, daycare facilities)
COURAGE	

## **Additional Resources**

Shifting the Landscape: Creating alignment in Indigenous Studies to support learners in Ontario's postsecondary environment.

Coming Full Circle: Evaluating the success and sustainability of our 'Pathways for Indigenous Learners' model

Expanding the Circle: Pathways for Indigenous Learners across Ontario

Pathways for Indigenous Learners (2014-2016)

Principled Position on Pathways for Indigenous Learners (See Expanding the Circle) ONCAT links to pathways information: <a href="https://www.ontransfer.ca/index\_en.php">https://www.ontransfer.ca/index\_en.php</a>

## **REFERENCES**

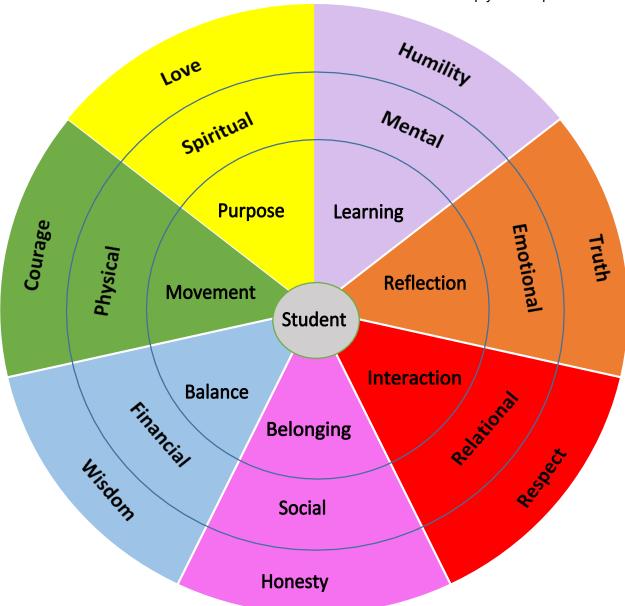
Centre for Policy in Aboriginal Learning (2019). Coming full circle. Confederation College and ONCAT.

Centre for Policy in Aboriginal Learning (2015). Pathways for Aboriginal learners: Collaborating across Aboriginal Institutes, colleges and universities: Final Report. Confederation College and ONCAT.

Centre for Policy in Aboriginal Learning (2018). Shifting the landscape: Creating alignment in Indigenous Studies to support learners in Ontario's postsecondary environment. Confederation College and ONCAT.

## APPENDIX A: WRAP AROUND SUPPORT MODEL

"a framework ... is the enactment of a respectful relationship with the rest of creation which shares this earth with us a framework is never a noun never simply a metaphor...



it is more than any words which attempt to detonate it a framework is a journey/ing with"

### Spiritual – Purpose – LOVE - We are given

strength to walk through all that comes our way as we seek to understand the Creator's purpose for our lives.

> Accessing Elders – on and off campus Aboriginal counselling – on and off campus Opportunities for cultural practices Opportunities for spiritual practices

### Mental - Learning - HUMILITY -

Academic bridging course – intensive 1 or 2 week module – adaptation of Trent's research and writing course Adapting to systems in new post-secondary

institution
Acknowledging and accepting Indigenous

Acknowledging and accepting Indigenous cultural difference

## Emotional - Reflection - TRUTH

E-portfolio – (to be developed)

Completion of transition questionnaire/assessment – (to be developed)

Weekly check ins with peer mentor/advisor Managing time (transfer shock)

Follow up by support staff to faculty Faculty engagement Advocacy

### Social - Belonging - HONESTY

Maintenance of cohort
Summer orientation – "Biishka",
Kiikokanawge
Community connections – friendship
centres,
Family connections

## Financial - Balance - WISDOM

Income source
Funding logistics
Employment opportunities – pre, mid, post
Moving costs
Budgeting
Bursary applications

Self - direction (self-care, self-advocacy)
Counselling

### Relational - Interaction - RESPECT

Promotion of Articulation Agreements – Navigators – College Recruiters Develop promotional materials: brochures, postcards, etc.

 $1^{\rm st}$  year ACA, NCFS, ET – class visits  $2^{\rm nd}$  year ACA, NCFS, ET – class visits

Access programs – class visits

Alumni base – call/email/mail promotional material

High Schools Career fairs Virtual tours

Website promotion and information Meeting with students who are pursuing and meet criteria of Articulation Agreement Introduction to receiving institution staff and faculty

Assist with application process "Checking in not out" once at receiving institution

Weekly check ins with peer mentor/advisor

## Physical – Movement – Self direction – COURAGE

Housing/accommodations
Daycare, children's schools
Safe neighbourhoods
Health care – doctors, dentists,
optometrists
Diet and exercise

## APPENDIX B: SAMPLE ARTICULATION AGREEMENT

## DIPLOMA-TO-DEGREE EXCEPTIONAL TRANSFER AGREEMENT [COMMUNITY ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT] BETWEEN

**Algoma University** (hereinafter 'AU')

Sault Ste. Marie, ON and

Confederation College (hereinafter 'CC')

Thunder Bay, ON

## 1.0 General Provisions:

- This articulation agreement sets forth guidelines for the partnership that will exist between AU and CC. This agreement describes the standard transfer credit pathways for one-year Ontario College Certificate programs, two-year Ontario College Diploma Programs and three-year Ontario College Advanced Diploma Programs;
- II. The goal of this agreement is to provide maximum opportunity for students to achieve the benefits of combining a college diploma and a university degree;
- III. The fundamental means embodied in this agreement is the recognition of prior learning and a credit transfer system in the province of Ontario that optimizes pathways and minimizes unnecessary duplication of students' learning and barriers to student mobility;
- IV. The agreement shall be continuous from year to year; however, either party may terminate the agreement if notice in writing is given at least six months prior to the date on which the termination becomes effective. Students enrolled at the time of notice of termination will be given the opportunity to complete their degree studies based on the terms of the agreement when they commenced their studies;

V. AU and CC will assign members to an Advisory Council to actively monitor the implementation of the pathway, using co-developed evaluation methodology and tools.

## 1.1 Block Transfer Credit Agreement Specifications:

i. CC diploma and certificate program graduates must meet AU admission requirements defined as the successful completion of a two or three-year diploma program or a one-year certificate program with a minimum overall average of B (3.00 GPA) to be eligible for block transfer credit recognition. The following CC diploma program will be considered as part of the exceptional transfer credit framework:

Aboriginal Community Advocacy Program [ACA – two-year]

(Appendix A summarizes credit recognition based on the transfer agreement between AU and CC)

ii. Successful applicants from the aforementioned two-year diploma program with a minimum overall average of 3.00 GPA (B) or greater will receive recognition as follows:

57 transfer credits towards the three-year Bachelor of Arts in Community Development program [BA3.CDEV];

60 transfer credits towards the four-year Honours Bachelor of Arts in Community Economic and Social Development program [BA4.CESD];

45 transfer credits toward the three-year Bachelor of Arts in Community Economic and Social Development program [BA3.CESD]

- iii. CC diploma graduates from the aforementioned program with a 2.50 2.99 GPA (C+) will receive transfer recognition for a maximum of 15 credits towards the Bachelor of Arts in Community Development and Community Economic and Social Development degree programs; students with a 2.49 GPA or less (C-/C) grade will be eligible for admission, but will not receive transfer credit.
- iv. In the case of course code changes, AU and CC agree to update the agreement accordingly.

v. Each CC graduate admitted to AU via this agreement will receive an individualized diploma to degree completion chart outlining the number of transfer credits received and the courses required for completion of the designated degree program.

### 1.2 Institutional Commitment

vi. Algoma University and Confederation College agree to implement a wrap-around support model for this exceptional agreement. The agreement is designed to facilitate the seamless transfer of students, and in particular Indigenous learners. The wrap-around support model involves active participation by both institutions at all stages of the student experience. AU and CC agree to assign a Working Group with representation from both institutions for this pathway agreement to explicitly identify which wrap-around supports will be provided in accordance with the model below. The success of this agreement will be monitored by the Working Group by examining student success and support provision using the wrap-around framework. In addition, the parties agree to the following:

### AU will:

Collaborate with CC to provide information to students in their first year of study at CC regarding the transfer pathway.

Encourage pathway preparation by providing information to advisors at CC on college courses that will maximize transfer credit for this pathway.

Assign an Anishinaabe Student Success Advisor to work with CC students while they are in the CC diploma program.

Ensure applicants from CC receive priority entry to the university through a joint admissions process.

Waive the requirements for a completed transfer application and the transfer application fee.

Collaborate with CC to connect students and faculty to university resources while in the CC diploma program (faculty, library, learning resources, housing, etc.).

Provide AU pathway scholarships to eligible students.

## CC will:

Collaborate with AU to provide information to students in their first year of study at CC regarding the transfer pathway.

Encourage pathway preparation by providing opportunity for advisors and faculty at CC to learn about college courses that will maximize transfer credit for this pathway.

Assign an Advisor to serve as the primary liaison for CC students interested in the AU pathway while they are in the CC diploma program.

Collaborate with AU to connect students and faculty to university resources while in the CC diploma program (faculty, library, learning resources, housing, etc.)

vii. Both parties agree to work collaboratively to build a strong inter-institutional working relationship to facilitate seamless transfer using a wrap-around support model that puts the student at the centre.

## APPENDIX C: ASSET MAP FOR PARTNERING INSTITUTIONS

The purpose of this document is to assist you in summarizing information pertaining to programs, courses, supports, opportunities, services, etc for Indigenous learners within your institution. This information will be helpful throughout the process of this work, in creating learning pathways for Indigenous learners across partnering institutions. When possible, include institutional data that could be useful to or inform the development or creation of learning pathways.

\*\*Feel free to copy & paste any relevant information from your institution's website \*\*

"ASSET"	DESCRIPTION
Programs and Courses (that have a focus on Knowledge	e/pedagogy, culture, knowledge,
etc, or where there are Indigenous Learners enrolled, or the	at are delivered within
communities)	
Programs	
Courses	
Services/Support/ Resources	
Cultural Support (i.e. feasts, sweatlodge, ceremonies, sharing	
circles)	
Academic Support (i.e. academic advising, tutoring, various	
workshops) Individual Support (i.e. on campus counselling, Elders)	
Financial Support (i.e. bursaries, food vouchers, bus tickets, emergency funds, food bank)	
Resource Centres?	
Peer Mentoring – e.g. connections to upper year mentors	
(Please include any informal supports (i.e. rides, out of pocket	
expenses – lunches, coffee))	
If you have a gathering space/student lounge/support centre,	
who typically uses this space? (i.e. 1st year students, 2nd, non-	
Indigenous)	
Do you offer <b>post-graduation services</b> ? (I.e. career exploration, job bank, etc.)	
Are there linkages with specific community supports that	
learners can access? (I.e. off campus counselling, cultural	
support, etc.)	
Special events and/or cultural programming?	
, , , ,	
Informal supports (i.e. rides, out of pocket expenses – lunches,	
coffee)?	
Learner Demographics – when possible include institution	nal data
Do you have a system for obtaining Indigenous learner	
numbers? Do you have the numbers for each group?	
Who keeps the data? (i.e. Registrar's, IT, Student Success	
Centre)	

"ASSET"	DESCRIPTION
Where do your learners come from?  Urban – reside in same location as institution or relocated from another urban setting  Rural – reside in location that is within the region of institution, i.e. drive in First Nation community or small town  Remote – fly in First Nation or Inuit communities	
Language – is there a language barrier? Is English a second	
language for some of your learners?	
Age – is there a higher concentration in a particular age range?	
Education – what education level are they entering with?	
Parental Status – do you have a large number of learners who are parents?	
<b>Prior Learning Experiences</b> – what work experience or educational experience or a combination of both are they bringing with them?	
Staff	
Please list the positions that work directly with Indigenous learners or within the realm of support services. (i.e. managers, counsellors, advisors, navigators)	
Are there Indigenous Studies administration, administrative positions held by Indigenous peoples in your institution?	
Are there Indigenous counsellors, Elders, and/or peer support workers available at your institution?	
Learner Recruitment	
How do Indigenous learners typically find out about your institution?	
Do you have a designated Indigenous Recruiter?	
If not, how are Indigenous learners recruited? (i.e. through mainstream services)	
Where are learners recruited and in what ways? If in schools, what grade levels are targeted?	
How do you recruit learners for new programs?	
Is there a formal way of tracking this?	
Who makes the initial contact? How is contact maintained? Is there follow up or referral to another person or department made?	

"ASSET"	DESCRIPTION
What information is given and by whom?	
Outreach and Transition	
At what point is first contact made with potential Indigenous learners – application, registration or other?	
Who makes the initial contact? How is contact maintained? Is there follow up or referral to another person or department made?	
What information is given and by whom?	
If they are directly from high school, does your department have relationships with guidance counsellors or others that work directly with Indigenous learners?	
Who helps learners with the transition to your institution?	
Does your department assist with securing housing, daycare or other essential services for learners?	
Does campus residence provide targeted accommodation for Indigenous learners?	
Are there specific transition services offered to Indigenous Learners transfer students? (i.e. separate orientation, eligibility for on campus housing)	
Decision Making	
Who is responsible for making decisions for Indigenous Learners within your institution?	
Are there any groups or councils (e.g. Aboriginal Education Council) that assist in decision making for Indigenous Learners at your institution? If so, what groups?	
Does your institution have Indigenous representation in decision making processes e.g. sitting on the board of governors, sitting in on senior leadership meetings?	
Institutional Setting	
Aside from curriculum, in what ways are Indigenous knowledge(s) reflected within your institution?	
The cultures of learning institutions differ from each other; what potential adjustments would Indigenous learners have to make as they enter another institution? (I.e. class size, what assignments are like (group presentations, essays, etc.)	
What does building of community look like at your institution?	
What pathways, for Indigenous learners, between post- secondary institutions do you currently offer?	

"ASSET"	DESCRIPTION
Does your institution have a designated position for pathways	
related work? (e.g. a Pathways coordinator who is responsible	
for the creation, development and support of pathways)	
Does your institution have education or personal development	
opportunities to inform staff and students on Indigenous	
cultures, education, Canadian History, etc?	
Student Indigenous Funding Sources	
What funders do you currently have relationships with?	
Is there someone from student supports who liaises with the	
funders?	
Link to Community	
When and how does your institution engage with and involve	
Indigenous Communities?	
Institutional Documents	
Does you institution have documents or polices that reflect	
your institutions commitments to Indigenous education and	
learners, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to	
Action and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of	
Indigenous Peoples?	
% of core funding for Indigenous education	
What % of your institution's core funding is spent on	
Indigenous Support Services	
What % of core funding is spent on positions for Indigenous	
Faculty and Staff	
Other (Is there any other useful information that could help to in	nform our process of creating or
supporting pathways for Indigenous Learners?)	,

## APPENDIX D: SPEED-DATING AND ACTION PLANNING WORKSHEET

Group Exercise: *Identifying Opportunities for Articulation Agreements and Credit*<u>Transfer</u>

## PART A: Individual Institution Brainstorming

Using your Institution's Asset Map as a resource, identify:

3 assets (e.g. Support services or particular program) that your institution does well that you think would benefit another institution.

Gaps- (e.g. A process, support service, or pathways) that you want to implement at your institution

Areas in your institution where you would like to partner with another institution (e.g. based on potential opportunities for alignment or pathways development)

Be mindful of the wrap-around supports model when completing this exercise!

Asset(s) to Share	
(e.g. a Program, course, certification, support service, bridging program, or process, etc)	
Gap to Improve	
(e.g. area where you could improve existing programs by laddering into another or by implementing a particular support service, etc)	
Partnering Opportunity	
(Where do you see opportunity for collaboration/ partnership or possible? E.g. with an institution(s) that addresses your "gaps" or interests, or that complements your "assets"? Is there an obvious area for alignment or pathway development)	
Learner Supports	
(Look to your Asset Map-how will learners be supported- link back to wrap-around supports model – Are there any gaps?)	
Institutional Capacity	
(Thinks about and outline the institution's capacity to pursue this opportunity, where there may be gaps,	

ow another institution could compliment your
th their assets)

## **PART B: Collaborative Brainstorming and Planning**

Name of Partnering Institution(s):

Contact Information for Each Person:

Description of potential alignment/ pathway development:

## Developing a Plan...

Consider the following questions when developing a plan and completing the step by step action plan

What actions need to be done in order to accomplish this?

Who are the people we must communicate with or get involved?

What information/resources do you need to accomplish this?

What actions/roles will be assigned to who?

What deadlines will be assigned?

Step	Action Description	Resources	Person	Deadline
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				

## APPENDIX E: PATHWAY TEMPLATE

Partnering Institutions: Algoma University and Sault College

PATHWAY DETAIL	.S
Title of Pathway:	Social Service Worker – Native Specialization to Bachelor of Social Work
Pathway Type:  Degree Completion, Certificate to Diploma, Diploma to Diploma, Degree to Diploma, etc.	Diploma to Degree - exceptional
List other postsecondary institution/s involved in the creation of the pathway:	AU and SC
Pathway Implementation Date	Fall 2018
Contact Procedure for Pathway Implementation:	Dave Marasco and Carolyn Hepburn
Eligibility for the Pathway (student eligibility for the pathway):	Minimum B average (SSW-NS)
Applicant must have graduated from the program at the sending institution:	Yes
Minimum program GPA or % required to be eligible for this pathway:	В
Minimum GPA or % required in specific courses	Not specific grades; only grade in overall program.
Total number of transfer credits/full courses to be granted at receiving institution (please express as a numerical proportion, i.e. 90 of 120)	54/120 transfer recognition
Transfer Credits Granted (please describe pathway clearly and succinctly):	
Total number of program courses that must be completed at the receiving institution in order to graduate (please express as a numerical proportion, i.e. 90 of 120):	22 courses 66/120 to be completed at AU
Anticipated time to complete the credential if enrolled full-time:	Approx. 2 years (4 terms)
List of eligible institutions and their programs	AU SC
Plan for streamlining wrap-around supports between partnering institutions	-SC providing office space for AU staff -classroom visits at SC -joint orientation activities -joint admissions
Plan for ensuring the sustainability of the pathway	-program oversight by academic units -student tracking -annual review of articulation agreement -data to support success of agreement

## APPENDIX F: SAMPLE COMPLETE MONITORING TOOL

Relationships and Accountability  Sources of information: Internal and external to the institution	,	Notes	Academic/ Mainstream Metrics Sources of information: Academic units/ faculty, the Registrar	,	Notes
Relationships established between internal and external pathways partners		Staff from Trent University and Confederation College met several times throughout the development and implementation of the pathway	Applicants	1	6
- Academic units	1	Trent staff and Faculty met at Confederation	Enrolment	1	6
- Registrars	1		Academic Performance atSending Institution	1	Students met GPA required for pathway
- Recruitment	1	Trent staff and faculty travelled to Confederation College to meet with prospective students;	Academic performance at receiving institution	1	Anecdotal - students were the top of their classes
- Student services	1	Team from Trent communicated with student services	Persistence/retention	1	4
- Prospective Indigenous learners	1	Team from Trent met in person with prospective students from Confed	Graduation	1	4
Capacity Building			Next steps e.g. employment or future studies		
Wrap around supports streamlined	1	discussed			
Transition plan created/ plan for the hand off	1	Students were enrolled in the Biishka transition program			
Pathway is signed off and implemented	1	Yes, Trent, Confed, and FNTI presidents met for an official signing			
Resources are in place	1	Yes			
Pathways is marketed to students	1	Yes			
Annual review	1	No			
Plan for follow up with alumni		No			

Student Experience			Wrap Around Supports		
Sources of information: Students, Faculty, Student Services	*	Notes	Sources of information: Student services	*	Notes
The transition	,	Students participated in the Biishka transition program	Plan and follow through for ongoing check-ins		Not formally established
Satisfaction and success		Not formally established	Wrap around supports provided	`	Wrap around supports model was in place
Barriers experienced	,	Trent team met with students to discuss and address barriers e.g. moving costs, finding an apartment			