



# A Roadmap to Recognition for Aboriginal Institutes in Ontario Position Paper

October 10, 2014

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*Abstract: Aboriginal Institutes (AIs) in Ontario are an integral contributor to Ontario's post-secondary landscape and represent a vital stakeholder in meeting provincial labour market needs and participation. The value-added services provided by AIs and their striking performance results in Aboriginal post-secondary education in the last two decades requires an enhanced level of commitment and the engagement of multiple stakeholders to support, sustain and continue the momentum of AI demonstrated success.*

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## *Acknowledgements:*

*To the members of the Aboriginal Institutes Consortium who share a collective vision and commitment to Aboriginal and other learners who desire culturally enriched learning in the lifelong learning continuum so they can become meaningful participants in the economy and labour force today and into the next seven generations.*

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Aboriginal Institutes (“AIs”) in Ontario are at a crossroads. For almost thirty years, they have delivered culturally-enriched post-secondary education and training to Aboriginal students who would not otherwise access the post-secondary system. They have expanded significantly in recent years, and in 2014-2015 will provide programs to more than one thousand learners from communities across Ontario. Yet, AIs currently operate on the periphery of Ontario’s post-secondary system. They do not receive operational or capital funding. Most of the federal and provincial funding they do receive can only go towards developing and delivering accredited programs, in partnership with colleges and universities.

These funding constraints mean that AIs have developed a wide array of high quality, “in demand” programs and courses, but cannot ensure that they will be offered from year to year. AIs do not have the infrastructure to sustain or grow programs. Instead of focusing on serving students, too much staff time must be devoted to researching and applying for grants. Ontario AIs now seek “recognition”, meaning that they are a funded, integral component of the post-secondary education system in Ontario, with the ability to offer recognized credentials. The time is now right to establish a roadmap to recognition for Aboriginal Institutes in Ontario.

#### *Closing the Education Gap is an Opportunity*

Closing the education gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students is an opportunity, particularly for Ontario, where Aboriginal communities are playing an increasing role in the resource economy. By one estimate, closing the gap could result in cumulative benefits of up to \$400.5 billion across Canada from 2006-2026, and save an additional \$115 billion in government expenditures. AIs play a key role in closing the gap, by linking communities and learners with the education and skills that are in demand.

#### *Momentum Exists*

For the past decade, federal and provincial resources have been dedicated to closing the education gap. Progress has been made and AIs have benefitted from provincial funding improvements. Collectively, all stakeholders must now ensure that momentum is not lost. AIs are partners that can contribute to closing the gap at all levels of the lifelong learning continuum so that everyone in Canada can benefit from the estimated cumulative benefits of \$400.5 billion by 2026.

#### *Aboriginal Institutes Serve a Unique Role*

AIs serve a unique and necessary role in Ontario’s post-secondary system. They provide an alternative pathway for Anishinabek, Cree, Haudenosaunee, Oji-Cree and other learners who desire culturally enriched learning with academic rigour. AIs add value to the system in the following ways:

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- AIs offer a “cultural environment” and sense of “cultural safety”.
- AIs build human capital in areas of Ontario that are poised for economic growth.
- AIs increase post-secondary education attainment rates.
- AIs build stronger Aboriginal communities.
- AIs facilitate cultural sustainability.
- AIs further public education on Aboriginal peoples.

### *Aboriginal Institutes Meet Ontario’s Policy Priorities*

Improving Aboriginal access to post-secondary education has been a priority in Ontario since 2005. AIs are committed to working closely with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities to implement the Aboriginal Postsecondary Education and Training Policy Framework. AIs can also play a role in improving differentiation of Ontario’s post-secondary education sector. AIs currently work in partnership with mainstream institutions to deliver accredited programs. Mainstream institutions that focus on serving Aboriginal learners can meet their strategic mandates through robust partnerships with AIs.

### *AIC’s Roadmap to Recognition*

The Aboriginal Institutes Consortium (“AIC”) represents six of the nine AIs in Ontario. AIC has established three long-term goals for its members: secure funding, credential-granting status, and perceived status within the post-secondary system. To reach these goals, AIC will pursue short-term strategies to build the capacity of Ontario AIs to achieve and demonstrate results. These strategies include:

1. Incorporation of AIs within Ontario’s Differentiation Policy Framework and Strategic Mandate Agreement approach.
2. Development of a “toolkit” or “model” for improved partnerships between AIs and mainstream institutions.
3. Continued collaboration with the Aboriginal Education Office.
4. Expanded role in enhancing public understanding of Aboriginal culture and history.
5. Development of capacity to show results, through a formalized, annual data collection system.

Ontario has recognized a need for a coherent policy on AIs for at least a decade. At the same time, AIs have grown rapidly and will not be able to continue filling their valuable role without secure funding. AIs require an enhanced level of commitment and the engagement of multiple stakeholders to support, sustain and continue their demonstrated success in improving Aboriginal access to and success in post-secondary education in Ontario.

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Aboriginal institutes (“AIs”) in Ontario are Aboriginal owned and controlled, community-based educational institutes that develop and deliver culturally enriched, accredited post-secondary certificate, diploma, degree and post-graduate programs to Aboriginal students in partnership with colleges and universities. Ontario AIs need funding to become fully sustainable, integral components of Ontario’s post-secondary education and training (“PSE”) system. The funding challenges that AIs face fall into two categories:

1. AIs lack secure operational funding. They rely primarily on annual grant proposals, which provide unpredictable funding from year to year. Most grant money does not cover operational expenses, so institutes rely on tuition, private funding, training contracts, and other sources, which added together fall short of the resources public post-secondary institutions can access. The lack of operational funding affects AIs’ capacity to:
  - a. ensure that courses or whole programs will be offered from year to year;
  - b. plan effectively over the short and long term;
  - c. hire and retain qualified staff and faculty;
  - d. acquire and maintain technology, library and other resources;
  - e. provide effective student and ancillary services; and
  - f. focus resources on serving students, as seeking out and applying for grant funding requires substantial effort.
2. AIs lack access to capital grants that public post-secondary institutions qualify for. As with operational funding, the grant funding that AIs receive cannot be used for capital projects. AIs struggle to build and maintain adequate facilities for their students, which in turn hampers their ability to grow.

Overall, AIs seek “recognition”, meaning that they are a funded and integral part of the post-secondary system in Ontario. This paper highlights the essential role that AIs play in providing learning opportunities to Aboriginal people who would not otherwise access Ontario’s PSE system. The paper discusses the current policy and financial environment that AIs operate within, and addresses how AIs are currently hampered from fulfilling their potential, due to a lack of secure funding. Lastly, strategies will be identified to ensure AIs can continue to offer quality programming for Aboriginal learners. This Position Paper lays the groundwork for a new path to recognition for Ontario AIs, placing recognition as an ultimate goal, and identifying interim strategies to address the current funding gap.

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## **2. CONTEXT**

### **2.1 Gap or Opportunity?**

The gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal educational achievement in Canada is well-documented. The gap exists at all levels of the system, from elementary school through to PSE. As of 2011, 48.4% of Aboriginal people aged 25-64 had a post-secondary qualification, compared to 64.7% of non-Aboriginal people. The gap is particularly pronounced for university education. Only 9.8% of Aboriginal adults had a university degree in 2011, compared to 26.5% of the non-Aboriginal population.

Strides have been made in recent years. More Aboriginal students are obtaining post-secondary qualifications. Yet Aboriginal education must continue to be a priority in Canada. The Aboriginal population is young and growing in comparison to the non-Aboriginal population. From 2006-2011, the Aboriginal population in Canada grew by 20.1%, whereas the non-Aboriginal population grew by only 5.2%. Almost half of the Aboriginal population is aged 24 and under, compared to just one third of the non-Aboriginal population.

This growing population is facing an economy that increasingly demands post-secondary qualifications. If we do not ensure that Aboriginal youth are able to achieve success in PSE, we are missing an opportunity for them, their communities, Ontario, and for Canada as a whole. Closing the education and labour market gaps could result in cumulative benefits of up to \$400.5 billion across Canada by 2026 (calculated in 2006), and save an additional \$115 billion in government expenditures. It is time that the federal and provincial governments embrace the opportunity that a young and growing Aboriginal population offers for Canada's economy today and tomorrow. Investment in PSE for this demographic is just that: an investment, not a burden the other level of government should bear.

### **2.2 Building on Momentum**

In the past decade, much attention has been paid to closing the education gap for Aboriginal students. Beginning around the mid-2000s, governments, agencies, and other organizations produced numerous studies, reports, and initiatives. AIs saw increased growth and provincial funding improvements, including multi-year funding from the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities ("MTCU"), direct receipt of funds (instead of flowing through partner institutions), bursary funding, and successful negotiation to receive 100% of tuition for enrolled students (instead of splitting with partner institutions).

Unfortunately, progress in recent years has stalled. AIs are at a crossroads. The Aboriginal Institutes in Ontario cannot grow further, or sustain themselves, without obtaining a secure source of operational and capital funding. Some of the voluminous studies, reports, and initiatives that have taken place over the past decade are listed in Appendix A to this paper. Through these initiatives, work has begun on improving the PSE system for Aboriginal learners in Ontario.

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Collectively, all stakeholders must now ensure that this momentum is not lost. As Ontario considers re-visioning the PSE system, the unique role that AIs perform in growing Aboriginal learners with PSE credentials must be taken into account, and Aboriginal Institutes must be financially integrated into Ontario's PSE system. The governments, both federal and provincial, must see AIs as Partners who can contribute to closing the education gap at all levels of the lifelong learning continuum so that everyone in Canada can benefit from the estimated cumulative benefits of up to \$400.5 billion by 2026.

### **2.3 Unique Role of Aboriginal Institutes**

AIs serve a unique and necessary role in Ontario's PSE landscape. The Aboriginal Institutes provide a viable alternative pathway for the Anishinabek, Cree, Haudenosaunee, Oji-Cree and other learners who desire culturally enriched learning with academic rigour that is equivalent to or better than mainstream institutions. The culturally appropriate programs are developed and delivered in partnership with mainstream colleges and universities in Ontario.

Aboriginal Institutes in Ontario have been in existence since 1985, with the AIC founded in 1994. The AIC currently represents six of the nine institutes in Ontario; AIs also collaborate and partner with each other in developing or delivering programs or courses. For example a successful Governance program that the First Nations Technical Institute perfected with its partner, Ryerson University has been offered at Kenjgewin Teg Educational Institute (KTEI). Since their inception, the institutes have grown rapidly, despite coping with persistent underfunding and competition with mainstream institutions. Oshki-Pimache-O-Win Education and Training Institute, for instance, saw a tenfold increase in its student body from 2004-2010, with an overall graduation rate of 70%. Similar higher than average PSE graduation outcomes exist in other AIs (see Appendix B).

However, the success of Aboriginal Institutes has inadvertently placed them in a position of increased competition with mainstream institutions for limited funding and Aboriginal student enrolment. Many mainstream institutions are "indigenizing" themselves and adopting a "holistic" model of integrating Aboriginal culture and ways of knowing throughout their organizations, an effort to be commended. The vast majority of mainstream colleges now offer Aboriginal-specific programs. At a time when mainstream institutions are focusing on addressing the needs of Aboriginal learners, government needs to understand how AIs add value to the PSE system, as well as the provincial and national economies. Some of the unique contributions that AIs offer to the PSE system are as follows.

1. Uniquely created and governed for holistic learning and success for Aboriginal Learners

Aboriginal Institutes are created, governed, and largely staffed by Aboriginal people. They are inherently "holistic" in a way that mainstream institutions, designed to serve a much broader demographic, simply cannot be. AIs offer many features that mainstream institutions do not, including a higher ratio of Indigenous faculty, Indigenous knowledge integration with Aboriginal communities, instructional techniques geared towards Aboriginal learning styles, coursework in

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traditional languages, deep linkages with other Aboriginal organizations and communities, curricula that includes spiritual and traditional teachings, peer support, and more. Together these factors create a culturally enriched learning environment where learners report feeling understood, valued and affirmed rather than being marginalized or feeling invisible. These are vital conditions for Aboriginal learner engagement and success. The difference that AIs offer is in their very nature; the AIs are inherently cultural.

Mainstream institutions may offer “cultural content”, but they cannot offer the “cultural environment and safety” unique to AIs; in research perspectives, this is referred to as implementation of *culturally restorative practices* using cultural attachment theory in education.

### 2. Unique capacity and mandates to contribute to labour market needs

Aboriginal Institutes offer direct connections with Aboriginal communities and have knowledge of local labour needs through their wide range of formal, informal, voluntary and established networks. The AIs enjoy strong relationships and support from the First Nation communities by virtue of their strategic mandates set and directed by their respective leadership. Some mainstream colleges offer community-based programs. AIs, however, are directly linked to the human resources needs of Aboriginal communities. They offer programs requested by communities to fill available jobs. For instance, KTEI’s Mnidoo Mnising Northshore Training Alliance brings together front line personnel in economic development, social services, education and training. AIs are key to building capacity in Aboriginal communities and moving towards self-government.

AIs can also assist in filling local labour needs and developing human capital in areas of Ontario that are poised to see significant economic growth. There is a skills mismatch in Ontario and a need to link people with available jobs. As Premier Kathleen Wynne has recognized, “there are jobs without people and people without jobs”. The Conference Board of Canada has recently estimated that the skills mismatch costs Ontario up to \$24.3 billion a year in lost economic opportunity and \$3.7 billion in tax revenues. AIs, which develop programs based on requests local communities and industry, can help address the problem of skills mismatch and the looming labour shortage through effective engagement with the youthful and growing Aboriginal population in Ontario.

### 3. Unique capacity to increase PSE attainment

The Aboriginal Institutes increase access to and success in PSE for Aboriginal students who would not otherwise attend a mainstream post-secondary institution. There are many reasons these students may be unable to attend a mainstream college or university, including low incomes and insufficient funding, low education of parents, family or work obligations, lack of childcare, distance, desire to be educated in a culturally sensitive environment, and scars from historic racism and assimilationist pressures. For students that face such barriers, the Aboriginal Institutes offer the flexibility and support that mainstream institutions, due to their size and diverse student body, cannot. The community based and blended delivery models of the

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Aboriginal Institutes allow students with work, community traditional responsibilities and family obligations to gain a post-secondary education, without having to leave their communities.

### 4. Aboriginal Institutes offer unique transformative learning opportunities

The Aboriginal Institutes play an important role in linking Aboriginal students to further education pathways. Many Aboriginal students do not follow a direct path through the education system. Given that more Aboriginal people than non-Aboriginal people do not complete high school, there is a need for programs that offer laddering opportunities, from the completion of high school to PSE, particularly for adults who have community, family and work responsibilities. Mainstream colleges can only partially address this need. There is a substantial number of Aboriginal students who are not accessing mainstream programs, due to the barriers discussed above. For these students, AIs are an essential link to PSE.

### 5. Unique capacity to create stronger Aboriginal communities

Aboriginal Institutes in Ontario have evolved as key service providers and contributors to the development of new and enhanced community-based Aboriginal education frameworks. In this regard, AIs are increasingly providing a wider range of lifelong education continuum experiences through collaboration with both mainstream and Aboriginal partners and stakeholders, including new links and relationships with on and off-reserve schools.

Having infused cultural standards in PSE program maps, AIs have also broadened current perspectives and definitions of student success for all learners in the lifelong learning continuum. AIs therefore have a unique role in enhancing community systems through education at all levels through teacher education and professional development.

### 6. Unique role to facilitate Indigenous Knowledge and Cultural sustainability

In addition to providing culturally enriched programs in the lifelong learning continuum, AIs offer programs on Indigenous knowledge and languages with the integral support of Indigenous Knowledge Holders. In this way, Aboriginal Institutes uniquely contribute to the cultural sustainability of the indigenous peoples they serve.

### 7. Unique role in providing public education on Aboriginal Peoples

Further, AIs are in a unique position to be a key partner in broadening Ontario's cultural enrichment, cultural sustainability, and overall public awareness of both Aboriginal history and Aboriginal relations for future collaborative relationships and public policy.

## **2.4 Terminology: Aboriginal Institutes and Recognition**

Throughout this paper, the term "AI" will be used to refer to Aboriginal-controlled, community-based institutions that primarily serve Aboriginal learners and have some level of relationship with the mainstream system. In Ontario, there are nine institutions that meet this definition.

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“Mainstream institutions” refers to post-secondary institutions that are publicly-funded and/or legislated. They serve the general public, though they may focus on a particular demographic (e.g. faith-based institutions).

The distinction between AIs and mainstream institutions is fairly clear in Ontario, as Ontario AIs do not receive operational funding and do not fall under existing provincial legislation. In other provinces, there is more overlap between these categories. First Nations University (“FNUniv”), for instance, primarily serves Aboriginal learners but is publicly-funded and federated with the University of Regina. Institutions like FNUniv that fall somewhere in the middle will be referred to in this paper as “mainstream AIs”.

Another term that will be used throughout this paper is “recognition”, a term that is not used in the mainstream PSE system. This term is important for Aboriginal Institutes in Ontario, however, as it describes a bundle of attributes that mainstream institutions have: funding, credentials, and perceived value. AIs in Ontario seek to gain these attributes, without necessarily becoming a mainstream institution. Recognition, including secure funding, credential-granting status, and perceived value, is the ultimate goal for AIC members, with secure funding being the first priority.

### 3. ONTARIO’S POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION SYSTEM

Ontario’s “recognized” post-secondary system consists of publicly-funded universities and colleges, as well as privately-funded institutions with limited degree-granting authority and private career colleges. An overview of the primary components of the system is as follows:

<b>Universities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Must be established by legislation or authorized under the <i>Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000</i></li><li>• Have authority to grant degrees</li><li>• Publicly funded</li></ul>
<b>Colleges</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Established under the <i>Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology Act, 2002</i></li><li>• Can grant applied bachelor’s degrees with Minister’s consent</li><li>• Publicly funded</li></ul>
<b>Private degree-granting institutions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Must be authorized to grant degrees under the <i>Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act, 2000</i></li><li>• Currently, all are religious institutions</li><li>• Privately funded</li></ul>
<b>Private career colleges</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Must be registered under the <i>Private Career Colleges Act, 2005</i></li><li>• Provide certificate and diploma programs for specific careers (vocational programs)</li></ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Privately funded</li></ul>
<b>AIs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Not governed by legislation</li><li>Provide training, certificate, diploma and degree programs in partnership with recognized institutions</li><li>Receive funds largely through proposal-based processes</li></ul>
<b>Apprenticeships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Combine on-the-job training with in-class training through a private or public college, online service or Aboriginal institute</li><li>Regulated by the College of Trades, established in 2009</li></ul>
<b>Distance education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>While not stand-alone institutions, distance education is a growing focus in Ontario</li><li>Contact North, elearnnetwork.ca, and Ontario Learn are all examples of online initiatives provided by consortia of universities and colleges</li></ul>

### 3.1 Current Policy Directions in Ontario’s PSE System

#### 3.1.1 ABORIGINAL ACCESS

Aboriginal access has been a priority in Ontario PSE policy since 2005, after the release of “Ontario: A Leader in Learning”, “Ontario’s New Approach to Aboriginal Affairs” and “Reaching Higher: the McGuinty Government Plan for Postsecondary Education”. Since this time, mainstream institutions have been required to sign Multi-Year Accountability Agreements (“MYAAs”) with MTCU. These Agreements require institutions to report back annually on performance in three areas: access, quality and accountability. As part of access, institutions must report on numbers of self-identified Aboriginal students enrolled and measures taken in the past year to improve Aboriginal student access.

In 2011, MTCU released the Aboriginal Postsecondary Education and Training (APSET) Policy Framework. The Framework lays out principles that will guide MTCU in developing policies and programs related to Aboriginal PSE. It also sets four goals for improving the PSE sector:

1. Enhanced accountability and transparency;
2. Improved responsiveness to Aboriginal learners;
3. Aboriginal learners achieve greater success; and
4. Aboriginal learners are better prepared for the labour market.

Within these goals, the Framework identifies broad strategies. The Framework does not establish specific, quantifiable targets, aside from affirming the provincial government’s goal of increasing overall PSE attainment to 70%. Many of the goals are highly relevant for AIC, such as developing consistent data-collection approaches across institutions. The Framework

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indicates that data collection is a challenge at MTCU, just as it is for AIs. For MTCU, the challenges lie with identifying Aboriginal students (as not all students self-identify) and tracking them through the system (given restrictions on the use of personal data). There is an opportunity for collaboration here, as both MTCU and the AIC want to build capacity for the Aboriginal Institutes to show results.

The first phase of implementing the APSET Policy Framework primarily involved relationship-building. MTCU is now completing a progress report on the Framework and will release a Phase II Implementation Plan in the winter of 2014-15. The AIC will identify concrete strategies for inclusion in the Implementation Plan. The AIC will collaborate with MTCU to ensure that AIC's road to recognition is coordinated with MTCU's approach.

### **3.1.2 DIFFERENTIATION POLICY FRAMEWORK IN ONTARIO**

Ontario is currently pursuing increased differentiation of its PSE system. MTCU released the Differentiation Policy Framework in November 2013, through which the province will be taking a more active role in managing the system. One of the four goals of differentiation is to improve student access to quality PSE, including Aboriginal access. The Framework also encourages collaboration between institutions and focusing on areas of program strength.

Under the Framework, universities and colleges are required to develop Strategic Mandate Agreements ("SMAs"). The SMAs identify each institution's mandate, strengths and aspirations. Funding decisions will likely, in the future, be based upon how well institutions are fulfilling their specialized role within the system.

Regular reporting is required under the SMAs, which will be coordinated with existing reporting obligations under MYAAs. Improving Aboriginal access to PSE is a key goal of both the MYAAs and SMAs.

AIs can play an important role in assisting institutions with fulfilling their SMAs. There is potential for mainstream institutions to specialize in programs for Aboriginal learners, particularly given that six of Ontario's colleges serve more than 50% of Aboriginal learners in Ontario colleges. Mainstream institutions with an Aboriginal focus have incentive to enter into robust agreements with AIs. Strong partnerships will allow mainstream institutions to meet their SMO goals, which will improve their access to funding. Support is required to integrate mainstream-AI partnerships into the SMAs.

## **3.2 Current Status of Aboriginal Institutes**

Aboriginal Institutes in Ontario currently exist on the periphery of the mainstream system though they provide a viable cultural alternative for Aboriginal learners, many of whom see colleges and universities as alienating and isolating institutions. At neither level of government is there an official policy on the programs they offer or how they should be funded. They are not covered by provincial or federal legislation.

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Despite this, Ontario AIs have developed a wide variety of program offerings and have been highly successful in meeting the needs of Aboriginal learners and the communities they serve. Most AIs offer some form of transition programming, such as O.S.S.D. or A.C.E. programs, pre-college or pre-university courses. All AIs offer programs and courses in partnership with mainstream institutions. The AIs generally deliver the coursework and shoulders the main burden of operating costs (facilities, administration, program promotion, student recruitment, student services, etc.). Certificates, diplomas and degrees for these programs are granted through the mainstream institutions; for some the logos of the AI and mainstream partner are on the PSE credentials awarded to the graduates. Currently, the AIC represents six of the nine AIs in Ontario:

1. Anishinabek Educational Institute
2. First Nations Technical Institute
3. IOHAHI:IO Akwesasne Adult Education
4. Kenjgewin Teg Educational Institute
5. Oshki-Pimache-O-Win Education and Training Institute
6. Six Nations Polytechnic

The AIs have been enormously successful, in terms of their growth, student satisfaction, and graduation completion rates. The Aboriginal Institutes' continued success will not be possible without better funding, which is linked to official "recognition" from the Ontario government. A roadmap to recognition will be discussed in the final section of this Position Paper.

## **4. FUNDING FOR ABORIGINAL INSTITUTES IN ONTARIO**

### **4.1 Federal**

#### **4.1.1 HISTORY**

The federal government supports Aboriginal PSE primarily through funding individual status First Nation and Inuit students. Funding for individuals occurs through the Post-Secondary Student Support Program ("PSSSP") and the University and College Entrance Preparation Program ("UCEP"). On a lesser scale, the federal government funds institutions, including Aboriginal Institutions, through the Post-Secondary Partnerships Program ("PSPP"). The PSPP replaced the Indian Studies Support Program ("ISSP") on April 1, 2014. Given this recent change, a brief overview of the ISSP will be provided, followed by a review of the new PSPP.

ISSP funding was provided for the design and delivery of college and university level courses for First Nation and Inuit students. In 2010, the ISSP budget was approximately \$22 million, shared among mainstream and Aboriginal institutions across Canada. Funding was proposal-based, and could be partially applied to operational costs.

On March 27, 2013 the Ontario AIs were informed changes to the ISSP program would come into effect on April 1, 2013. AANDC centralized the funding approval process, so that decisions

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on ISSP funding would be made at the national, instead of the regional, level. Allowances for operational expenditures also changed, so that only 10% of funds could be used for administrative expenses directly associated with the funded program. For one of the Ontario AIs this meant a decline from over \$350,000 in operational funds to approximately \$63,000. This reduced amount would not be enough to cover the institute's rent (leaving aside the restriction that the funds go only towards program expenses). Other AIs have experienced these same detrimental declines in operational support.

Both the Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology and the House of Commons Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development criticized the ISSP program for failing to meet AIs' real financial needs. These Committees recognized the value of AIs and recommended that the federal government develop a funding system that meets the actual financial needs of Aboriginal Institutes.

Despite this recommendation (and many other valid concerns with ISSP funding), the federal government reduced operational support for AIs starting April 1, 2013 after giving one business day notice for the changes. AANDC went on to replace the ISSP with the PSPP effective April 1, 2014 without any consultation or notice to the AIC or any other Aboriginal organizations. AANDC also opened the new funding program without new investments to mainstream institutions that has increased the competition for PSPP funds.

### **4.1.2 POSTSECONDARY PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM FUNDING**

PSPP is now the primary federal funding program for institutions offering Aboriginal postsecondary education programs. As with the ISSP, PSPP funds are not intended as a source of operational funding and are primarily for program development and delivery. Up to 10% can go towards "administration costs directly related to the project". Funding is available to recognized PSE institutions, but AIs with formal partnership agreements with recognized institutions can also apply. Funding is available for the following activities:

- Delivering a program of study (e.g. instruction, tutorial, teacher's salary);
- Supporting existing UCEP courses;
- Converting existing courses to on-line delivery and distance education;
- Delivering an individual course; and
- Researching and developing new courses and programs.

Despite widespread criticism of the ISSP program, the federal government has essentially repackaged it as the PSPP. The federal government has gone against recommendations from Standing Committees of the House of Commons and Senate, that the ISSP be re-designed to provide funding only for AIs, and funding that meets their real financial needs. PSPP funding is intended for "recognized" provincial institutions, or institutions that are affiliated with them. The PSPP funds are administered nationally.

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The national allocation process is less sensitive to regional needs and dynamics between institutions. Ontario's AIs are competing against Aboriginal and mainstream institutions across the country for PSPP funds.

PSPP funds will continue to fall far short of meeting the real financial needs of AIs. The funds remain limited to program development and delivery. The federal government has further made it clear that PSPP funding is not intended to be a long-term source of funds. Proposals for PSPP funds must identify other funding sources and a "transition plan for self-sufficiency and sustainability setting out how and when the proposed program will migrate to the mainstream activities within the regular operations of the post-secondary institution." Multi-year funding is contingent on dates being provided for transition to self-sufficiency.

The PSPP funding approvals for most AIs in Ontario were reduced compared to prior years. These approvals also demonstrated an inconsistent evaluation process. A five year funding limit for each program not stipulated in the funding guidelines was retroactively applied to one AI. This AI was informed two weeks before classes were scheduled to begin that two programs with a total enrolment of 47 students were denied funding. A highly successful, well-established first-year university program, offered in partnership with six universities that had received federal funds for 21 years was deemed ineligible due to the retroactive application of the unwritten five year transition plan limitation. After a request to regional AANDC staff for reconsideration of the decision the funding was reinstated after the semester began. A second program, the only accredited post-secondary Cayuga Ogwehoweh Language Diploma program in Canada remains unfunded. Currently 22 full time students are enrolled in this program and the AI continues to fundraise to offer the Cayuga Language program. The AI was informed that AANDC expects it to become self-sufficient. The five year funding limit will be applied to another AI next year; they were informed this will be the last year that most of their programs (which all meet labour market needs) will be funded.

The AIs are facing an untenable situation. It is clear that even if an AI's funding is not affected this year, the AIs offering recurring programs will be impacted if AANDC's policy position is applied consistently. Several critical considerations about AANDC's requirement for migration to self-sustaining programs include:

1. Program offerings are based on community demands and labour market requirements;
2. The Aboriginal Institutes do not receive annual operating grants like mainstream postsecondary education institutions;
3. Any mainstream postsecondary education institution would not be financially sustainable from tuition revenues alone, and;
4. Unilateral limitation to Aboriginal and Treaty rights to education is unjust.

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## *A Roadmap to Recognition for Aboriginal Institutes in Ontario*

### **4.1.3 INDIRECT FUNDING**

The federal government provides indirect funding for AIs through transfer payments to the province, various proposal-based programs, and by providing financial support for individual students. Some of the indirect sources of federal funding are:

- The Canada Social Transfer covers PSE, along with social assistance and other social services. The 2014-2015 CST amount designated for Ontario is approximately \$4.8 billion.
- Employment and Social Development Canada provides funding to Aboriginal organizations for training and skills upgrading through the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (“ASETS”) and Skills and Partnership Fund (“SPF”). Organizations obtaining this funding could contract with institutes to supply training.
- Canada supports First Nation and Inuit students through PSSSP and UCEP, as well as providing scholarship support (e.g. through Indspire) and student loan support generally.

These funding sources are not sufficient, as none provide the operating and capital funds that the Aboriginal Institutes need.

### **4.2 Provincial**

From 1991-2009, the Ontario government provided funding through the Aboriginal Education and Training Strategy (“AETS”) to increase the number of Aboriginal students in PSE, improve cultural sensitivity, and increase participation of Aboriginal people in decisions affecting PSE. AETS funding was available indirectly for AIs through partner institutions, for the development and delivery of post-secondary programs. Most AETS funding, however, went to mainstream institutions. In 1996, a fixed ratio was introduced for AETS funding, with 53% going to colleges, 37% to universities, and 10% to AIs. Close to the end of AETS, the government significantly raised funding to AIs, from \$0.8 million in 2004-05 to \$3.8 million in 2008-09. Funding was also provided to AIs through special grants, such as the Access to Opportunities Strategy. Most of this funding was for program development and delivery, with some allocations for support services, such as counselling, career services, and so on.

Today, the Ontario government allocates an annual total of \$26.4 million to Aboriginal PSE, through the Postsecondary Education Fund for Aboriginal Learners, which is divided among Aboriginal and mainstream institutions as follows:

- \$5 million spread between all nine AIs in Ontario to offset the delivery of provincially-recognized PSE programs. Approximately 35% of this funding can go towards student services.
- \$18 million to colleges and universities to support specific Aboriginal programs and Aboriginal student services.
- \$1.5 million for Aboriginal bursaries at mainstream and Aboriginal institutions, with AIs receiving \$130,000 of this funding.

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- \$1.9 million for the Targeted Initiatives Fund, which is open to a wide range of stakeholders and distributed through a competitive proposal process.

The first two envelopes are called the Student Success Fund. At the beginning of the fiscal year, each AI is informed of the amount of funding they are eligible for (out of the total \$5 million allocation). The AIs then submit work plans to access this funding, with MTCU ensuring that the 35% limit for student services is not exceeded, and that the funding is going towards provincially-recognized programs. Beyond this limited MTCU oversight, any quality control measures are the responsibility of the mainstream institution that the AI has partnered with to offer provincially-recognized programs.

As discussed above, the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities continues to identify access for Aboriginal people to postsecondary education and training as a core priority.

## **5. FUNDING AND POLICY IN OTHER PROVINCES**

### **5.1 British Columbia**

British Columbia's mainstream system includes colleges, universities, and institutes. B.C. also has private institutions, some of which have been authorized to grant degrees, and private vocational schools. Of the three publicly-funded institutes, one is a "mainstream AI": the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology ("NVIT"). The other two institutes are the British Columbia Institute of Technology and the Justice Institute of British Columbia.

NVIT was initially established as a private institute by a group of First Nations in 1983. It became publicly-funded in 1995, following the release of the B.C. government's Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Policy Framework. This Framework allowed for the establishment of public Aboriginal post-secondary institutes. However, other AIs either have not been able to meet the Full-Time Equivalent requirement for public funding, or are committed to retaining jurisdiction over themselves. NVIT has an Aboriginal-controlled board, but the board is appointed by the provincial government. For 2013-14, NVIT received approximately \$7.5 million in operating grants from the B.C. government.

Aside from NVIT, B.C. has approximately forty AIs, most of which are very small (fewer than 50 enrolled). Two of these institutes receive some base funding. The Native Education College receives \$1.95 million in operating funds from the Ministry of Advanced Education and \$280,000 is provided to the Nisga'a Lisims Government for post-secondary education, which funds the Wilp Wilxo'oskwhl Nisga'a. The remaining AIs do not receive operating funds. Instead, the current policy emphasis in British Columbia is on strengthening partnerships between the AIs and mainstream institutions.

There are two projects in British Columbia that the AIC will consider: the IAHLA Data Collection Project and the Post-Secondary Education Partnership Agreement Toolkit, both of which are discussed below.

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### **5.1.1 ABORIGINAL PSE POLICY DIRECTION**

In 2005, a Memorandum of Understanding on Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training was signed between the First Nations Summit, AFN, Métis Nation British Columbia, United Native Nations Society, Indigenous Adult & Higher Learning Association (“IAHLA”), the Ministry of Advanced Education, AANDC, BC Colleges, British Columbia Association of Institutes and Universities, and the Research Universities’ Council of British Columbia. This MoU commits the partners to working together to improve participation and success for Aboriginal learners in PSE. The MoU set the stage for a collaborative relationship between governments and Aboriginal organizations.

In 2012, British Columbia launched its Policy Framework & Action Plan (“2020 Vision”). Prior to the release of 2020 Vision, the First Nations Education Steering Committee (a First Nation controlled body) recommended that the province create legislation to integrate institutes into the PSE system and provide improved funding. The British Columbia government did not follow this recommendation, but instead committed to funding AIs through stronger partnerships.

The 2020 Vision will eventually require all mainstream PSE institutions to develop Aboriginal Service Plans (“ASPs”). Through the ASPs, institutions must identify specific strategies that will be implemented to meet the ASP goals of increased access/success for Aboriginal learners, improved partnerships in Aboriginal PSE, and improved receptivity/relevance of PSE for Aboriginal learners. They must report on partnerships with AIs, Aboriginal communities, and other Aboriginal organizations. B.C. will provide funding for the development and implementation of ASPs, though institutions are expected to support the programs and services developed under their ASP from their base budget. The ASP funding is intended to enhance existing operating funds. Given that partnerships are a mandatory part of ASP reporting, and that funding is available to improve partnerships, AIs should have strong leverage to negotiate robust agreements with mainstream institutions in B.C.

Another goal of 2020 Vision is support for community-based delivery of programs. This goal specifically includes a commitment to fund partnerships between public PSE institutions and Aboriginal communities and institutes. To this end, B.C. launched the Aboriginal Community-Based Delivery Partnerships Program in 2012. The program receives some funding from AANDC and is also funded through the Canada-British Columbia Labour Market Agreement. The fund is proposal-based and does not provide operational funding.

As with Ontario, B.C. is working towards improving quality assurance in the PSE sector. B.C. is considering how AIs might be integrated with its Quality Assurance Framework (“QAF”). B.C. has set a goal of developing a harmonized QAF, so that institutions aren’t reporting to different bodies using different measures and frameworks. The revised QAF would establish maturity levels for institutions, with more mature institutions having less onerous reporting obligations.

British Columbia is also exploring how to track Aboriginal learners through the system, and intends to develop an “Aboriginal Institutes Identifier”. This identifying number would be

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coordinated with the “Personal Education Number” given to each student entering the public system. Ultimately, B.C. will be able to track pathways that Aboriginal learners take.

In sum, British Columbia’s main policy is to support improved collaboration between Aboriginal Institutes and mainstream institutions, rather than funding Aboriginal Institutes directly. British Columbia is accomplishing this through several strategies outlined in 2020 Vision, including requiring ASPs for all mainstream institutions, directly funding partnerships on a project basis, integrating quality control for AIs with the provincial system, and improving data collection on learners attending AIs.

### **5.1.2 INDIGENOUS ADULT AND HIGHER LEARNING ASSOCIATION (IAHLA) DATA COLLECTION PROJECT**

The IAHLA is the equivalent of the AIC in British Columbia, representing 40 member institutes. It was formed in 2003 with a similar mandate as the AIC, including promoting the need for adequate core funding and gaining recognition and accreditation for institute programs and courses.

Through the Data Collection Project, the IAHLA has been collecting data from member institutes since 2006 on various markers. Data is collected through surveys sent to institute staff and learners. For the 2012-13 report, 21 institutions responded. The annual reports provide data on enrolment levels, programs offered, instructor qualifications, funding sources and needs, learner satisfaction, goals upon graduation, and other key figures.

The data produced through the Project is used in IAHLA’s lobbying efforts on behalf of its members. The institutes also use the data for strategic planning and their own reporting obligations. Another benefit is that IAHLA appears to have a long-standing relationship with a consulting firm, which now has deep knowledge of the sector, and can prepare reports efficiently. For example, in 2010, Juniper Consulting produced a report on the costs and benefits of AIs in British Columbia, relying substantially on data from the Project. The report compares the costs of AIs with mainstream institutions and quantifies the benefits they provide to the PSE system. The B.C. government referenced this report in its most recent framework plan for Aboriginal PSE (2020 Vision, discussed above).

The Data Collection Project is a valuable resource. It provides current, quantifiable data on the success of AIs in British Columbia. It also provides year-to-year comparisons of growth, funding levels, graduation rates, and so on. It is possible that the Project has set the stage for better integration of AIs with the mainstream system, as B.C. is now developing a more harmonized approach to quality assurance and data collection on learners attending AIs.

Ontario currently lacks a centralized system for collecting data on Aboriginal Institutes. Implementing a data collection system would require annual funding for data analysis and report production, but much of the work could be completed using existing (albeit taxed) administrative resources (the distribution and collection of surveys, and publication of results). The AIC began work on data collection in 2009, but funding is now needed to move this project forward.

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Reliable, long-term data is essential for Aboriginal Institutes to become recognized as key components of Ontario's PSE system.

### **5.1.3 POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT TOOLKIT**

2020 Vision commits to sharing the Post-Secondary Education Partnership Agreement Toolkit developed by the IAHLA, the University of Victoria and NVIT with parties on both sides. The Toolkit defines different types of partnerships that may be entered into, provides model agreements, and establishes best practices for the areas that agreements should cover. The Toolkit discusses the benefit that AIs offer to public PSE institutions, by increasing the number of Full Time Equivalents, which impacts the public institution's funding. Sharing of FTE funding might therefore be reasonably negotiated.

The language on sharing operational funding between institutes and their mainstream partners is not very strong in the Toolkit, but the concept of a Toolkit could nonetheless serve as a model for Ontario AIs. The AIC has initiated a review of member institutes' partnership agreements. The review has highlighted that partnership agreements currently take a number of forms, and identifies some of the "best practices" in existing agreements. This review could serve as the basis for developing a guidance document for partnership agreements, to be shared with mainstream institutions and to inform Aboriginal Institutes when negotiating new agreements. Such a document, particularly if endorsed by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, could result in improved funding through more robust partnership agreements.

## **5.2 Saskatchewan**

Saskatchewan's publicly-funded PSE institutions include the following:

- Universities – Saskatchewan has two universities, the University of Regina and the University of Saskatchewan.
- Affiliated colleges – affiliated with universities to offer coursework leading towards degrees, but are financially and legally independent.
- Federated colleges – academically integrated with a university, but legally and financially independent.
- Polytechnical college – the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology ("SIAST").
- Regional colleges – offer university or SIAST courses at the local level.
- Mainstream AIs – FNUniv, the Gabriel Dumont Institute ("GDI"), the Northern Teacher Education Program/Northern Professional Access College ("NORTEP/NORPAC"), and the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies ("SIIT").

Saskatchewan also has private vocational schools.

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All AIs in Saskatchewan are “mainstream AIs”, meaning they are all part of the recognized system. They all receive operational funding from the province and operate either through affiliation/federation agreements or stand-alone legislation, as is the case with SIIT. A brief overview of each institution follows.

FNUniv is the only Aboriginal university in Canada and operates as a federated college of the University of Regina. The FNUniv began in 1976 as the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College. FNUniv is academically integrated with the University of Regina, with degrees awarded, and all programs accredited by, the U of R.

FNUniv experienced significant governance issues beginning in 2005, when the politicization of the Board of Governors first came to light. From 2005-2010, approximately half of the staff and over one third of the academic staff either resigned or were dismissed. Student enrolment fell by almost 40%. In 2010, the federal and provincial governments froze funding until the governance issues were resolved. Both governments restored funding that year, although funds would flow through the U of R instead of going directly to FNUniv.

Today, FNUniv is the only mainstream AI or AI in Canada to receive operational funding from the federal government. In the 2012-2013 budget year, FNUniv received \$7 million in ISSP funding and approximately \$3 million from the province. These figures are similar to 2005 levels, but proportionately, government grants count for less of FNUniv’s total revenue. The funding levels are stable for 2014-2015 as the Terms and Conditions for the 2014-2015 PSPP states that the FNUniv can receive no more than \$7 million under the PSPP. The province will provide \$3,754,000 in operating funds in the 2014-15 budget year.

GDI is the province’s Métis education institute. It includes several organizations: the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (offered in affiliation with the two universities), Gabriel Dumont College (affiliated with both universities to offer coursework towards certain degrees), and the Dumont Technical Institute (federated with the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology). GDI and SUNTEP were both established in 1980, with the other two components being added in the early 1990s. GDI also offers employment and skills training. As seen in the chart below, GDI and its components receive separate operating grants (with the exception of GDC).

NORTEP/NORPAC is affiliated with both the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Regina. All of its courses are accredited university courses. NORTEP was introduced in 1976. It offers a four-year Bachelor of Education program to primarily Aboriginal learners in the north. NORPAC was established in 1989. It offers three years of arts and science courses, which students can then use to complete degrees at recognized post-secondary institutions.

Lastly, SIIT was established in 1976 as a community college. In Saskatchewan, community colleges were later renamed regional colleges. They are associated with either SIAST or the universities to offer accredited courses locally. In 2000, SIIT became an independent diploma and certificate-granting institution under the *Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies Act*.

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Budget letters detailing the amount of funding provided to each PSE institution are available online. Funding is provided through the Ministry of Advanced Education and the Ministry of the Economy. As seen below, Saskatchewan contributes substantial core funding to its mainstream AIs:

<b>First Nations University</b>	Operating grant	\$3,754,500
<b>Gabriel Dumont Institute</b>	GDI operating grant	\$2,383,800
	DTI operating grant	\$1,979,000
	SUNTEP operating grant	\$3,717,800
	DTI adult basic education grant	\$2,108,662
	DTI skills training grant	\$812,255
	Scholarship funding	\$55,000
	TOTAL	\$11,056,517
<b>NORTEP/NORPAC</b>	Operating grant	\$3,374,300
<b>Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies</b>	Base operating grant	\$1,411,000
	Adult Basic Education grants	\$2,502,112
	Skills training grants	\$1,918,178
	Scholarship funding	\$137,000
	TOTAL	\$5,985,280

Funding for AIs in Saskatchewan is far greater than in Ontario. Just one Saskatchewan AI (SIIT) will receive over \$5 million from the provincial government in 2014-15. In Ontario, the provincial government will allocate \$5 million across all nine AIs.

### **5.2.1 ABORIGINAL PSE POLICY DIRECTION**

Saskatchewan's policy focus has been on integration of Aboriginal institutions with the mainstream system. Because Saskatchewan AIs are integrated with the mainstream system, they receive annual operating grants from the province.

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Saskatchewan has also undertaken some initiatives to improve Aboriginal PSE. The province has a long-standing Aboriginal education advisory committee that includes representation from mainstream AIs, Aboriginal teacher training programs, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, an elder, along with mainstream teacher education programs and school boards. The committee has stated that its focus is on children, rather than jurisdiction.

For another example, a joint task force was established in 2011 between the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations and the government to work on improving education and employment outcomes for Aboriginal people in Saskatchewan. The task force recognized the right of First Nations and Métis communities to educate their children, and also acknowledged that jurisdictional disputes over who should pay for Aboriginal education are not helpful or useful. The task force recommended that the government work with Aboriginal institutions “to expand their capacity to deliver programming to meet the needs of the First Nations and Métis communities”.

A full comparison of the Saskatchewan and Ontario systems has not been completed. On a preliminary basis though, there are several reasons why the funding situation differs in Saskatchewan. First, and primarily, AIs are all part of the mainstream system in Saskatchewan. Second, Aboriginal people constitute a higher proportion of Saskatchewan’s population than in Ontario. Third, there are fewer institutions, and they are generally larger than in Ontario. Fourth, the Saskatchewan institutes were mostly established between 1976-1980. While the first AI in Ontario was established in 1985, most AIs in Ontario are much newer.

Another factor, though, may be a difference in political attitudes. Instead of blaming the federal government for providing insufficient funding, Saskatchewan may have simply accepted that it is in the province’s best interests to ensure that all Aboriginal students have access to quality, culturally-appropriate education from elementary to post-secondary school.

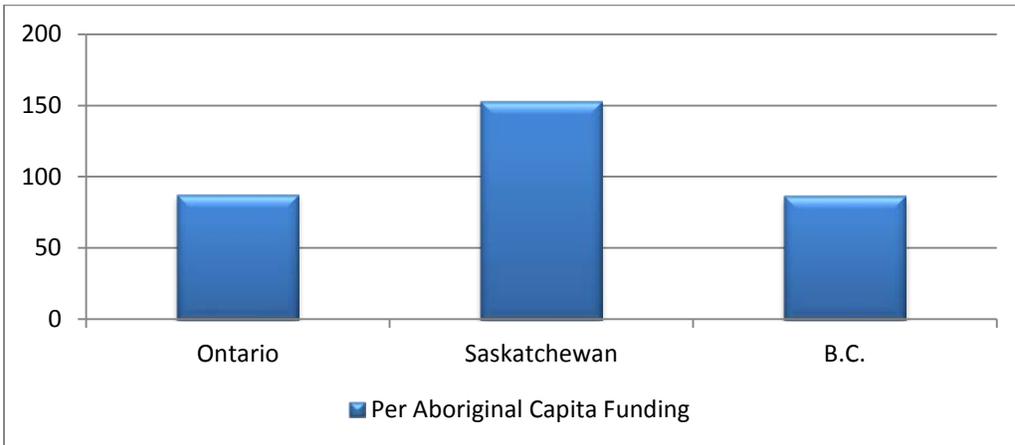
### **5.3 Funding and Policy Comparisons: Ontario, British Columbia and Saskatchewan**

British Columbia and Saskatchewan provide ideal case studies to contrast with Ontario. They represent two pathways that the AIC could follow for recognition. In B.C., most AIs are not part of the mainstream system and do not receive operating funds. However, the IAHLA in B.C. is pushing for legislation specific to AIs and for operational funding, just as AIC is doing in the Ontario context. IAHLA appears to be taking an incremental approach to recognition, and has focused on projects that will improve integration of AIs with the mainstream system (e.g. facilitating better partnerships through the Toolkit, coordinating data collection and quality assurance with the province). In Saskatchewan, on the other hand, AIs have achieved recognition by joining the mainstream system. The Saskatchewan mainstream AIs either operate through affiliation with a mainstream college or university or, in the case of SIIT, as an independent college.

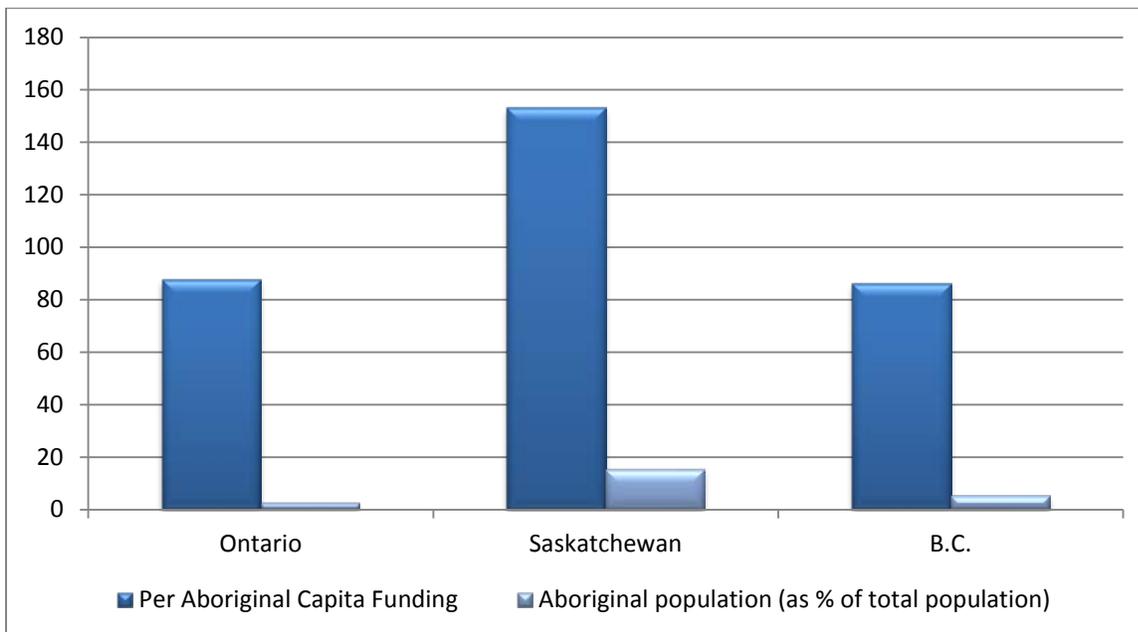
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Funding for Aboriginal PSE is highest in Saskatchewan, when looked at on a “per Aboriginal capita” basis:<sup>1</sup>



Saskatchewan also has the highest proportion of Aboriginal people, compared to its total population. Over 15% of the population in Saskatchewan is Aboriginal, compared to 2.4% in Ontario and 5.4% in B.C. When funding levels for Aboriginal PSE are compared to the proportion of population that is Aboriginal, Ontario’s investments compare more favourably to B.C. and Saskatchewan:



<sup>1</sup> Funding levels are for the 2014-2015 fiscal year. Population statistics are from the 2011 National Household Survey.

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While overall funding levels between the provinces might be explained by the relative proportion of Aboriginal population, the differences become stark when the distribution of funding is compared. Ontario provides substantially less funding directly to AIs, in comparison with British Columbia and Saskatchewan. The proportion of funding that flows directly to AIs is proportionate to the number of mainstream AIs in each province. In Saskatchewan, 100% of the AIs are “mainstream” and 100% of the funding that the Ministry of Advanced Education provides for Aboriginal PSE goes directly to the institutions. In Ontario, where no AIs receive operational funding, only 19% of the Aboriginal PSE funding flows directly to AIs.

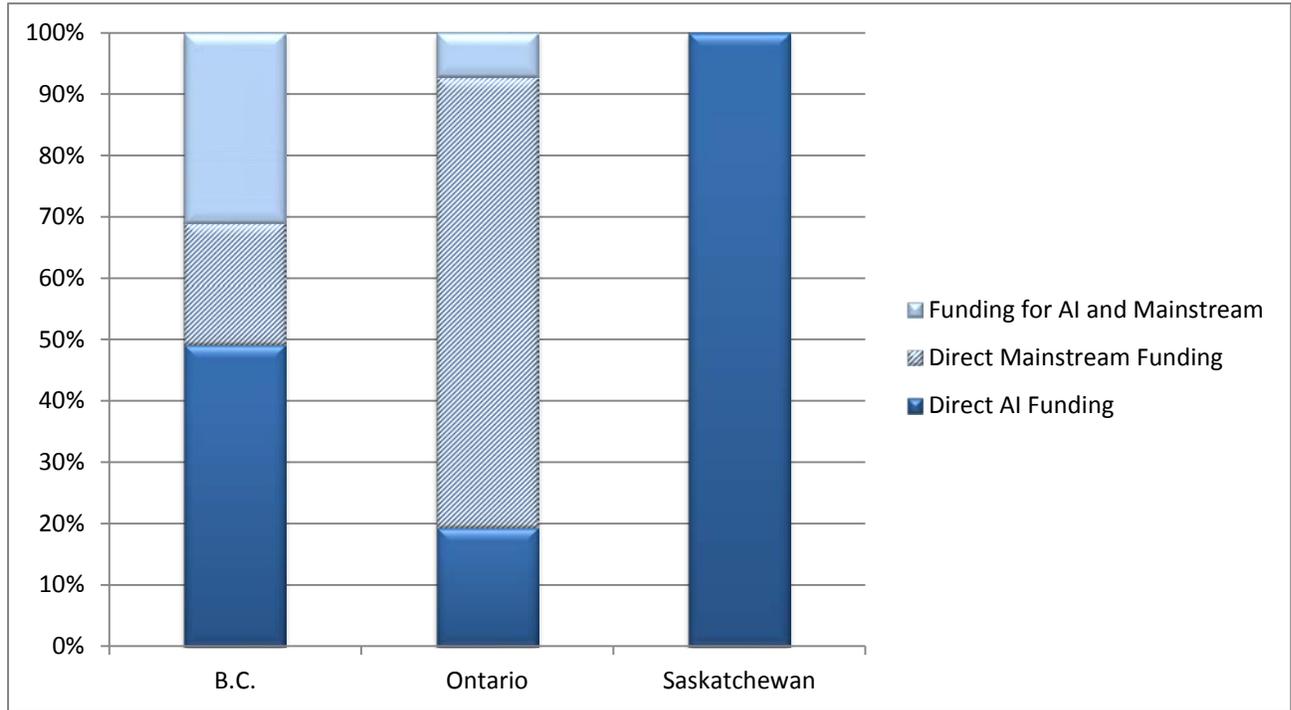
<b>Province</b>	<b>Program</b>	<b>Amount</b>
<b>British Columbia</b>	NVIT, Wilp Wilxo’oskwhl Nisga’a, NEC	\$9,862,142
	Community Based Delivery Partnerships Program (available to AIs and others)	\$4,400,000
	Aboriginal Training & Employment Program (available to AIs and others)	\$1,800,000
	Aboriginal Service Plan funding (mainstream institutions only)	\$4,000,000
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$20,062,142</b>
<b>Ontario</b>	Student Success Fund (AIs only)	\$5,000,000
	Student Success Fund (mainstream institutions only)	\$18,000,000
	Aboriginal bursaries (AIs only)	\$130,000
	Aboriginal bursaries (mainstream institutions only)	\$1,370,000
	Targeted Initiatives Fund (available to AIs and others)	1,900,000
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$26,400,000</b>
<b>Saskatchewan</b>	Mainstream AIs (includes operating, scholarship and bursary funding)	\$24,170,597

The following chart shows the proportion of provincial funding that flows directly to AIs and mainstream AIs in each province, compared with funds reserved only for Aboriginal PSE at mainstream institutions and funds available to both AIs and mainstream institutions. While

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overall funding levels in Ontario are comparable to British Columbia, Ontario provides far less funding directly for AIs than the other provinces. Most funding for Aboriginal PSE in Ontario is available only to mainstream institutions.



## 6. NEXT STEPS

The Aboriginal Institutes in Ontario are at a crossroads. Over the past decade, they have seen rapid growth, yet they will not be able to continue fulfilling their valuable role in Ontario’s PSE system without secure funding. The strategic mandates of the AIC members are aligned with broader PSE objectives provincially and nationally.

Ontario AI’s will be in the world spotlight in the next three years with the hosting of the World Indigenous Peoples Conference in Education (WIPCE) and the World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium (WINHEC) in Ontario.

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The AIC acknowledges it will be difficult at this time to secure substantial *new* funding commitments from either level of government. The federal government has constrained its funding of Aboriginal PSE, with the replacement of the ISSP with the PSPP. The Ontario government has indicated that increases to PSE funding are not likely in the near future. Mainstream institutions in Ontario will be expected to do more with less and are under increased pressure to justify their funding requirements under Ontario's Differentiation Policy Framework.

Under these fiscal conditions, a long-term strategy for the AIC, with short-term goals to cover the funding gap will be taken.

### **6.1 Long-Term Goals**

The ultimate goal of the roadmap is *recognition*, which can be divided into three long-term goals in the next 7-10 years:

1. Member institutes achieve *recognition* through annualized, secure sources of funding;
2. Member institutes achieve *recognition* from Aboriginal people, employers, governments and the public as integral components of Ontario's PSE system; and
3. Member institutes achieve *recognition* through stakeholder engagement in policy and value added PSE program development, offering recognized credentials

*Funding is the immediate priority out of these three goals.*

There are two potential pathways to recognition for the AIC to consider. First, recognition could be achieved by member institutes joining the mainstream system, which is the pathway Saskatchewan AIs have taken. The AIC explored this path with MTCU, and was told that MTCU would not create more than one Aboriginal college. Following this advice, the AIC committed to developing an Aboriginal College in Ontario, which the member AIs could then affiliate with. Further, MTCU does not anticipate that any AIs could achieve university status directly, but would need to first become colleges. There are many examples to draw from institutions that have proceeded incrementally through the mainstream system. Algoma University began as an affiliated college with Laurentian. SIIT in Saskatchewan operated as a regional college for almost 25 years before becoming independent. NVIT was a private institution until it had grown sufficiently to qualify for public funding.

Alternatively, the AIC could lobby for a "separate but equal" status for AIs within the public system. By taking this route, AIs might retain more independence from provincial oversight, but they would still be subject to higher reporting and quality assurance obligations. The AIC would need to collaborate with MTCU in fleshing out the details of this status. As a first step, the AIC will determine whether there is political support for this route by MTCU. New Zealand is one example of a jurisdiction that has given AIs separate but equal status.

Finally, the AIC will continue its parallel advocacy role at the national level to get the federal government to fulfil its fiduciary and treaty obligations to fund Aboriginal PSE.

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### 6.2 Short-Term Strategies

While working towards *recognition*, either along the mainstream or alternative pathway, the following short-term strategies will be pursued by the AIC. These strategies will help build the Ontario AIs' capacity to attain and prove results, furthering their case for recognition.

First, AIs will advocate for acknowledgement within the Ontario's Differentiation Framework Policy and Strategic Management Agreement approach and act to strengthen relationships with colleges and universities.

The AIs are key stakeholders with mainstream institutions that are focussing on Aboriginal access and programming. Accordingly, the AIs will work to strengthen and balance partner relationships that are acknowledged and integrated into our partners' mandatory SMAs. The provincial government will be asked to support this effort by providing funding for improved and balanced partnerships between mainstream institutions and the AIs. The Aboriginal Service Plans in British Columbia provide a practical example of how mainstream institutions' reporting obligations can more directly encourage partnerships with AIs.

The objective of collaborative and enhanced relationships with colleges and universities in Ontario will be for them to see the advantages and value-added results of partnerships with AIs, and view AIs as assets and complementary rather than competitors. Some of the key advantages that Aboriginal Institutes offer to mainstream institutions are:

1. access to the growing demographic of Aboriginal students transitioning to PSE from AIs;
2. innovative, inherently cultural, community-based delivery of post-secondary education programs;
3. bridges and strong connections to Aboriginal communities;
4. access to trusted networks of traditional knowledge in integrating cultural standards in PSE and training programs;
5. access to a demographic that isn't otherwise pursuing PSE;
6. increased range of program and course offerings that include PSE and training programs;
7. knowledge sharing on developing critical and cultural student supports and services; and
8. potential funding access for shared programming opportunities.

Second, improved partnerships between Aboriginal Institutes and mainstream institutions are essential to supporting the successful implementation of the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities' Aboriginal Post Secondary Education and Training Policy Framework. The development of a guidance document (e.g. model partnership agreements or a "toolkit") will be explored with MTCU. The guidance document could improve funding indirectly. While the AIs have valid concerns about focusing on partnerships with other institutions (related to institutional independence, power dynamics, and uneven benefits of these arrangements), this is a reality of the current system. The AIC commits to working together with MTCU to promote "best practices" in partnerships, while parallel work progresses towards the goal of *recognition*.

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Third, the Aboriginal Education Office is currently interested in developing a policy paper on Ontario AIs. If this project moves forward, it must be integrated with the AIC's roadmap to recognition. The AIC can help fill some knowledge gaps in the policy paper. In particular, it could provide information on how Aboriginal Institutes in other jurisdictions have been supported and inform how Ontario AIs can be included as an integral part of the Ontario's public system. The AIC will continue working with the AEO to ensure that any strategies chosen are considered within the AIC's roadmap to recognition and the current and any new Policy Framework.

The Aboriginal Institutes will continue to support and expand their role in building better understanding of Aboriginal culture and history for Ontario using new and existing education networks and affiliations (i.e. Additional Qualification (AQ) designation by Ontario College of Teachers, Professional Development service providers, etc.). The opportunity for the AIC to inform policy through dialogue, discussion and focused research at various levels is a current untapped potential.

Lastly, the member Institutes will develop the capacity to show results. The British Columbia model of annual, centralized data collection will be explored. Grant funding will be required to implement this project. Solid consistent data that demonstrates the success of our Aboriginal Institutes will facilitate our *recognition* goals. The AIC initiated work on a data collection system in the past, and will push forward on this project again. At a time of increased competition for Aboriginal PSE dollars, the AIC will demonstrate to government funders the return on investing in Aboriginal Institutes.

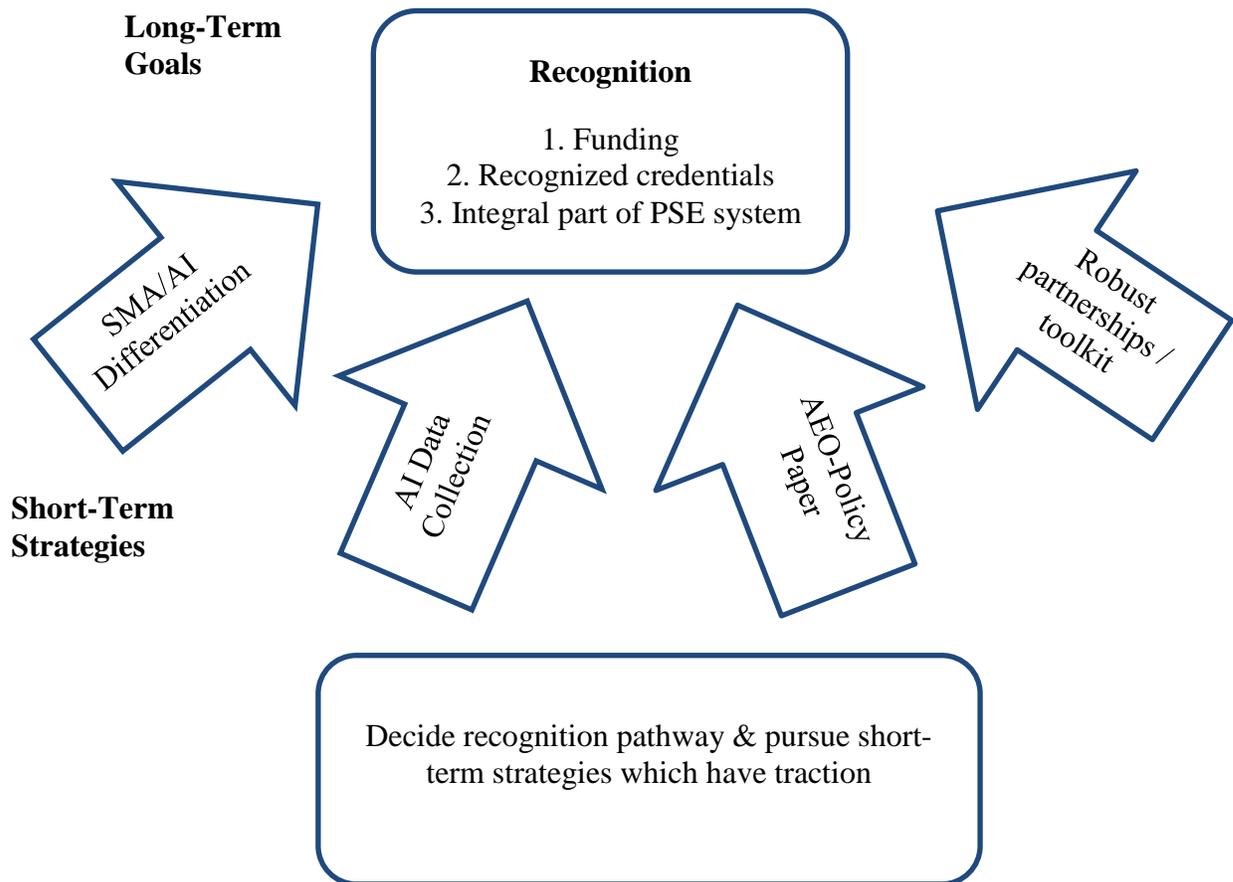
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## 6.3 The Roadmap to Recognition

The Ontario government has recognized the need for a coherent policy on Aboriginal Institutes for at least a decade, but progress is currently stalled. A new roadmap to recognition will be developed with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. This paper lays the groundwork for that task. A visual representation of the roadmap discussed in this paper is provided below.

In sum, the AIC has three long-term goals for its members – funding, credential-granting status, and status within the PSE system – which, taken together, amount to “recognition”. To reach these goals, two pathways are available to the AIC: entering the mainstream system or establishing an alternative way, unique to AIs. As the AIC works towards the long-term goal of recognition along either of these pathways, the Aboriginal Institutes will pursue short-term strategies to build capacity, improve their case for recognition, and define the roadmap. These strategies will include: developing model partnerships and negotiating more robust partnership agreements, lobbying for greater integration with Ontario’s Differentiation Framework, working with the AEO on a policy paper, and building data collection capacity.



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### Appendix A:

#### Recent Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education Initiatives in Ontario and Canada

2004	Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (“CMEC”) makes Aboriginal education a priority.
2005	Rae Report, “Ontario: A Leader in Learning” is released. Recommends that the Ontario government provide new funding to AIs and work with them to improve credit recognition, accountability and results measurement.
2005	Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (“HEQCO”) is established. Mandate includes researching and providing advice to the Minister on all aspects of PSE, including access to the system, and collaboration between institutions, both key issues for AIs.
2005	Ontario releases “Ontario’s New Approach to Aboriginal Affairs”, making Aboriginal education a key priority, with goal of closing the education gap by 2016.
2005	Ontario government introduces “Reaching Higher: The McGuinty Government Plan for Postsecondary Education”, which includes an investment of \$6.2 billion in PSE by 2009-10, and the requirement for institutions to sign Multi-Year Accountability Agreements, through which they secure multi-year funding arrangements, and are required to report on access.
2006	“Review of the Indian Studies Support Program Component of the PSE Program” completed by Katenies and Chignecto consultants for the Joint AFN-INAC PSE Working Group. Recommends overhaul of ISSP program, including limiting ISSP funds to AIs.
2007	Education Policy Institute provides report on Ontario’s Aboriginal Education and Training Strategy to the MTCU. This report was commissioned following the release of the Rae Report, to review the effectiveness of AETS funding.
2007	The House of Commons Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development releases report, “No Higher Priority: Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education in Canada”. Recommends that the government take immediate steps to evaluate the adequacy of the federal funding program for Aboriginal PSE institutions (ISSP) and “develop a funding methodology for the ISSP that is based on the actual funding needs of Aboriginal and mainstream post-secondary institutions”.
2008	CMEC releases declaration of priorities (“Learn Canada 2020”) shared by Canada’s education ministers, including eliminating the education gap and enhancing the long-term capacity of the PSE system to meet the needs of all Canadians seeking PSE opportunities.

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2009	CMEC holds summit on Aboriginal education.
2009	Canadian Council on Learning releases report, “State of Aboriginal Learning in Canada”.
2009-10	MTCU develops new, multi-year approach for funding Aboriginal PSE
2010	Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology releases report, “Opening the Door: Reducing Barriers to Post-Secondary Education in Canada”. Recommends that the government evaluate its funding for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal post-secondary institutions and determine whether the ISSP is adequate to meeting these institutions’ real funding needs.
2010	Assembly of First Nations releases discussion paper, “Taking Action for First Nations Post-Secondary Education: Access, Opportunity and Outcomes”, calling for sufficient core, capital and per-student funding for AIs
2010	Report prepared for HEQCO by R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd.: “Promising Practices: Increasing and Supporting Participation for Aboriginal Students in Ontario”. Highlights the need to measure impacts of Aboriginal programs and services at mainstream institutions and recognizes important role AIs have played in developing Aboriginal-specific curricula and establishing best practices for Aboriginal support services and programming.
2010	Association of Canadian Community Colleges releases Environmental Scan on Aboriginal learners, programs, services, and partnerships in colleges across Canada.
2011	MTCU releases the “Aboriginal Postsecondary Education and Training Policy Framework”. Commits to ensuring that every qualified person who wants to pursue PSE finds a place within Ontario’s system, and to support the delivery of programs and student supports through AIs. Commits to multi-year funding of programs and services for Aboriginal learners at recognized institutions, but not to funding AIs directly.

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## Appendix B:

### Contact Us! More About Members of the Aboriginal Institutes Consortium

To contact us about this position paper, contact:

**Rosie S. Mosquito, Aboriginal Institutes Consortium – Chairperson**

- **Tel: 807.626.1880**
- **Email: rmosquito@oshki.ca**

Additional information about the Aboriginal Institutes Consortium can be found at [www.aboriginalinstitute.com](http://www.aboriginalinstitute.com)

Additional information about current active members and performance results of its members in Ontario advancing this *recognition* initiative can be found at:

- Anishinabek Educational Institute - [www.aeipostsecondary.ca](http://www.aeipostsecondary.ca)
  - First Nations Technical Institute – [www.fnti.net](http://www.fnti.net)
  - IOHAHI:IO Akwesasne Adult Education [www.akwesasne.ca](http://www.akwesasne.ca)
  - Kenjgewin Teg Educational Institute – [www.ktei.net](http://www.ktei.net)
  - Oshki-Pimache-O-Win - [www.oshki.ca](http://www.oshki.ca)
  - Six Nations Polytechnic – [www.snpolytechnic.com](http://www.snpolytechnic.com)
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<u>Year Established</u>	<u>Aboriginal Institute in Ontario</u>	<u>Post Secondary Programs Offered</u>	<u>Estimated Number of Learners in 2013 - 2014 (FT &amp;PT)</u>	<u>Graduates</u>	<u>College and University Partners (Varies Year to Year)</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>MYAAPP Funding</u>	<u>AANDC Funding - ISSP</u>
1994	Kenjgewin Teg Educational Institute	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Aboriginal Teacher Education Program</li> <li>*Personal Support Worker</li> <li>*Bachelor of Social Work</li> <li>*Culinary Management</li> <li>*Early Childhood Education</li> </ul>	150	63	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Queen's University</li> <li>Canadore College</li> <li>Laurentian University</li> <li>Sault College</li> <li>Cambrian College</li> </ul>	M'Chigeeng, Manitoulin Island	\$ 290,000	\$ 245,000
1985	Six Nations Polytechnic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Practical Nursing with Aboriginal Communities</li> <li>*Social Service Worker Program</li> <li>*Native University Program</li> <li>*Office Administration</li> </ul>	256	105	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brock University</li> <li>McMaster University</li> <li>Mohawk College</li> <li>Queen's University</li> <li>Wilfred Laurier University</li> </ul>	Oshweken, ON	\$ 383,240	\$ 419,778
1993	Anishinabek Educational Institute	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Native Paramedic</li> <li>*Personal Support Worker</li> <li>*Business</li> <li>*Autism and Behavioural Science</li> <li>*First Nation Forestry</li> </ul>	370	58	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fleming College</li> <li>Sault College</li> <li>St. Clair College</li> <li>Canadore College</li> <li>Ryerson University</li> </ul>	North Bay, ON	\$ 398,000	\$ 884,150

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<u>Year Established</u>	<u>Aboriginal Institute in Ontario</u>	<u>Post Secondary Programs Offered</u>	<u>Estimated Number of Learners in 2013 - 2014 (FT &amp;PT)</u>	<u>Graduates</u>	<u>College and University Partners (Varies Year to Year)</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>MYAAPP Funding</u>	<u>AANDC Funding - ISSP</u>
1985	First Nation Technical Institute	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Public Administration and Governance</li> <li>*Aviation</li> <li>*Office Administration</li> <li>*Indigenous Community Health Approaches</li> <li>*Master of Social Work</li> </ul>	289	85	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ryerson University</li> <li>St. Lawrence College</li> <li>Canadore College</li> <li>Wilfred Laurier University</li> <li>Queen's University</li> </ul>	Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory, ON	\$ 1,203,284	\$ 615,875
2001	Oshki-Pimacheo-win Education & Training Institute	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Business Fundamentals</li> <li>*Personal Support Worker</li> <li>*Aboriginal Early Childhood Education</li> <li>*Aboriginal Financial &amp; Economic Planning</li> <li>*Social Services Worker - Native Specialization</li> <li>*Chemical Addictions Worker</li> </ul>	86	17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Confederation College</li> <li>Cambrian College</li> <li>Lakehead University</li> <li>Northern Ontario School of Medicine</li> <li>Sault College</li> <li>Algoma University</li> <li>Nicola Valley Institute of Technology</li> </ul>	Thunder Bay, ON	\$ 365,072	\$ 631,381
1987	Iohahi:io Akwesasne Adult Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Nursing Program</li> <li>*Teachers Assistant</li> <li>*Police Foundations</li> <li>*Bachelors of Social Work</li> </ul>	80	25	St. Lawrence College	Cornwall, ON	\$TBC	\$ 169,000

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### Appendix C:

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