REPORT OF THE ONECA POST-SECONDARY GATHERING

November 19-20, 2019

Abstract

This Gathering was convened by the Ontario Native Education Counselling Association in response to members as a venue to discuss issues, address challenges and explore opportunities to advance post-secondary support for First Nations.

Gaya'dowhs LuAnn Hill-MacDonald

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks to the Planning Committee for their vision, dedication and hard work in taking action to plan and implement this Post-Secondary Education Gathering - Anne Marie Jones, Garden River; Christine Sayers, Batchewana; Rona George, Wikwemikong; and Yolanda Twance, Lakehead University.

Many thanks to the Ontario Native Education Counselling Association for their financial and administrative support. Without their support, this event would not have been possible.

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ABOUT ONECA

Vision - ONECA is an organization of Education Counselling Professionals in Ontario which value and utilize its' collective knowledge, wisdom and respect to strengthen the spirit of self for the well-being of others. To be as the creator meant us to be - to "Soar Like Eagles".

The Ontario Native Education Counsellors Association (ONECA), incorporated in 1985, is committed to the capacity development of First Nations post-secondary education in Ontario through the creation of programs, services and a wide variety of supports. ONECA supports education counsellors, students, public education and resource development.

PART A – PROGRAM AGENDA

November 19, 2019

7:30-8:30	Breakfast and Registration
8:30-9:00	Opening – Greetings from ONECA
9:00-9:30	Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) – Post-Secondary Updates – Bernadette Wabie
9:30-10:00	Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) – Katherine Kasch
10:00-10:15	Nutrition Break
10:15-12:00	Mental Health Policies – Anne Seymour
12:00-1:00	Lunch
1:00-2:15	Data Base Presentation – Justin Moore, Dadavan
2:15-2:30	Using Social Media to Connect with Students "Do's and Don'ts" – Niki Naponse, Za-geh-do-win
3:30-4:30	Policy Discussion Group

November 20, 2019

7:30-8:30	Breakfast
8:30-10:15	Polices, Sponsorship Letters, Applications Working Session
10:15-10:30	Nutrition Break
10:30-12:00	Polices, Sponsorship Letters, Applications Working Session continued
12:00-12:30	Lunch
12:30-1:00	Working Groups Report
1:00-2:00	Presentation – Abenaki – Michelle Poirier
2:00-2:15	Nutrition Break
2:15-3:00	Data Base Presentation - Lifeline Design – Dave Saraiva
3:00-3:15	Next Steps
3:15-3:30	Closing Remarks

The format of the two-day Post-Secondary Gathering was a combination of presentations and working sessions. The Gathering, held at the Water Tower Inn in Sault Ste. Marie attracted 85 participants (includes ONECA staff, presenters and facilitators).

PART B – THE PRESENTATIONS

This section provides the reader with the presentation topics, abstracts and access to the power point presentations if one was made available.

Post-Secondary Updates - Bernadette Wabie, Indigenous Services Canada (ISC)

Participants were provided with updates on changes to the National Reporting Guidelines and other areas that impact post-secondary for First Nations.

Bernadette provided an overview of the amount of funding spent in First Nations post-secondary and highlighted reporting information. She reported that the 2018-2019 National Guidelines are still in use as ISC is waiting for approval of the Guidelines for 2019-2020. Expected changes include:

- the removal of Canadian residency;
- maximum allowable funding for administration will increase from 10% to 15%; and,
- the maximum for high cost programs is expected to increase to $53,000.

The budget is expected to remain the same. First Nations were encouraged to report unfunded students.

Changes to OSAP – Katherine Kasch, Sault College

An information session to discuss the OSAP program and how it can help to reduce the financial barriers for Indigenous learners in post-secondary education. The session will address the recent changes to OSAP that requires students provide proof of their Indigenous status. It will explain what documentation is needed to provide proof of Indigenous status and how to assist students that are having difficulty obtaining the required information.

There are several changes to OSAP for the 2019-2020 year. One of the changes is documented here. To access the full power point presentation, click here: www.oneca.com PSE Gathering

What is your current citizenship status?
Understanding citizenship statuses

○ Canadian Citizen
○ Permanent Resident
○ Protected Person
● Other

Are you registered as a Status Indian under the *Indian Act*?

Note: students who are not Canadian Citizens but are registered under the *Indian Act* are eligible for money from the federal government only. You may be required to provide documentation to demonstrate your status.

○ Yes
○ No

Mental Health Policies – What you need to consider! – Ann Seymour, Wikwemikong

Ann led the group in conversation about what needs to be considered when developing and implementing mental health polices for post-secondary students. This session was interactive and participants were asked to share their experiences and best practices when it comes to addressing issues with regards to absenteeism related to mental health. This session started the conversation and provided steps for policy development.

Ann stressed using a collaborative integrated approach to identifying and understanding the issues and offered a model of Cultural Integration for policy development.
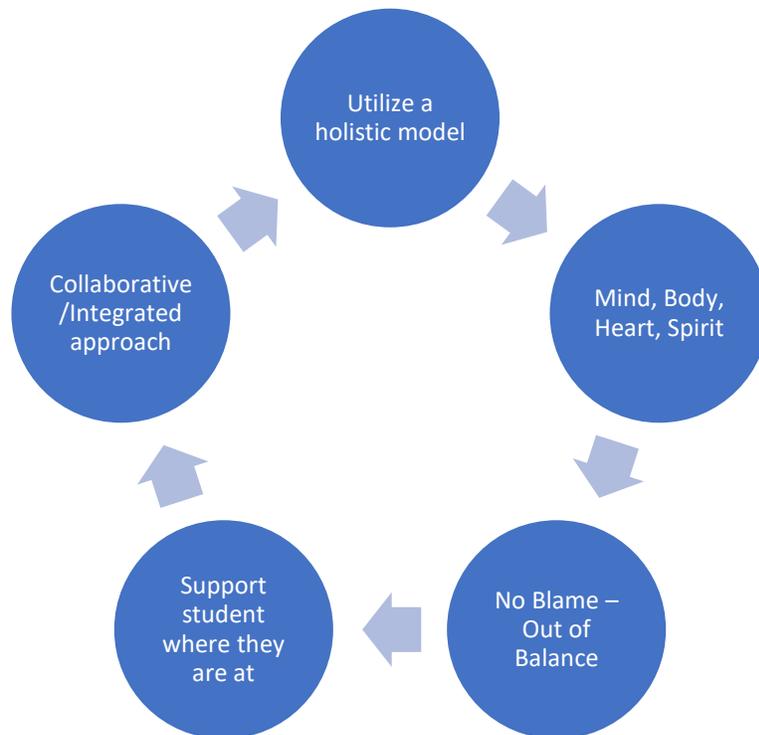

Figure 2 Cultural Integration Model

Ann provided this template to guide Policy Development.

▶ **Policy** – A clear statement that indicates ONECAS intended protocol(s)
▶ **Purpose** – The reason or rationale underlying the policy and procedure-WHY
▶ **Scope** – Who is the for i.e. all students, upper /lower students
▶ **Definitions** – All terminology must be identified, clear and succinct
▶ **Responsibilities** – Describes who is responsible for implementation
▶ **Process** – Describes the steps, details, or methods
▶ **References** – List of applicable documents, policies, laws, and regulations etc. that are used to develop or have influence on policy.

To access the power point presentation, click here: www.oneca.com PSE Gathering

Data Base Presentation – Justin Moore, Dadavan Systems

Dadavan Systems is a Nova Scotian software company with a 20-year history helping Indigenous communities improve student outcomes through tailored data collection and reporting solutions. The Outcomes SIS suite has been built in partnership with Indigenous communities to make sure their student's unique needs are met. As community and student needs evolve so too does the Outcomes SIS solution.

What sets them apart from other PSE software:

- Comprehensive student database
- Reporting includes successful students and those who do not complete their program
- Government reporting – easy to extract data for DCI submissions to ISC
- Online application form
- Accounting
- Bulk student upload
- Customizable
- Unparalleled support

Dadavan currently providing services to 37 First Nations communities in Ontario. The program "Outcomes", was created for K to Grade 12 and post-secondary education. For First Nations clients, the program is aligned with ISC reporting requirements. The cost to implement the student data base program is $1,500 (up to 30 students) which includes training, annual license and service. To host program costs $2,400 annually.

To access the power point presentation, click here: www.oneca.com PSE Gathering

Using Social Media to Connect with Students "Do's and Don'ts" – Niki Naponse, Za-geh-do-win

Technology can be a wonderful thing if used properly. Many of us are attempting to use it more to connect with our students and to share information and that is great if we do it properly. As some people are new to technology, this presentation was designed for the beginner. It will address how to set up group emails, chats, using social media to reach students, and the Do's and Don'ts.

Handouts were made available on: Cybersecurity, Creativity and Copyright, Tips for Smart Cell Phone Use, Using Passwords and How to Spot Fake News.

Lifeline Design – Dave Saraiva

Established in 2009, Lifeline Design Inc. is a full-service design firm specializing in software development for private and public sector clients. In addition to custom software development, Lifeline offers a broad suite of data management and productivity applications.

Lifeline Design is currently providing service to Grand River Post-Secondary Education Office. The software is custom built to address specific needs and is quickly adaptable as your organization changes. It uses the Cloud for efficiency. Contact Lifeline for a demonstration.

To access the power point presentation, click here: www.oneca.com PSE Gathering

Abenaki - Michelle Poirier

Established in 1984, Abenaki Associates is one of Canada's longest operating IT companies. Abenaki was one of the very first Authorized Sage Resellers in Canada, and to this day, are the only Aboriginal-owned Sage Reseller nation-wide.

Abenaki Associates has been developing innovative, award-winning, software solutions for over 30 years. It also provides Sage 300 financial management tools to increase your community's Capacity Development and service delivery to your members.

Abenaki prides themselves on the close relationships they build with clients, and their ability to address their specific needs. They strive to stay current on technology trends to be relevant, innovative and a leader in the products and services they offer.

PART C – THE WORKING SESSIONS

The two-day Post-Secondary Gathering had three opportunities for open dialogue.

The Planning Committee for the gathering identified three areas of focus for the working sessions: policies, sponsorship letters and funding applications. Questions were pre-determined in each of the three focus areas to facilitate focused dialogue, information sharing and brainstorming solutions.

Registrants for the gathering where divided into three working groups based on their identification as community or institution representatives. The total number of registrants necessitated the creation of two community groups and one institution group. Facilitators were engaged for each working group to ensure focused dialogue and written feedback.

PART D – WORKING SESSIONS REPORT BACK - COMMUNITY GROUPS

Working Session on Policies

#1 (a) Identify areas where you feel your post-secondary education policies are strong.

- Guidelines for students with disabilities
- Overpayments (fail, withdraw, FT/PT) – repay
- Student contract; conditions for payment
- First year orientation in community
- Deadline date per year e.g. May 1st or June 1sr
- Yearly policy updates; review policy when there are changes to funding
- Have an education committee or authority for selection process
- Have an appeal process in policy
- Specify the dates i.e. Sept-Dec, 2019, Jan-April, 2020
- When a student withdraws from program, we fax/send a Cease sponsorship letter asap
- Refund – send to _____ First Nation (repayable)
- Public information to band members
- Give copies of sponsorship letters to student
- Give maximum amount; allowances; all costs covered (Deluxe Package!)
- Monthly check-ins, emailing students monthly
- First Nation partners with OSAP, Indspire - $12,000 per student per year, 3 bursary requirements (provide proof)
- Career Action Plan
- Includes email address of the 3rd party sponsorship clerk at school
- Any issues with tuition payment to contact PS Counsellor directly
- Includes First Nation student services, registrar, fees office

Other Comments/Information Sharing

- Database can ease the generation of sponsorship letters
- Give contact information to post-secondary institutions
- Creation of Listserv for all PSE counsellors – opportunity to learn from colleagues
- May utilize First Nations Student Online Registry (FNSOR)
- ISC needs to change reporting, add a line to band contribution
- Access to student portal an infringement on privacy?
- Additional funds are needed for students in residence
- Guidelines: Have priority list for community - the closer the student is to the community, the higher priority they have; Three priorities – current PS student and self-funded, recent HS grad (within 2 years), and not 1 or 2; Five priorities and every grade

12 graduate and mature students must attend a session, depending on travel; Fund everyone using six priorities – 1. Continuing students, 2. HS, 3. Self-funded, 4. Grads (PSE), 5. Mature students, and 6. Funded before but not successful; Use the ISC National Guidelines

(b) Identify areas where your post-secondary policies could be improved.

- Special delivery programs i.e. FNTI, delivery mode – online, blended, classroom
- Membership verification
- Residency clause
- Make education policy available to community
- Explain the difference between full and part-time
- Other grants/bursaries – make it mandatory to apply for the bursary or scholarships at the college/university
- Create a template with check boxes – school to match their database to this somehow
- If pay a bookstore directly, a template would be good to show maximums
- Give a timeline/deadline for institute to send the invoices
- Should a school have to report 'no shows' to us?
- Creating policy to reflect OSAP funding
- Mental health policy – needs, or improved; accessible mental health policy
- Lunch & learns with high school students, presentations on social media for students
- Transition course, half credit; Transition from post-secondary (Alumni program)
- Text blast communications

#2 – What are some of the challenges you encounter when implementing policy?

Funding Issues
- Having to deny/turn people away; funding for legal fees, inadequate funding jeopardizes student success, OSR – land claims, some students get more funding; on-reserve/off members; administration covers travel costs for students; no increase in funding for Bill C-31, C-3, S-3; cost of living; travel; semester vs. annual intake (year-long)

Chief and Council and or education authority/committee
- Policy approval and/or discussion, overturning a decision, decisions made by our leadership, not following policy, micro-managing, nepotism,
- No internal/political interference;
- Inactive education committee, not following proper process

- Election/change in government (slow to change); appeals to Chief and Council instead of to PSE counsellor

Communication Issues
- External (not communicating) government, Ministry and OSAP
- Misinformation or old information
- Uncertainty – world changing fast, people stuck in their ways,
- Students not reading policies, more communication, old contact information, hard to contact the student; generation gap; poor communication with students
- Parent interference;
- Students not attending; withdrawing, no shows; difference in First Nations policies and students comparing/demanding

Institutions
- Institutions are not posting mid-terms in a timely fashion; Institution finance department send threatening emails to students and withhold marks; professor not using the appropriate software for grades; counsellors compassionate

Policy Issues
- Encountering gaps – needs to be viewed as a working document; interpretation of policy; timeframe to get revised policies in place; policy is not as comprehensive as required i.e. no appeal process
- Appeal board policy – 2 elders, 1 youth, 1 rep from Chief and Council, 1 rep from community; if no funds, no appeals
- No mental health policy
- Need youth voice on boards - appeal boards, policy boards, etc.; who is going to represent on committee?
- Consent form to be more specific i.e. parents; student changes program mid-year and requires official letters of support
- Established timeframes; special circumstances; Semester vs. annual intake (year-long)
- No access to student's special needs, assessments and/or Dr. note
- Late applications, not meeting deadline dates; students not sending required documentation by the deadline; when student doesn't complete full applications; students embellish their eligibility, grades, progress
- Community wants vs National Guidelines; fiscal year doesn't match school calendar
- System upgrade e.g. database

#3 – What are some external factors that influence the development and implementation of local policies?

Policy

- Difficult to make policy amendments
- Technology will impact policies
- Opt-out of medical and dental; student appeals; new situations arising; lack of student involvement (reading the policies); consider including special needs questions
- Included -PS application, contract form, release of information, and direct deposit form, acceptance letter, written career/action plan
- Dependents – provide proof that student is financially responsible for them
- DOB and application date and term you are applying for; Priority # (office use)

Government

- ISC, ISC National Guidelines, ISC communication creates confusion at the community level - as per $53,000 max.
- New legislation – membership codes
- ISC policies vs. community policies; elections

Community

- Chief and Council, BOD, Education Committee, community agencies i.e. Area Management Boards
- Managers interpretation; nepotism
- Community ownership; additional funding i.e. land-claim settlement; elections (band/provincial)
- Annual reviews/policy
- Membership – S3 new members; regaining "status"; case law, membership vs. timing of the application
- AESPFN are now self-governing
- Squeaky wheels – disgruntled students, helicopter parents, by-passing the process, reject the policy, influence negatively

Funding Issues

- Lack of funding
- Change of fee structure; cost of living; residency fees – high cost; student fees i.e. transportation, medical
- Changes in student needs – mental health, illness; increase in the number of documented disabilities – mental health
- OSAP changes; International scholarships

Other
- institutional changes - increases, decreases of student supports, appeal process, etc.; third party letters; institutions not recognizing our forms; cheque distribution vs. direct deposit, institutions are not accepting paper applications, get application online
- Livestream for grade 12 student PS orientation using Facebook live, video-conferencing; YouTube video – how to complete an application form
- Suggestion: ONECA create a sponsorship form for Ontario

#4 – What opportunities do you see to improve local policies?

Policy development
- Establish a post-secondary policy review committee; annual policy review; update and improve; National policy revisions
- Develop a template and share with institutions and First Nations to receive feedback; Share the "perfect" sponsorship letter with all post-secondary students and workers;
- Include part-time students in the policy
- Policy needs to be referenced, communicated to leadership and other partners in organization
- Residency policy (high population)
- OSAP requirement with proof
- Parental and student involvement in policy development

Post-Secondary Institutes

- Strengthen partnership with post-secondary institutes/counsellors, release of information with post-secondary institutes; collaboration with institutions i.e. deadlines
- Translate to their language
- Mutual supports from institutions, recognizing the financial investment to schools with First Nations enrolment
- Directory of Native counsellors at post-secondary institutions; conversations with schools – best practices
- Educate schools – eliminate this First Nation does this, acknowledge our diversity
- Indigenous Centre's to support
- Share the contact list for schools
- Grade 7-12 trips to local college and university to familiarize with campus life

- PSE counsellors from ONECA attend and speak at Registrar's conference, 3-4 PSE counsellors – lots of other places to share these concerns i.e. Directors provincial organization in colleges/universities, Aboriginal Reference Group, meet 2x/year

Communication
- Consultations with students, surveys; consult with education at member Nation level, elementary, secondary, post-secondary
- Information sharing generates questions; membership increases but not funding, share information back to First Nation communities for change
- Know the terminology of the school, create a fact sheet for terms to know at college/university e.g. what's a GPA?
- Send this report to IPEC, institutions, funding agencies, Chief and Council, AEC's, Education Directors, PS Counsellors

Technology
- Make application available online
- Data base for application forms e.g. template for sponsorship forms, common forms
- Consider a data-base system to manage student data (from applications onward)
- YouTube workshop available only to students on website – include how to use email
- Need capacity for website creation to help manage the application process
- Provide more support for students – face to face and web-conferencing, First Nations PSE website for students to remain in contact with the PS program
- Communicate changes with students; Social media policy blitz; Social media groups, email networking, connecting, list serv
- Have an online forum for post-secondary counsellors to ask questions, closed group on face book messenger?

Other:
- Encourage students to check for grants/bursaries and scholarships; accessing bursaries, looking at businesses donating funding for bursaries/scholarships
- Cost of living breakdown
- Be always aware of changes in legislation/laws
- Be sure to send 2 different letters for books and tuition – send book sponsorship directly to the book store
- Opt-out of extra fees if possible – PSE will pay if can't, including medical/dental, etc.; recommend that students opt-in for health and dental, otherwise the ISC coverage is less than other students

- Create a master list of all contact people/departments for 3rd party sponsorship, across all institutions and include First Nations student services – share a working document on ONECA.com
- More post-secondary conferences; through gatherings such as this – annual PSE gathering funding by ISC; share best practices; see what other First Nations are doing, tackle common problems together; PSSSP policy review at ONECA annual conference, ONECA district meetings share results

Community Groups – Working Session on Sponsorship Letters

#1 (a) What are some of the strengths of your sponsorship letter?

- Letter is electronically generated, input information and receive email confirmation i.e. UBC online sponsorship form
- Clear and concise
- Tells institution to send tax forms to students
- Informs the school we won't cover health and dental – some First Nations cover health and dental
- Sponsorship letter should state that we need detailed invoices (breakdown of all costs: tuition, books, transit, fees, etc.)
- We need input from institutions directly as to what they require on the letters

(b) Where would you like to improve?

- Add additional detail e.g. health and dental
- More detail for sponsorship contact person e.g. email address, phone number, etc.
- Handbook for institutions "How to work with First Nations PSE"
- Engage institutions to streamline sponsorship process for individual students (meal plan, residence, tuition), invoke commitment to TRC and student success
- Email the President of college/university if not getting anywhere
- Contact registrar/Finance office to ask "who handles third party sponsorships, WSIB, etc.

#2 – What are some of the issues or challenges you encounter with writing and providing a sponsorship letter?

- OCAS or OUAS should develop a check box to identify sponsored students
- Have a checkbox to opt into dental and health benefits
- Be clear on who to contact at the First Nation for sponsorship letter disputes
- Partnerships with institutions – AEI/Loyalist, FNTI/Ryerson
- Need contact list - no email addresses; develop a resource list of all post-secondary institutions i.e. list of institutions emails/faxes numbers – ONECA to assist with this; develop a list of updated First Nations counsellors; create a master list to share with First Nations of main contact information, with an actual name of staff; institutions handle sponsorships differently and staff don't even know sometimes; need to know (email or fax) where or to whom the sponsorship letters go; faxes not always received
- First Nations need to get students to submit the "External Agency Authorization Forms"
- Don't provide detailed invoice with all fees included
- OSAP issues - "First Payee of Tuition" – institute should not use OSAP, scholarships/bursaries/awards to pay or hold, First Nations is first payer before OSAP, etc. not the case for all First Nations – issues with release of information
- Inconsistencies in sponsorship letters across First Nations and funding agencies; a standard template might help – with check boxes that First Nations can check if covered, institutions should try to customize their system to match template so it is easier to track who pays what, etc. – schools don't read each one/no way to record differences;
- Institutions are not processing sponsorship letters in a timely fashion, often have to send 3-4 times; some institutions don't recognize our sponsorship letters; need confirmation from colleges and universities for receipt of sponsorship letters
- Provide students with a copy of the sponsorship letter
- HRDC releases them to ensure student is not accessing their dollars – double dipping
- Database (e.g. GRADS) automatically generates sponsorship letters – difficult or impossible to change information
- Invoice vs. statement sent from institutions; when charges that are not approved are added anyway
- Residence sponsorship letter

#3 – Exercise: Prepare a list of the information that needs to be contained in a sponsorship letter.

- Contain the institution contact information
- Sponsored student details e.g. student D.O.B., program of study, date: from – to and student ID
- Institution information – name/department, fax number, phone number, address, email, program name, full/part-time, length of sponsorship (highlight on the letter)
- Limitation and coverage – amount? Maximum sponsorship for books/course materials
- Requirements for direct invoicing
- Authorization number? E.g. authorizing officer and signature
- Residence fee – sponsorship confirmation
- Attending institution details
- Sponsored student details
- When having funding restraints (high wait list) resource share with on-reserve employment and training
- Date, school year, term, full-time/part-time
- Email address of 3rd party sponsorship clerk
- Duration of sponsorship and term, sponsorship coverage e.g. fees included, tuition, optional fees
- Sponsorship coverage – separate letters sent for books/residence, limits of coverage (e.g. maximum $500, etc.)
- Request notification of withdrawal, or change in status (full-time, part-time)
- Separate applications for fall/winter, spring/summer
- Funding agency signature and letterhead
- Provide a list of fees and amounts for student's fees/opt-out fees
- Conditions, refund and repayment
- Sponsorship letters on letterhead – contact information – email, phone, person
- US Institutions – funding in Canadian funds, payments
- Invoicing information for the funder – address, contact name, email address; invoicing details – send to …, mail, email, fax, detailed feeds included, separate tuition from residence
- If a problem, school to provide us with a name/phone/email of person in charge or sponsorships
- Create a scavenger hunt for students – they need to stop at the Native Resource Centre, tutoring Centre, library, bookstore, disability services, financial aid (e.g. emergency funding, OSAP) – evidence can be selfies at each site, offer coffee care or other incentive upon completion

#4 (a) Where do we go from here?

- Need better communication from PTO's, Tribal Councils, etc. on PSE
- PS Counsellor/Coordinator quarterly meetings
- PS institution directory; FNC contact list
- Establish a clear process
- Online sponsorship authorization forms (school forms) – this is dependent upon internet connection
- Have the college/university registrars attend our conference
- Have a spokesperson address or present at the college/university annual registrar meetings e.g. we want to simplify the sponsorship process… agreed upon forms, deadlines for invoices, opting out of health and dental, no tuition reminders sent to students/should go directly to sponsor

(b) What opportunities do you see?

- Maintain post-secondary networks, gatherings, annually and PS ONECA district meetings to do specific work to improve
- ONECA to coordinate and communicate changes in post-secondary to First Nations
- Have a contact person at OSAP (rep)
- Have a better relationship with Registrar's Offices i.e. sponsorship letters
- Develop a chat group on messenger i.e. communicate with other First Nations for information/contact person at institutions (Outlook 365)
- ONECA have a portal or sample forms commonly used – ONECA needs more core funding
- Invite school's key sponsorship people/third party bullying contacts to ONECA annual conference or a special meeting to educate/share our office practices and needs

Community Groups – Working Session on Funding Applications

#1 (a) Is your priority list for funding still useful?

- Yes, the 7 priorities follow the national guidelines – need to be updated
- Some First Nations created their own
- No, lack of funding

(b) Who gets the highest priority?

- Continuing students get the highest priority, then high school students, then mature students

- High school graduates and then continuing students
- Provide individuals who have not accessed funding for PSSP
- New grads, returning/continuing students
- Continuing students and new grads

(c) How do you deal with high tuition programs?

- Pay local public-school fees
- Over $10,000 BOD special approval
- Cost share with other funding sources
- Custodial issues i.e. court papers
- Private school = higher tuition – some First Nations do not fund, others cap
- Eligible program at eligible school i.e. Queen's Commerce = $19,000 (cap tuition)
- Budget dependent
- Won't pay more than public school's tuition for a program offered privately
- For international programs, only pay what a comparable Canadian program would cost
- Spend time researching institution and program
- No student names, go to a committee who makes a recommendation from Council, committee consists of band member, must apply, honorarium provided
- 75% is funding, the other 25% is non-ISC, maximum is $4,000, private schools and colleges, $7,000 for universities, then OSR partnerships with employment and training, planning with OSAP
- Maximum – cap amount/students
- Levels of assistance – Level I, 2-3 years college, Level II, 3-4 years for undergrad, Level III, 2 years (MD, Masters)

#2 – What are some of the challenges you face when it comes to processing the funding applications?

- Lack of funding
- Nepotism
- Political interference
- Program(s) mandatory i.e. spring/summer term
- Missing information, penmanship, missing deadlines, late applications
- Yearly applications to be completed, not automatic for the length of the program
- Paper vs. online applications, recent picture to attach to application/email
- Missing applications, received but not moved forward, submitting to the wrong person
- Student is not identifying they are staying in residence
- Changing their mind at the last minute

- Didn't receive, open or read "conditional approval" letters/emails – constant contact
- Multi-year applications

#3 – What information needs to be contained in a funding application and appendices?

- Basic student information – name, status #, marital status, phone, email, etc.
- Documented disability – IEP, physical education, and other funding
- Career plan, education plan – school, program, length, dependents, etc.
- Update gender
- Release of information
- Consent to disclose and verify information form – exchange of information internal and external, third party consent i.e. student needs to sign
- Student contract, terms and conditions
- Office only – record keeping, tracking application
- Have you been funded before? Previous funding information i.e. program, year
- Any other funding – ODSP, training dollars, EI, working
- Banking information
- Copy of status card and 2nd piece of ID e.g. driver's license
- Tuition confirmation
- Levels of education/years, past grades/transcripts, high school diploma
- Student schedule/timetable
- Application date, check off – fall term, spring/summer term, new applicant and continuing student, Canadian citizenship
- Coincide with INAC reporting to ensure we have everything for reporting
- Identify if staying in residence or at home, your residential address while in/at school?
- Is travel required (Xmas break, etc.)
- Are you on ODSP, EI, etc.?
- Deadline/payment dates
- Language preferred

#4 – What opportunities do you see moving forward?

- Adopt best practices in our home community, ONECA district – compile data and share with all/available on website
- Develop a strict policy so that it trumps others that request a student to be sponsored that contravenes the policy i.e. Motion from Council not to take appeals
- Online application form (First Nations with databases)
- Actual tuition costs
- One general PSSSP for all Ontario
- Responses provided in previous questions
- Compile a list of main contacts for each school i.e. who gets sponsorships, who deals with invoices, Indigenous counsellors
- Continue post-secondary meetings, ONECA districts and overall
- Continue orientation with students
- Students to give back hours (20) as a way to role model appreciation, gratitude for assistance, which reinforces compliance with assistance guidelines

"Great opportunity for networking"

PART E - WORKING SESSIONS REPORT BACK - INSTITUTIONS

#1 (a) How would you describe your communications and relationships with the First Nation?

- Positive, open
- First Nations know who to contact when needed
- Relationships been built across institutions (many departments, etc.) with First Nations
- Better now than in the past, balancing new technology with face to face
- Assist with navigating the college system
- Less communication with increased technology (face to face, phone)
- Indigenous staff have good relationships with First Nations communities; non-Indigenous departments/staff, not so much
- In some cases, no communication
- Some visit institutions/students/Indigenous students
- Institutions only hear from First Nations communities when they cannot reach their students
- Excellent with local First Nation, could be better with other First Nations
- Email, website, Facebook, information only on Facebook page
- Annual report
- Community visits, career fair, high school visits
- Newsletter, posters, fliers, pass-a-long card
- Personal planners
- Radio show
- Food – pizza and pop
- Education authorities

(b) How can communications and relationships between First Nations and Institutions be strengthened?

- Knowledge
- Reflection of past to change our future e.g. residence
- Working on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action
- Relationship building between college and First Nation – events
- Indigenous Circle on Education associated with college also member on Board of Governors
- Reciprocal relationships need to be nurtured; have an understanding that it takes more time to build relationships and build trust, communication connections

- Have a community day, get to know their families and children, Fall harvest, Halloween event
- Invite the communities to the institution to help identify strategic priorities
- More updates regularly, need more face to face
- Regional ONECA meetings should invite First Nations communities to the District meetings
- Meet with Board and committees
- Rainbow twizzlers, squishy world ball, swag, t-shirts, etc.
- City-wide orientation

#2 What would you say are the main challenges facing First Nation students when they attend post-secondary, particularly in the first year?

- Connection – community identity, new people/culture, homesickness, spirituality, religion, traditional
- Making new friends; loneliness, missing partner if they are still at home
- Food insecurity; housing, being on own for the first time – room and landlord issues, how to live with other people; transportation – bus system, street names
- Transitions to post-secondary
- Academic challenges – supports, methods teaching; time management
- Culture shock, culture of community, inclusivity – diversity amongst Indigenous students
- Access/exposure to drugs and alcohol, New Freedom Adulthood, learning independence
- Life skills, transition to adulthood – separation from parents, community, peers, etc.
- Wrong program – pressured by parents to take a certain program
- Students don't see self in all areas of study; hesitant to go to non-Indigenous supports in the college/university
- Anxiety/depression, intergenerational trauma, mental health and learning disabilities
- Identity issues, loss of death/crisis can derail
- Money management, budgeting and money concepts; banking – orientation when they apply, not in the fall
- Safety and racism, cultural differences need to be celebrated
- Building relationships, sense of belonging, contact person, lack of trust
- Validation of their choices
- Scheduled check in, counsellors to meet 3 times in 21 days
- Culture shock of academia, culture shock of being in the city
- Child care, family and community pressures – real or perceived
- How to use and navigate – registration, dropping, learning platforms; how to be a successful student – how to take good notes, how to purchase books, learning strategies

#3 What are some of the best practices or supports that your institution has put in place to support First Nations students?

- Nothing about us without us
- Welcome week (post frosh week), transition program, feast during the year, fire outside for teachings, events with food, weekly lunches, snacks/coffee/workshops, tee pee raising contest – national competitions, language nest, "Tightwad Tuesdays" – movies, bring family, café chats, self-care workshops, orientation city-wide
- Self ID list assigned to Indigenous Academic advisor
- You Tube – my foundations, preparing students before they attend (i.e. math, etc.)
- Students association; e-mentor – list of self-identified students – events and supports
- Book clubs – great way to make new friends, speed reading; free tutoring, printing (free), tailored academic supports
- Academic workshops for students, bursary workshops, professional development
- Indigenous Ambassador work study students mentor first year students
- Entrance scholarships, local community scholarships
- Partner with community to host events; community based First Nations programs
- Indigenous graduation, separate graduation/gala, Convocation – culture recognized/immersed at each; gifting of eagle feathers, star blankets depending on level of education, leather scrolls; Indigenous art and culture throughout the school
- Teaching methods – flag pole, traditions, academics – holistic, learning circle class set up
- Wake the Giant (program at Dennis Franklin Cromerty high school in Thunder Bay)
- Most institutions implementing indigenization and decolonization TRC Calls to Action
- Most institutions have Indigenous services, Indigenous resource Centre, dedicated space, funding, lounge, Indigenous support staff, smudge policies, access to medicines, culture, traditions, teachings, smudging area
- Early Alert System in place – students at risk are identified and contacted
- Regular communication with First Nations students via newsletters, students must self-identify voluntarily
- Curriculum enhancement with Indigenous content
- Elders office, access to elders and knowledge keepers, elder supports/workshops/circles
- Indigenous leader in upper management
- Good relationship with funders (sponsorship)
- Four seasons training for all staff
- Celebrations – workshops, ceremony, feasts, pow wow, traditional making (mitts, poppies, skirts, beading, mocs, etc.); "Jammie Day", theme days, rock your mocs

#4 How are institutional policies shared with the First Nations who are sponsoring students?

- Institution website, Face Book, local newspapers, recruiters, First Nations information sessions, events
- Information to Alumni
- Propose – an Open House for local First Nations and sponsoring agencies
- Share information at the ONECA conferences and on the ONECA website
- Institutional policies vs. Post-Secondary Partnership Program
- Orientation, Student handbook
- First Nations receive a binder with all information about programs, calendar, etc.
- Post-secondary counsellor meetings – academic and tuition schedule shared with students ahead of time so they can plan and anticipate what's to come
- Use of banner to flag students who may be struggling
- Presentations to First Nations students including accessibility, supports, financial aid
- Community contact is ongoing, visible; community engagement, person assigned
- Connection to high schools – First Nations counsellors e.g. dual credit program
- Advisory Circles, committee meetings, community participation e.g. strategic plan
- Upper management reaching out to communities e.g. Chiefs, funders, sponsors
- Consortium relationships with First Nations institutions i.e. Six Nations Polytechnic, FNTI
- Share institution information with Indigenous organizations, e.g. ONECA transition videos

#5 What suggestions do you have to increase the success rate of First Nation students who attend post-secondary?

- Community Funded Introduction – sign a release form to inform schools they are attending
- Better prepare students before entry in areas of English, Math and Science; computer and writing skills prior to entering post-secondary
- Dual credit courses at post-secondary institutions
- More "support" staff at the college or university to assist with academic writing and learning styles; peer tutoring
- Prevent late starts (housing, day care issues, overwhelming)
- Welcoming environment – who's who, supports
- Indigenization and decolonization across institutions not only Indigenous Department
- Increase scholarships and co-op opportunities
- Orientation, mandatory orientation/transition attendance – partnership, transition programs

- On campus employment opportunity
- Learning strategy supports
- Emergency food funding (or other exceptional expense)
- Child care for day and evening classes
- Policies to address stopping out
- Encourage students to self-identify with post-secondary institutions/Indigenous services to get information and updates regularly
- Entrance assessments – need accurate information and to fill gaps
- Ensure community voice is an integral part of decision making within the institution – take these recommendations seriously!
- Develop relationships with younger grades, grade 6 and 7's, normalizing healthy ideas about enjoying school, programming age specific i.e. youth, mature students
- Be specific to needs of the student – where are they coming from? What do they need to know about succeeding at school i.e. how to decorate home, get OSAP, shop, get a haircut, etc.

#6 Are there opportunities to collaborate with First Nations communities, school boards, and other Indigenous education organizations such as ONECA, to ensure that students are prepared to enter post-secondary? Please share examples.

- Promoting math and sciences; Indigenous room at high school where community members come and do programming with students
- City-wide orientation
- Collaboration with other institutions – for example, a conference to meet other people
- Employment organizations to do workshops – work with institutions to talk about jobs, salaries, work trends, etc.
- Students valuing their own skills
- Stronger relationships with the Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School in Thunder Bay or other First Nations run schools
    - share project i.e. Wake the Giant
    - Indigenous family nights – start with a shared meal, then they participate in age-appropriate programming that is hosted by different community partners
- Training for First Nations communities – clarify roles, procedures, Freedom of Information requirements – counsellors and education representatives; communities need to understand how institutions work i.e. release of information is required
- Give expectations (realistic) to students – need to attend classes, be prepared – responsibility

- Budgeting skills to prepare students to be financially responsible, and stretch dollars
- First Nations to connect with their students regularly (progress checks/updates
- Dual credit collaboration e.g. Confederation College and Seven Generations Education Institute
- Transition programs/information sessions year-round; "SMART" Start – summer high school transition program
- Information and resource sharing e.g. ONECA website
- Regular communication between recruiters, First Nations and Indigenous counsellors
- Opportunity – student housing with transition/retention supports
- Community visits across Ontario – recruiters/out-reach
- Consortium relationships between institutions and on and off reserve
- Aboriginal counsellors have a representative in nearly every community, provide feedback/community needs and wants
- Mentors that are attending to meet with new and future students
- Familiar face to attach to the program, school and staff

#7 What challenges do you face within your institution when it comes to supporting First Nation students?

- Institutions concerns focus on funding – need to see investments - quantity not quality
- Under funded
- Systemic racism/discrimination, lateral violence, difficult to address racism – "sweep it under the rug", "get over it", not culturally safe – policies e.g. parking for elders
- Institutional communication is lacking
- Policies for scheduling classes, parking, etc. create barriers
- Let us do our jobs, we're spread thin, excessive workloads
- Institutions need to recognize, validate and contribute to what we do
- Recognize the diversity of the student body
- Being an advocate is like being viewed as an "angry Indigenous person"
- Education students prior to entering post-secondary – being safe in an urban setting, life skills, budgeting, opening bank accounts
- Change the mindset from deficit based to strength based, set the bar high
- Elders not compensated enough
- Misunderstandings between those who don't work directly with Indigenous students (financial aid, registrar etc.)
- Access financial resources for "big" financial problems, emergency funds
- Mental health approach expected to be Eurocentric

- <u>Real</u> institutional commitment to Indigenous services; rhetoric, no action, tokenism
- Stereotypes of Indigenous peoples and Indigenous experiences (not quite racism)
- Spirituality has no real place in post-secondary institutions
- Awareness and use of support services – late access when it may be late in semester
- Resources/focus going from Indigenous support to international students
- Staff – need more Indigenous people
- On reserve – red tape delays everything
- Administration and upper management delays
- Sustainable funding and space for the importance of "Heritage and culture"
- "Additional" houses/day care for extra support or connections for support
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Calls to Action has created more challenges
- Trying to take future students on "real tours", etc.

#8 (a) Where do we go from here? What opportunities do you see?

- More open doors for community members to "Transition" into careers
- Indigenous student centered; wrap around support for all students, starting at the elementary level with community and parental involvement
- Increase PSSP funding and STOP using just OSAP
- Focus on hiring practices and on-boarding; hire our own people – our graduates, pay better wages to compete (with other employers)
- Continuous review of commitments and keep up with the TRC Calls to Action
- Strategic Plans – Indigenous student and community priorities
- Increase relationship building with partners (institutions, First Nations, governments)
- Fill communication gaps between Institutions and First Nations
- Encourage visioning with students in grades 7 to 12 so they have a clear vision by post-secondary (schools, parents, communities)
- Marketing programs more – show-case alumni using social media, written, videos, visits
- Increase access to delivery e.g. modules, flexible start dates
- Conferences to get together to share information
- People are open to change and self-reflective, change happens but snail paced
- Indigenous students succeeding in various programs

(b) Where is a renewed focus needed to ensure First Nations students can succeed in post-secondary institutions?

- Outreach – pre-enrolment and during the period of study, target high risk students
- Transitioning in

- Developing relationships with local school boards, First Nations high schools
- Connecting with pre-teen/teen aged students before they're in grade 12
- Actual land-based diploma programs and language immersion programs

#9 – What is my role/how can I contribute to my institutions' reconciliation agenda?

- Promote professional development to faculty and staff to encourage their own learning
- Develop resources to help faculty to learn how to embed into curriculum
- Work with institution to create a strategic plan, engage the Indigenous community, not just education council
- More institutional leadership to take on
- Be voice and advocate for community voice, take courage
- Ensure Indigenous staff attend CACUS
- Embed Indigenous initiatives into the system
- Working collaboratively with the other student services to meet the needs of Indigenous students i.e. contact ISS when students accept offer
- Providing feedback from students
- Taking responsibility of learning about shared history
- Make sure your strategy plans are measurable

#10 – What are the possible ways and means of ensuring students participate in the reconciliation agenda at my institutions?

- Getting students to self-identify
- Weekly communications on events
- Empowering student leadership
- Provide opportunity for students to be at decision making tables
- Embed into curriculum
- Encourage students to help participate in research
- Encourage students to participate across all areas
- Actively engage students
- In the negative side of things – students being asked to act as experts in class and on committees

PART F - EVALUTIONS

Eighty-five (85) participants attended the ONECA Post-Secondary Gathering held in Sault St. Marie on November 19-20, 2019. The total number of participants includes presenters, facilitators and ONECA staff.

Sixty-four (64) participants of the Gathering completed evaluation forms. Of the sixty-four (64) program participants, forty-three (43) were ONECA members and twenty-one (21) were non-members.
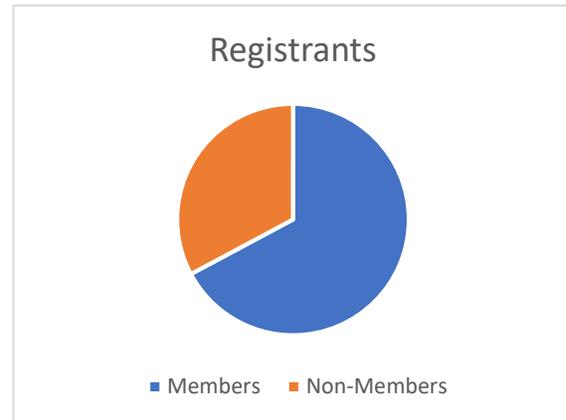
Based on registration information of the participants, the forty-three (43) members that attended the Gathering were from nine (8) of the eleven (11) ONECA membership districts.
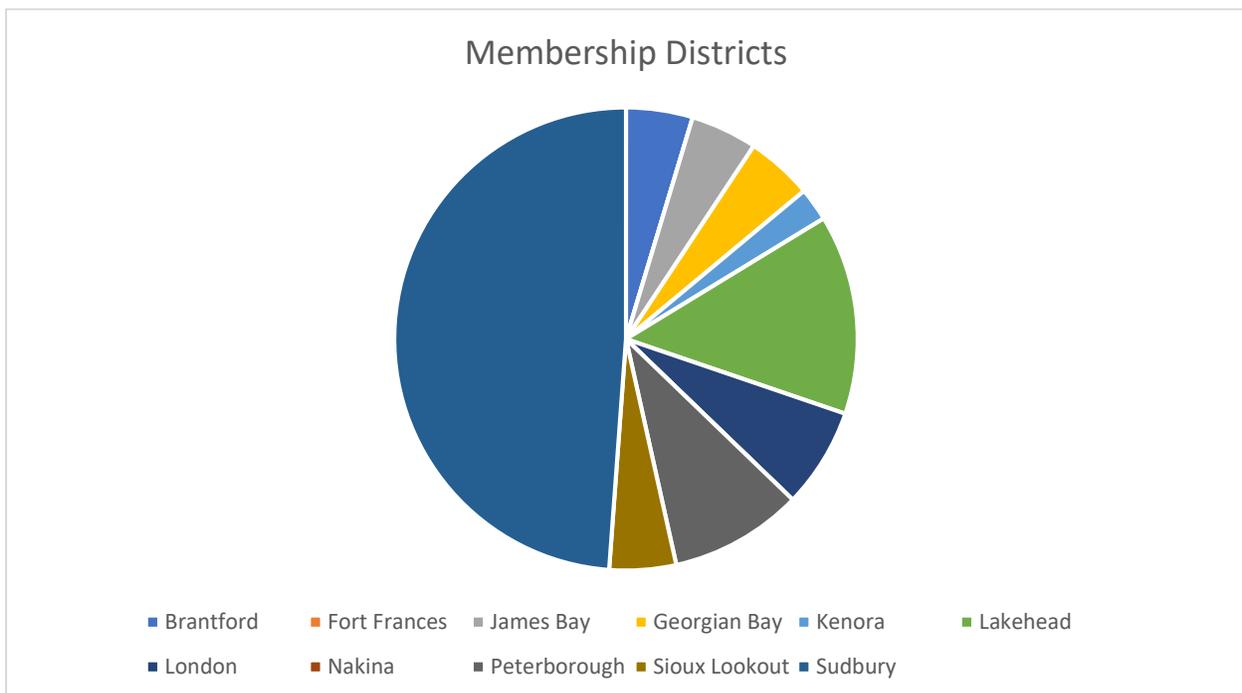
Participants who were not ONECA members that attended the Gathering were from the following locations.

- Six Nations - Naotamegwanni - Chippewas of Nawash - Wabaseemoong - Wahta - Sault St. Marie - Chippewas of the Thames - Shoal Lake #40 - Garden River	- Missanabie Cree - Aamjiwnaang - Thunder Bay/Eabametoong - Walpole Island - Naicatchewewin - Long Lac 58 - Grassy Narrows - Nestor Falls - Central Quebec School Board

Evaluation Feedback

Participants were asked to provide an overall rating of the ONECA Post-Secondary Gathering. The survey results demonstrate high levels of satisfaction (ranking of excellent or good) in all aspects of the Gathering. In addition, the survey shows that the most satisfying aspect of the Gathering were the discussion groups.

Rate the following areas	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Presenters	38%	55%	7%	
Discussion Groups	75%	25%		
Hotel	56%	32%	10%	1%
Food	32%	50%	17%	1%
Organization	72%	25%	3%	

There was overwhelming agreement that the Gathering met the expectations of the participants.   Ninety-eight percent (98%) of the respondents indicated the Gathering met their expectations. Sixty-one (61) responded yes, one (1) responded no and two (2) did not respond.

Met Expectations

Yes ■ No ■ No Response ■ ■

Almost all of the participants indicated that they established new contacts at the Gathering. Sixty-three (63) responded, yes and one (1) did not respond.

When asked if participants will be able to apply the information in their work, sixty-three (63) responded yes and one (1) responded no.

Participants were then asked if there was a desire to participate in similar events in the future, the response was a resounding yes. One hundred percent (100%), all sixty-four (64) participants responded yes.

There was **unanimous support for ONECA to host another post-secondary gathering.**

In addition, ninety percent (90%) or fifty-eight (58) participants indicated their willingness to provide a letter of support to ONECA to seek funds for another gathering. The remaining six (6) participants that completed evaluation forms did not respond to this question.

Member Status

■ Members ■ Non-Members ■ ■
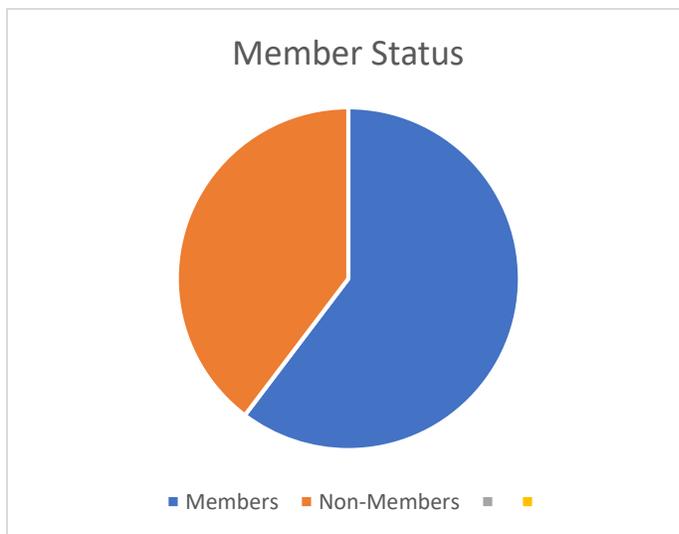
Of the participants that responded to the request to provide a letter of support, thirty-eight (38) are ONECA members, and twenty-five (25) are not.

Furthermore, twenty-one (21) of the non-members indicated a desire to become ONECA members. One (1) responded they would need to seek agreement from their community to become a member and three (3) responded that they do not want to become members of ONECA.

Ninety-five (95%) of participants to the Gathering or sixty-one (61) participants indicated they would recommend ONECA to others.

Next Steps

The next set of questions on the evaluation form garnered lots of helpful suggestions and ideas. When asked, what do you feel the next steps should be now that we have hosted this Gathering? There was overwhelming support for ONECA to host another post-secondary gathering and a preference for interactive formats. Participants expressed a solid base of support to continue the work on policy development, the need for more collaboration with post-secondary institutions and a clear expression of the need to take action on the items identified. Specific suggestions and comments articulated at the Gathering are listed here.

ONECA to host another Gathering

- Yearly event or 2x/year
- Create regional networks, quarterly meetings, use teleconferencing
- Have one in Thunder Bay to attract more participation from the north
- Survey on topics to be presented and perhaps make it more focused
- Funding/financial
- Network, sharing, more time for open discussion, best practices
- Continue the discussions on post-secondary policies
- Also need a gathering for elementary and secondary counsellors
- Continue to provide updated information

Continue the work on policy development

- Templates of sponsorship letters in place for all to receive and a post-secondary, policies and forms
- Address mental health yearly; highlight mental illnesses and how to ensure students seek accommodations if required, make a mental health policy
- Development of sponsorship letter template and communicate with institutions re. sponsorship letters
- Create templates for applications, policies and sponsorship letters
- Create a contact list for all PSE accessible in a working document on ONECA website
- Implementing new items to assist in policies

"It was nice to connect with others who do what you do and experience issues, positive stories, etc. similar to me"

Other Suggestions/Comments

- Discuss best practices specifically to create TRC baseline
- Review copies of topics covered to branch out into more research
- Work with Dadavan
- Actual outcomes i.e. resources on ONECA website i.e. google docs – standard sponsorship letter/application forms agreed upon by First Nations, funders and institutions
- Presentation on PS student success plays/reconciliation
- Implementing changes recommended on all levels, community, ONECA, etc.   (who is responsible? Collaboration)
- More consistent process, decrease administration with building relationships with institutions and have a smoother process, increase student relationship
- Offer IT support around setting up a Listserv for PSE counsellors to share best practices, ask questions, topics to discuss: sponsorships, counselling, data bases, discussing best practices, considering a website, etc.
- Expand topics e.g. less on databases, less intro level basics, more opportunities for institutions (perhaps admin) to interact with FN communities and establish regular communications throughout the year, e.g. communities invest in students/PSE, how are institutions providing support/ensuring success?
- More info on OSAP & ramifications/realities for students i.e. paying back the loan
- Meet with senior officials from institutions for the development of protocols/service agreements
- Implement ideas, suggestions

"everyone should have smiles"

Share Information

- Share the report of the Gathering with schools, all involved in PSSSP
- Provide copies electronic of other FN PS policies and application forms
- Create more shareable information including sponsorship contacts, policy, etc.
- ONECA to make master list of college/university contacts – where letters/bookstore letters could go to. Working document online.

Communication

- Create a Facebook group or something similar to keep contact with one another
- Keep in touch (email, listserv)
- form a FB social media group to share, chat
- Invite institutions (registrar's office) or who deals with 3rd party sponsorships
- Assisting with communication with colleges and universities re streamlining forms, deadlines, expectations on both sides, contact database for institutions
- Counsellor contact list sent out to all counsellors; Contact list of FN education services, standard application, institutional contact (financial services) list

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"Great to see so many post-secondary counsellors."

RECOMMENDED TOPICS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION GROUPS (no particular order)

Students

- Students responsibilities to funders and how to enforce the responsibilities to challenge our students to respect funding dollars
- A student panel to vent/discuss some policy issues. Recognize we are all different and unique but some policy directions are common for all First Nations.
- Mandatory orientation sessions for approved students
- How to accommodate all Indigenous students (mature, rural, urban)
- How to engage students using social media; Do's and Don'ts regarding Social Media with post-secondary students
- Discussions around the differences between isolate, rural and urban students
- More discussions on how to implement changes or provide resources for students.
- How to deal with angry students and those who take legal action for not being approved
- Things that are working in First Nations communities to engage younger generation (i.e. preteens) to feature careers in trades, health and others that are in high demand occupations and program requirements - math/sciences/English (besides colleges/universities going into communities promoting their programs and schools).
- Accessibility/disability services including special education, documented learning disabilities, psycho education associate
- First Nations Indigenous student services

- Transitions from secondary to post-secondary
- Have a standard PSE student self-care workshop developed to address such issues like misuse of drugs/alcohol and what that leads to, how to make use of the Career Centre

Funding

- Funding from ISC; Sharing PS budget process in a slideshow or handout for all members
- Preparing for new student's programs i.e. secondary budgeting
- Advocating to ISC for increased funding and better communication
- How other funders e.g. training organizations can assist to off-set funding for post-secondary students
- OSAP was great, but maybe a workshop stating all bursaries and deadlines that PS students can apply for; OCAP concerns with data gathering at institutions
- Mental health, medical and dental coverage
- Include specifically residences – PS students receiving residence sponsorship and processes
- First Nations OSR was suggested

Policy Development

- Creating policies that are similar so we are working from similar places
- Mental health policy development; mental health issues with students; failing students with regards to mental health
- At our next gathering, create standardized forms, sponsorship letters, etc.
- Social media ethics; was hoping for policies or actual examples of use of social media
- Appeal process, Data management – financials, Reporting
- Policy (student) ongoing discussion
- Student assistance – reimbursements when they have not gone through Education
- Director i.e. student applied on own – 2 years later, asking for assistance

Other Suggestions/Comments

- More open discussion sharing best practices and training opportunities, more time to discuss issues with other post-secondary counsellors/officers
- The mental health discussion was great! More of this! More mental health discussion
- Incorporation, TRC expectations, recommendations
- Create a network to access our shared resources, stop hoarding
- How to deal with Council/Committee interference
- Have everyone's business cards for better networking and sharing practices
- Elders roles; involve the elders in the discussions

- Ministry of Education update, information sharing presentation, accessibility services for post-secondary students, consent to release information – legislation – do's and don'ts, portal for forms, templates
- PSE institutions hear from and directly engage with ONECA members who are the SME
- Invite PS student's services – finance, registrar, support services
- Good selection of topics this year
- Thank you to ONECA for organizing!
- Institutional involvement (university, college and high schools)
- How to move forward politically
- Implementation – actioning
- Data – maybe an opportunity to actually use the Dadavan or other computer programs
- How to connect with each other regularly; everyone access to same database is it possible?
- Collaborate with other First Nations – database update – who is using what software, also, reporting – challenges/struggles for new workers
- Best practices from community/PSE relationship – who is doing a good job and how?
- Sharing best practices – ONECA [to develop] standard forms universal for all to use
- Yes, need more gatherings to work on all the recommendations, to share information, compile data, etc., create new forms; access to summary of notes

HOW COULD WE IMPROVE?

Host another Gathering

- Hold a post-secondary gathering; keep as an annual event to provide updates/changes; host a 3-day event with more hands-on workshops; consider alternative gathering between the north and south; continue to bring FN communities and institutions together (regional, annual)
- Work on the next steps
- Invite/involve elders and students, Education Directors and Managers, invite all post-secondary institutions – colleges, universities, Indigenous PS institutions, invite e.g. OSAP, CACUSS, institutions (accounts/registrars), etc.

"Everything was well done! Thank you!"

Program Ideas

- Perhaps a pre-conference worksheet – things to think about before the conference so we are all prepared at the conference; provide questions ahead of time for more input from other staff at the institutions for a more fulsome discussion; come with homework completed before we come together
- Have a way to connect in with other areas
- Maybe discussion sessions between presenters to break up the sitting in large group
- More collaboration and communication as staffer in groups express responses
- The social media workshop was too basic, time would have been better spent with networking …maybe workshop facilitator to share how they contact students and share information or go into small group discussions to share what works and doesn't work; do's and don'ts wasn't addressed; would have liked to hear more about social media i.e. what works, what doesn't, benefits, negatives of using it as a communication tool for our students
- More presentation of best practices at a community level
- More group discussions – topic lead
- Provide more presentations on supporting/transitions for staff/students
- More speakers directed at positions held e.g. post-secondary coordinators, education director
- More educational information from other institutions

"The Gathering was great! It shows how important this was needed with all of the Counsellors who attended."

- More on mental health, support services/information; more on mental health
- Too much focus on databases; database presentations not helpful to those of us not using those specific databases
- For the time, you did great!
- Agenda was not very clear in break outs, however, pulled together
- More time needed - more discussion time for questions in large group; more time to spend with communities; more time on groups discussions/sharing of information; more time for breakout sessions, share best practices with other FN PS workers

- Invite college/university institutions input/feedback in regards to sponsorship letters to strengthen relationships with FN sponsors
- Having school representatives present in some of the discussion
- Portals, relationships, annual meetings
- Less presentations, more groups work to give voice to our needs
- Dave Jones as the MC is always enjoyable; Love the emcee Dave - put his name and bio into the program next year
- Update PSE/community contact list annually; everyone should have a list of all the counsellors and where we are from; include email contacts with others if they wanted; list of FN counsellor at different institutions in Canada
- Maybe have a network hour where people introduce themselves and discuss in closer detail on certain topics – kind of like a "speed dating"
- Provide support, sent out admin stuff, standard templates
- Provide copies (electronic) of presentations, was hard to read/see what was being presented; presenters spoke fast to get through material

Comments for ONECA

- Have website for support/network other FN PS counsellors – "where to go to get help"
- Create organizational membership at higher cost instead of individual memberships
- Help with cost of some travel expenses or COO
- ONECA – you are doing a great job!
- Lobby for additional funding required for PSE
- Aid in connecting FN-PSSSP with OSAP, Ministry of Education, each other

Logistics

- Change the venue, location easier to travel to – air and road both long, no direct flight; move it to a Thursday/Friday? more variety at breakfast; provide WIFI password

"I really enjoyed this gathering; it was so nice to share and learn. We don't need to reinvent the wheel."

PART G - CONCLUSIONS

The Ontario Native Education Counselling Association (ONECA) was commended for taking action to organize and host the 2019 ONECA Post-Secondary Gathering on November 19-20, 2019 in response to requests by members. This year's Gathering came as a direct result of ONECA's follow-up to the requests by members who had attended the ONECA Annual Conference in May 2019.

Program participants of the Gathering articulated unanimous support (100%) in favor of ONECA hosting another Post-Secondary Gathering, in addition, ninety percent (90%) of the participants indicated a willingness to provide ONECA with letters of support to seek funding for the event. A wealth of suggestions offered to guide the development and coordination of another Post-Secondary Gathering include: a preference for interactive formats, the continued need for focused discussions and sharing information. Among the areas that require follow-up action, are: policy development, collaboration and communication with post-secondary institutions, and specifically, challenges around mental health.

Appendix A – The Parking Lot

Throughout the duration of the ONECA Post-Secondary Gathering, participants were asked to add items to the Parking Lot for discussion at another time. Here are those items:

- We should discuss PSE Counsellor representation on college committees and boards
- Offer questions for discussion like "what practice is working best for you around policy or administration, etc."
- Need capacity development in website creation to support PSE applications
- OSAP updates
- Student fees
- Canada Learning Bond
- Students not reading information (policy)
- If not eligible under PSE program for whatever reason, i.e. owes funding, they go get funded from another department like training