

# ONECA Post-Secondary Zoom Meeting

## February 9, 2021

### **Purpose of the Meeting:**

- ONECA updates; and
- Member updates and best practices.

**Participants:** Seventeen (17) participants signed on, in addition to ONECA Executive Director, Roxane Manitowabi and Gaya'dowęhs Lu Ann Hill-MacDonald.

### **1. ONECA Updates**

- There professional development series will continue throughout 2021. Details are forthcoming for the next sessions planned for February 18 and February 25<sup>th</sup>. Information for upcoming sessions will be promoted in the newsletter as information becomes available.
- ONECA has regularly scheduled meetings with the universities and the colleges where issues can be tabled on behalf of the members. The issues of third-party sponsorship and communication has been raised with Indigenous staff of these groups.
- ONECA met with the Chair of the Financial Aid Offices Administrators of the post-secondary institutions and tabled the issue of third-party sponsorship.
- ONECA is pressing on with the Cannabis, Vaping project; COVID resources sold out but ONECA ordered more resources to meet the demand; requested Ministry funding to bring together counsellors from institutions and communities to break down lines of communication.
- Please indicate how First Nations are financially supporting students during covid. Institutions are supporting students through the semester, sometimes funding is cut mid term due to low or failing grades.

### **2. Updates from the Members**

- The suggestion was made to have a presentation by the APSIP group. ([www.apsip.ca](http://www.apsip.ca))
- Six Nations Polytech (2 campuses) are delivering programs online.; the Brantford campus hosts college programs, trades programs and the STEAM program; new applications are coming in; SNP expects to be at similar enrolment levels as previous; SNP continues to use retention strategies and mental health supports as required; the #1 issue is connectivity.
- Get outdoors everyday to take care of mental health; living in balance is a challenge for students and families with the pandemic; all of us are going through a grieving cycle; Sault College continues to provide cultural and language programming as well as storytelling online.
- It's what we don't see that is the issue and you can feel it; core programs that require labs and hands on experiences are running in small pods at Loyalist College; Megatronics is big business right now; 90% of programming is online; students are lonely and some have no internet at home; doing drive-by visits for local students.
- Students are struggling; two drop outs; provided funding for laptops, increased living allowances to help with internet and other expenses during covid, delivered wellness boxes and purchased a yoga app for students; partnered with Durham College as meaningful and thoughtful partners

- to work on retention issues; working with Trent BEd program to increase indigenous pedagogy; Trent has a guidebook for counsellors - prep for grade 12 students (ONECA to follow-up).
- Continuing to work from home; 2 communities have covid outbreaks; students are struggling; more drop outs after the fall semester due to failing grades.
- More than usual drop outs or changes to student education plans due to no internet or internet issues; 5 students failed during the fall term; 1 student withdrew last year. Students need to make choices about next fall but institutional information is not available. Overall mental health is concerning.
- Mental health and technical issues are the greatest challenges; its difficult reaching out to students and getting them to respond; not sure of fall programming; some cases of covid.
- Continuing to work from home; the number of students is down about 10%; students are withdrawing due to mental health issues; the PSE budget is cut; 15 grade 12 grads did not go to post-secondary; we expect a deficit in the year ahead; the First Nation is allowing grace periods due to covid.
- A lot of drop outs due to covid and mental health issues. Its difficult to reach out to students; students are struggling; thirty students didn't complete or failed courses but they can reapply again in September. Accepted seven new students in January. Cabin fever.
- Students with poor marks; working with students with mental health challenges; its virtual red dress week; all positions are now full time, permanent.
- It's a challenge to support all students; gave covid support funding to students for technology; sending students gift cards was problematic; a handful of students with severe mental health issues/suicidal; student grades are either really good or really bad; surveying students and staff pre-covid and during covid; gathering data for first term; staff with covid fatigue and cabin fever; mental health zoom call; monthly staff zoom meetings and weekly managers zoom meetings to stay connected.
- Hard to connect with students; set up a blackboard page with information and for virtual drop ins; Auditor General reported only 17% of households on First Nations have internet, therefore, 83% of households do not have internet; assisted a student with high marks to get reinstated after their partner travelled to a covid red zone

### 3. Information from the Chatroom

- Contents of wellness boxes – <https://thebalancedcompany.inc.com/pages/shop-our-boxes>
- Glo Yoga – [https://www.glo.com/?gclid=Cj0KCQjAgomBBhDXARIsAFNyUqPYVxoTPM8uNZPSJghkS\\_C4dJLeeE7smCMhLBFEQN\\_SspPgFPGabfUaAtWUEALw\\_wcB](https://www.glo.com/?gclid=Cj0KCQjAgomBBhDXARIsAFNyUqPYVxoTPM8uNZPSJghkS_C4dJLeeE7smCMhLBFEQN_SspPgFPGabfUaAtWUEALw_wcB)
- Ontario secondary school graduation requirements - <https://www.ontario.ca/page/high-school-graduation-requirements#section-0>
- If we hear that the students have not been attending at all and not completing assignments or participating, then we have to stop paying them their monthly allowance
- The concern is also for students that are not successful that may end up in overpayment situation and ineligible for future funding. Very concerned also
- As difficult as it is to discontinue a student, if they are not attending and doing their work it has to happen
- If students failed one or more courses in the fall term, we continued funding them for the winter knowing that it has been a challenging time. If we can see that they have been making efforts to attend and complete assignments then we do not cut off their funding

- Possibly enacting a pass/fail option for funding rather than a grade percentage for each course as some universities have done; maybe a forgiveness option? say for failing a course or two .... especially for students who have strong records and are struggling this year
- When we have limited funding, it is hard to be that flexible if a student has stopped attending and not doing their work.... just giving their allowance still would make it like social assistance
- Even when I identified the students struggling to the school, the counsellors and success coaches were not able to meet with everyone as much as needed so the schools may need more workers to do outreach more regularly
- We have probation if a student failed two courses. Where a student failed all or more than two courses, I contact the teachers for their insight and direct info for their course. Teachers have been great at replying with information.
- If a student had continued to attend and kept trying to complete their work, they wouldn't get discontinued...they would be placed on probation and given a semester to 'pull up their socks' so to speak
- Comedy show would be awesome!

#### 4. **NEXT ZOOM MEETING – April**