

ONECA Post-Secondary Zoom Meeting June 30, 2020

Purpose: This meeting was organized to: provide an overview of the ONECA post-secondary institutes survey; and to share information from the joint meetings with the Indigenous People's Education Circle (Colleges Ontario).

Participants: Sixteen participants registered for the call. Ten participants signed on. ONECA representatives: Roxane Manitowabi, Gaya'dowehs Lu Ann Hill-MacDonald and Karihwakeron Tim Thompson.

1. Update on Meetings with Colleges and Universities – Lu Ann Hill-MacDonald

Universities - ONECA had a meeting with the universities group to seek opportunities for information exchange, dialogue and collaboration.

Colleges - ONECA developed a partnership with the Indigenous Peoples Education Circle, Colleges Ontario for information exchange, dialogue and collaboration. Colleges are working to update ONECA's list of contacts for the colleges and will make this information to ONECA members through the website.

ONECA forwarded questions from the membership to gain information on: the use of residence for students doing online programming; seeking adjustments to ancillary fees due to reduced services; and seeking information on how fees will be reimbursed (residences, other).

ONECA gained information from the colleges regarding the following: program and services changes continue (check with institutions by googling the institute and COVID) for updates; if students are on campus, there will be social distancing; residences will be open but not at full capacity and social distancing will be required; summer pilot programs are intended to help students complete programs i.e. that may have missed a placement due to the COVID shut down; micro-credentialing is a hot topic among the colleges; and colleges are planning for another shut down in the fall if there is a second wave of COVID.

Colleges asked: what are the expectations of colleges? This is an opportunity for ONECA members. We have received some submissions and are seeking more input. **Please send us your thoughts.**

2. Presentation on the ONECA post-secondary institutes survey – Karihwakeron Tim Thompson

ONECA undertook to develop a student survey to gain information about students' views of the post-secondary institutions they were attending. A survey was created with forty-seven (47) questions in four categories: Part 1 – Student Information; Part 2 – Faculty and Programs; Part 3 – Student Services; and Part 4 – General Impressions. One hundred and fifty-nine (159) responses were obtained between early March to early May.

ONECA received a good number of responses, but not enough from each institution to develop institutional profiles. Some of the highlights of the survey:

- More responses are required in the future to create institutional profiles.
- One third (1/3) of respondents were from Laurentian University, Cambrian College, Algoma University and Sault College. Of these students, 30% were enrolled in Indigenous studies programs and 25% were enrolled in some form of social work program.
- In addition to Ontario institutions, students reported attending 22 institutions outside Ontario.
- While PSSSP funding covers most of the costs to attend, more funding is needed for technology, other supports (i.e. specialized equipment) and travel. A few students are self-funded.
- Respondents provided good impressions about their experience.
- 120 of 140 respondents reported that institutions have Indigenous faculty but 110 or 75% agreed that more Indigenous faculty are needed.
- The survey confirmed there is a continued need to press for more Indigenous faculty and Indigenous content.
- 47% of students accessed Indigenous counsellors
- 25 students require accessibility services.
- Most students agreed that the services they needed were being provided.
- A lot of students were unaware of what services exist. Less than half know that Indigenous services exist. Students were asked to respond to 12 different services, and for the most part, students checked off – don't know.
- 37% of respondents didn't know there are Indigenous scholarships.
- More than half of the respondents didn't know if there was an Indigenous student council.
- With respect to social cohesion, 49% felt connected to the institution while 51% don't. Students provided many comments to explain this i.e. student identity issues.
- 46% of respondents didn't know if there is access to traditional medicines.
- 64% of students reported having good experiences at the institutions; 25% said their experience was adequate.
- 62% of students would recommend the institution to other Indigenous students.

A summary report is forthcoming.

3. Questions/Comments

- Members were pleased with the survey results and pleased to hear students are having good experiences. This is great feedback. The student survey cannot make conclusions about institutional infrastructure.
- At one institution, they lost funding due to COVID. Indigenous student services have been reduced and community-based programs have been cut.
- Some institutions are taking over the Indigenous services budgets and Indigenous staff are being asked to do academic tasks.
- PEFAL funding is not for salaries. PEFAL funding is intended to support Indigenous students.
- Students need computers, internet access and assistance to use a variety of software technology used by the institutions. Poor internet access in communities. Several family members in a household vying for internet. Some still use dial-up.
- How are institutions communicating with students?

- One community is trying collaborate with local schools for access to WIFI, computers and printers, etc. for a learning hub. Another community is working with a local institution to develop a hub for students to work from.
- Technology is the biggest issue. Without addressing technology issues, we're setting up students for failure.
- Need to explore partnerships to purchase internet at a reduced rate for Indigenous students from e.g. Bell or Rogers.
- One community is seeking suggestions to keep in touch with students during remote/online program delivery. It was suggested that counsellors ask faculty/student support staff for a mid-semester report as at-risk students are identified before study week.

4. NEXT ZOOM MEETING - early August