



**Ontario Native Education Counselling Association
March 2011**

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Table of Contents

Description	Page
Section 1 – Background	5
Section 2 – Aboriginal Student Transitions Project	6
2.1 Purpose and Scope	6
2.2 Project Objective	6
Section 3 – Approach and Methodology	7
3.1 Project Design	7
3.2 Focus Group Sessions	7
3.3 Web-based Survey	9
3.4 Internet Research	9
Section 4 – The Research Report	10
4.1 Locations of the Focus Group Sessions	10
4.2 Participant Profile	10
4.3 Feedback from the Focus Groups	11
Section 5 – Web-based Survey	29
5.1 Respondent Profile	29
5.2 Survey Feedback	29
5.2.1 Personally Prepared	29
5.2.1 Selecting a Career	35
5.2.3 Academically Prepared	37
5.2.4 Financially Prepared	41
5.2.5 Preparing for a Post-Secondary Environment	45
Section 6 – Internet Research and Existing Web-Based Resources	48
Section 7 – Evaluation of Information	49
7.1 Participation	49
7.2 General Feedback	51
7.3 The Data	51
Section 8 – Conclusion	52
Appendix – List of Charts and Illustrations	53

Executive Summary

The Ontario Native Education Counselling Association (ONECA) commissioned the Aboriginal Student Transitions Project to gather data in support of the creation of web-based resources to support First Nations, Inuit and Métis students transitioning to post-secondary education. The project was designed as a response to ONECA's research completed in 2010 entitled, *Walk in Our Moccasins: A comprehensive Study of Aboriginal Education Counsellors in Ontario*.

The project attracted participation and valuable feedback from students, parents, community members and education professionals (counsellors, educators, education administrators and other support personnel) from regions within and outside of Ontario.

Methods utilized to gather data included focus groups, a web-based survey and internet research. Participants that attended the focus group sessions were asked to reflect on four areas of focus before providing feedback. Counsellor issues, transitions practices for Aboriginal students from secondary to post-secondary, and factors affecting graduation from post-secondary were the areas of focus. Feedback received at the focus group sessions included content suggestions for videos, blogs, webinars, discussion groups, information briefs, on line calendars, social media (including email and Skype) and links to existing web sites. The web-based survey was utilized to solicit feedback on personally prepared, selecting a career, academically prepared, financial prepared and preparing for a post-secondary environment.

The reoccurring themes that emerged from the data included the need for:

- Regular communication between stakeholder groups,
- Access to information and assistance,
- Funding support and assistance,
- Culturally relevant services and content, and
- Ongoing support.

The wealth of information obtained provides a solid foundation for ONECA's next project – the creation of a web-based portal of culturally relevant and appropriate information and services to assist First Nations, Inuit and Métis students as they transition to post-secondary education.

Section 1 – Background

The Ontario Native Education Counselling Association (ONECA) was established in 1985 with the purpose of promoting and enhancing counselling services through research, and the development and the delivery of programs to support culturally relevant counselling education. ONECA's focus is to improve Aboriginal student success through the provision of support and programs to Native education counsellors in Ontario.

Over the past 26 years ONECA has developed and maintains strong partnerships with provincial and First Nations operated schools at all levels of lifelong learning (early learning to post secondary). ONECA's leadership and coordination results in partnerships and regular contact with the 132 First Nations in Ontario through district representatives and an established list serve. ONECA also collaborates with various provincial ministries and organizations to develop and provide culturally relevant counselling services, programs and resources.

ONECA has a diverse membership of more than one hundred and eighty (180) education professionals. Members include Native counsellors, education directors, faculty, student support workers, recruitment and support personnel in First Nation communities and provincial schools (elementary, secondary) and at First Nations and provincial post-secondary institutions in Ontario.

Vision

ONECA is an organization of Native 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: "Soar like Eagles."

Objectives of the Association

- To assist Native youth through the on-going development and improvement of Native Counselling and Education services
- To provide a forum for discussion of problems relating to Native student counselling and Native education, in general
- To advance and promote Native student counselling services as a profession by encouraging high standards
- To liaise with international, national, regional and local counselling and educational institutions and or associations
- To act as a resource distribution centre for program material pertinent to counselling Native students and to Native education in general
- To promote the immediate and long range goals and concerns of those involved in Native counselling services and Native educational programs
- To purchase, lease or otherwise acquire lands, buildings, easements and property, real and personal, which may be requisite for the purpose of or capable of being conveniently used in connections with any of the objectives of the corporation.
- To accept donations, gifts, legacies and bequests

Accomplishments

ONECA has achieved provincial recognition and a solid reputation among professionals and First Nations communities for the development and delivery of the Native Counsellor Training Program (NCTP) since 1977, and for hosting an annual Native Education Counsellors Conference.

ONECA led a province wide effort to increase funding support for the federal Post-Secondary Student Support Program to ensure all eligible students that want to attend post-secondary have the necessary supports to do so.

Some of ONECA's key historical accomplishments highlighting their collaborative efforts include:

- Development and delivery of the provincially accredited Native Counsellor Training Program
- Planning and hosting the annual ONECA conference that offers counsellor driven professional development activities
- Coordination and implementation of the Woman Abuse Affects Our Aboriginal Children workshop
- Research and publication of various best practices for Aboriginal student success accessible in print and on the website
- Dissemination and provision of information related to Aboriginal education to counsellors, First Nations and other stakeholders.
- Lead a national campaign against the taxation of post secondary funding for Native students

In 2010, ONECA completed research which examined Native counsellor roles and responsibilities, counsellor training and resource needs, and factors that affect student success, retention, transitions and graduation. The results of this research entitled, *Walk in Our Moccasins: A comprehensive Study of Aboriginal Education Counsellors in Ontario* authored by Dr. Pamela Rose Toulouse is available on the ONECA website. This research provided the foundation for the ONECA Aboriginal Student Transitions Project.

Section 2 – Aboriginal Student Transitions Project

2.1 Purpose and Scope

The purpose of the Aboriginal Student Transitions Project was to gather suggestions and ideas for the development of web-based tools to support students transitioning to post-secondary education. The research was designed to gain information to assist First Nations, Inuit and Métis students, as well as persons in positions of influence to encourage and support students to pursue post-secondary education.

2.2 Project Objective

The project objective was to gather data from a variety of stakeholders from different geographic areas of Ontario to support the development of web-based tools. The primary activities undertaken to gather data included:

- The design, development and administration of a web-based survey; and,
- Hosting focus group sessions.

A secondary data gathering activity was also employed. An internet search was conducted to begin compiling existing resources to support Aboriginal persons in pursuit of higher education.

Upon completion of the data collection, the information could then be used to inform the creation of a web based portal to support First Nations, Inuit and Métis students as they transition to post-secondary studies.

Section 3 – Approach and Methodology

3.1 Project Design

The focus of the project was First Nations, Inuit and Métis students transitioning to post-secondary. This includes youth nearing completion of secondary school, students from alternative secondary schools and mature adults with a desire to return to post-secondary studies.

The key target group for the project was First Nations, Inuit and Métis students. However, ONECA understood that if assistance to students was to be examined in a comprehensive manner, the research also needed to give special attention to all persons in a position to influence or encourage students to attain their educational goals. Therefore, the influential groups that were considered included family and peers, education professionals such as counsellors, recruitment and support workers, teachers, faculty and staff, education administrators and members of the broader community.

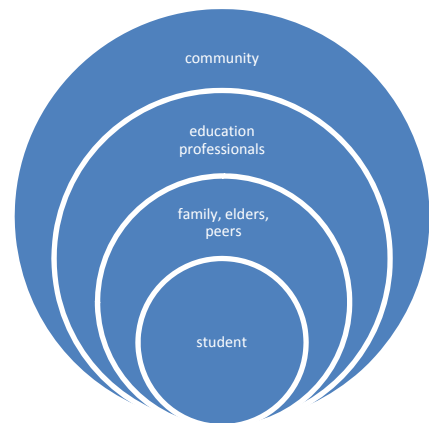


Figure 1 - Persons of influence

The project design included considerations specific to all three data gathering activities - the focus group sessions, web based survey and the internet research. The project consultants were Blake Bissaillion and Lu Ann Hill-MacDonald.

3.2 Focus Group Sessions

Eight focus group sessions were held in Ontario. The locations included Barrie, Belleville, Cochrane, Fort Frances, London, Sioux Lookout, Sudbury, and Thunder Bay. The locations were selected based on the numbers of members in each district and travel accessibility during the winter months. The need to attract students, parents and other community members was considered when determining the specific venues to be used. The types of venues utilized for the sessions were: an alternative secondary school, local friendship centre, a First Nations post-secondary institution and the facilities of colleges and universities.

Education professionals, students, parents and other community members were invited and welcome to participate in the focus group sessions which were designed to be three to four hours in length. With a half day of content, it was estimated that it would be difficult to gain participation from students, family and community members. A concerted effort was made to encourage these stakeholder groups to complete the web-based survey.

The focus group sessions, led by experienced facilitators included a brief introduction to ONECA, an introduction to the project and a lively brainstorm session. The content for the brainstorm sessions was based on findings contained in the report entitled, *Walking in Our Moccasins: A Comprehensive Study of Aboriginal Education Counsellors in Ontario*. The topic areas and the issues identified for participant feedback were as follows.

1. Counsellor Issues
 - a. Student preparedness and wellness issues
 - b. Limited funding and funding resources for students
 - c. Systemic racism and ignorance
 - d. Limited time, space and staff
 - e. Parental responsibility and engagement
 - f. Communication and relationships with First Nations and institutions (p 8)
2. Transition Practices for Aboriginal Students from Secondary to Post-Secondary
 - a. Post-secondary visits, events and career fairs
 - b. Workshops on independent living, academic success and urban services
 - c. Family involvement and community support (role models, grad, incentives)
 - d. Native education counsellor support
 - e. Strong guidance department – career pathways, programs and post-secondary course selection
 - f. Financial – First Nations post-secondary policies, incentives, scholarships and bursary information (p 25)
3. Aboriginal Post-Secondary School Students and Factors Affecting Graduation
 - a. Academic preparedness, clear career pathways and self-motivation (esteem)
 - b. Family, community and Band support (role models)
 - c. Funding – housing, child care, transportation, technology and class materials
 - d. Aboriginal student services and culturally supportive post-secondary environment
 - e. Employment and job markets
 - f. Native education counsellors (p 28)

Participants were encouraged to review the issues listed in each topic area and given the opportunity to provide feedback on how to address the issues using a brainstorm carousel process. Participants were split into groups. Each group provided feedback into a topic area and then were encouraged to add to the ideas of the previous group, resulting in a collaborative effort to address the identified issues in each subject area.

In addition to seeking participant feedback on the three areas of focus, participants were asked to identify existing resources that were available to assist Aboriginal students transitioning to post-secondary.

Participants for the focus group sessions were solicited mainly by email invitations that were extended to: the ONECA membership list of educational professional, First Nations schools, alternative schools and post-secondary institutions, school boards, provincial schools and post-secondary institutions. A snowball approach to distributing the invitation was encouraged to broaden the scope of participation from students, counsellors, parents, education professionals and others.

Participants to the focus group sessions were asked to provide personal information to enable the project to monitor whether the research was attracting the participation from each of the stakeholder groups (student, counsellor, parent, educator/administrator/support, other) and to ensure broad geographic representation. Participants were also asked to identify their home community. This question was asked to gain information about where participants started and where they attended school in order to get a sense of the factors that affect transitions to higher education.

Incentives were made available for participation in the focus group sessions (i.e. pens and usb keys) and all participants were eligible for entry for the grand prize draw of a Gateway Netbook. In addition, a small travel subsidy was made available to assist participants with travel expenses.

3.3 Web-based Survey

The web-based survey was created to elicit information from students and parents and any other individuals not able to attend the focus group sessions. The survey was designed with open ended questions so as not to prescribe or limit the kinds of responses, suggestions and ideas that may be possible. While this made the survey lengthy, the types of information the project was seeking to gather was considered essential to the success of students transitioning to post-secondary. The survey instrument solicited responses to questions in the following categories.

- Personality Prepared
- Selecting a Career
- Academically Prepared
- Financially Prepared
- Preparing for a Post-Secondary Environment

Email invitations to complete the survey were sent to the ONECA membership list, national First Nations student councils, friendship centres, First Nation education professionals, family members and others, including personal contacts. Post cards were created to promote the completion of the web-based survey. The post-cards were distributed at the focus group sessions and other educational functions i.e. Funding Information Night, Six Nations and the Great Moon Gathering, Cochrane. A snowball approach to the distribution of the post cards was encouraged i.e. "Once you have completed the survey, please pass the card to someone else that may be interested."

The web-based survey was launched January 30th and closed on February 28th, 2011. Survey respondents were asked the same profile questions as the participants of the focus group sessions. As an incentive to complete the survey, all respondents were eligible for the draw grand prize draw of the Gateway Netbook. The number of surveys being completed was monitored throughout the duration the survey was available to ensure effectiveness of promotion efforts.

3.4 Internet Research

The internet research was conducted simultaneously to hosting the focus group sessions and obtaining responses to the web-based survey to begin creating a list of online resources currently available to assist First Nations, Inuit and Métis students, families and education professionals.

Section 4 – The Research

4.1 Locations of the Focus Group Sessions

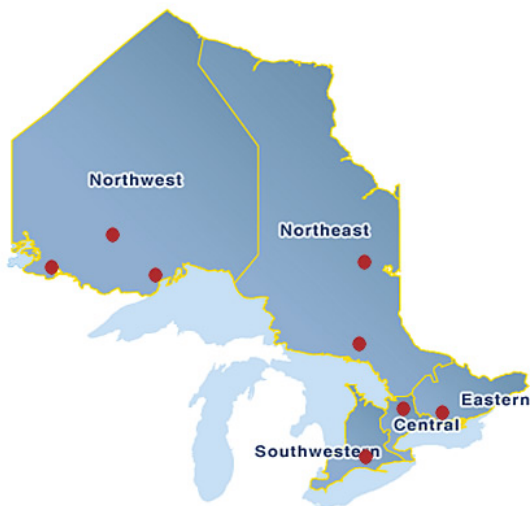


Figure 2 Focus group locations

Focus group sessions were held at locations in different districts throughout Ontario to gain geographic representation and perspectives from the various targeted groups. Sessions were held at the following venues and locations.

1. Kempenfelt Conference Centre, Barrie
2. N'Swakamok Friendship Centre, Sudbury
3. Niska Career Academy, Cochrane
4. Fanshawe College, London
5. Nishnawbe-Gamik Friendship Centre, Sioux Lookout
6. Loyalist College, Belleville
7. Lakehead University
8. Seven Generations Education Institute, Fort Frances

4.2 Participant Profile

Each of the focus group sessions attracted a good number of participants based on their geographic locations. The total number of participants that attended the sessions was (110). Of the one hundred and ten (110) participants, eighty-eight (88) were female and twenty-two (22) were male. There were ten (10) participants at the Cochrane session, thirteen (13) at Barrie, seventeen (17) in Belleville, eight (8) at Fort Frances, eighteen (18) at London, nine (9) at Sioux Lookout, eighteen (18) at Sudbury and seventeen (17) at the Thunder Bay session.

The information gathered to describe the profile of participants that attended the focus group sessions were as follows: students, counsellors, parents (and grandparents), education professionals (counsellors, administrators, support) and other.

Of the one hundred and ten (110) participants that attended the sessions, there were forty-four (44) education professionals, thirty-seven (37) counsellors, nineteen (19) students, six (6) parents and four (4), who identified themselves as other.

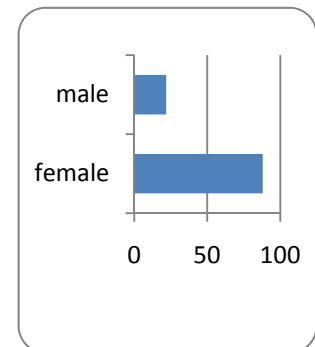


Figure 3 Gender of focus group participants

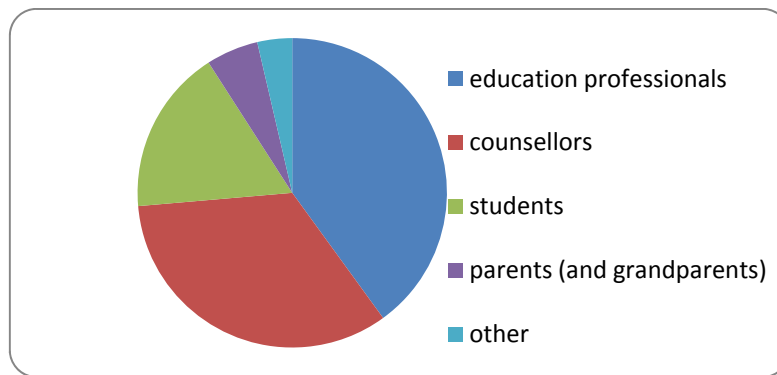


Figure 4 Participant categories at focus groups

4.3 Feedback from the Focus Groups

Participants were asked to provide suggestions for the creation of web-based tools to assist students in making the transition to post-secondary. The feedback gained from participants of the focus group sessions was recorded using a two step process.

Step 1: All comments were recorded as received under four topics - 1) Counsellor Issues, 2) Transition Practices for Students Transitioning to Post-Secondary, 3) Factors Affecting Graduation and 4) Existing Resources.

Step 2: Comments for the first three topics were reviewed for common themes, synthesized into like categories and then slotted into different kinds of web-based tools. The feedback from each of the focus group sessions are captured in the following charts which includes web-based tools and possible uses or content for each tool. An aggregate list of the existing resources was developed from the input gathered at each focus group session.

4.3.1 Barrie Focus Group

Tools	Possible Uses for the Tools or Content
Pod casts, blogs, videos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students talking – what to expect and how to be prepared for post-secondary, connecting with counsellors, opportunities and challenges - Problem solving blog series – various topics and various audiences i.e. Students to students; students to counsellors, counsellors to counsellors; educators talking to educators - Tutor/mentor (adapt existing programs to web-based), on-line learning tutorials for academic preparedness - Student wellness – finding and maintaining balance (mental, physical, emotional, spiritual) - Parents talking – how to be an advocate for your child, your rights, finding resources – who’s who and where to start, post-secondary tours - Counsellor fatigue and burn-out - Making the support system work – communication linkages, appreciation,

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> respect, institutional support - Community based programs, bridging programs - Community initiatives to support post-secondary - Student testimonials – the post-secondary experience - Where can I get help when I need it (for students) i.e. tutors, elders, peer support - Supporting special learners (differently-abled) - Managing Time – geared to secondary students - Using technology to my advantage i.e. alerts, alarms, research, computer programs, phones, student email (important messages from counsellors, faculty and institutions), blackboard training - Starting my career – how to write resumes, job search methods - Assessing my skills and gifts (determination) – include setting career goals - Writing and Research Skills - I need to transfer to another school, how do I do it and what do I need to know - Paying for my education by work contract – communities sponsor students to reduce or eliminate student loans - Why get a degree? – use real life role models - Career pathways - map where you start, may not be clear in the beginning, may have multiple careers - Making the Transition to post-secondary – talk about transitions, what you need to know, how to succeed, life skills, funding support, counsellor and other support services - Balancing family life with education i.e. caring for family members, paying bills - Role models – careers, elders, community people - Budgeting - Financing post-secondary education i.e. software and technology - Life away from home i.e. urban communities - Time Management Tools, Energy Management Tools
Social media – facebook, twitter, linked in, Skype	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Frequently asked questions about post-secondary for students - Frequently asked questions about post-secondary for parents - Announcements – socials, cultural teachings, speakers, conferences - Respond to questions from students, parents, community members - Funding i.e. invite partners to post scholarships/bursaries - Connecting 4th year students to 1st year students for support
Discussion Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Designated space for dialogue and discussion groups - Counsellor Talk/ Chat i.e. designated group on Linked in
Webinars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dealing with Racism/Systemic Racism, – geared to students, what to do when you find it - Cultural teachings geared to students, seasonal teachings - Cultural awareness geared to faculty - Counsellor training – the importance of safe environment - History of Indigenous peoples of Canada - Aboriginal cultures geared to non-Aboriginal - How to do community outreach (target counsellors) – address aboriginal, student support, student success, student engagement, family/parental engagement - Developing an Education Plan – a fluid document that changes/grows over time as students move through secondary and post-secondary - Public speaking and skill development

Info Briefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cultural teachings – articles, power point presentations - Application processes - Frequently asked questions from Students - Frequently asked question from Parents - Student testimonials - Directory of services at post-secondary institutions (checklist by independent organization like ONECA) - Why Self-Identify? - Employment research and self-promotion - Navigating the world wide web when applying to post-secondary i.e. application offices, application forms, application procedures
Calendars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Application deadlines – funding, enrolment in post-secondary - Announcements i.e. scholarships and bursaries, incentives - Post-secondary visits/tours and orientation programs – for students and family/parents - New Programs and initiatives - Community recognition events - Recruitment initiatives like career fairs - Cultural events, socials
Links to other websites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Aboriginal services and facilities at and around mainstream post-secondary institutions – i.e. culturally friendly housing, career services - First Nations post-secondary institutions - Friendship Centre services - Career services, career search sites - Financial Aid offices of post-secondary institutions - Culture and language resources - Partners supporting Aboriginal peoples and students - Referral and support services - Student life at and around post-secondary institutions (pictures, videos) - Labour market information - Career/interest inventories and assessments (secondary students) - Planning for Employment – employment plans - Resume writing - Community career centres/employment centres i.e. ARHDA's
Email	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication between student and institution, student and counsellor, student and faculty, student and family, counsellor to counsellor, etc - When are counsellors available

4.3.2 Belleville Focus Group

Tools	Possible Uses for the Tools or Content
Pod casts, blogs, videos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Grads with jobs talk to high school students - Aboriginal grad student tutors, current students provide information about colleges and universities - Aboriginal grad student testimonials, Aboriginal peer mentors - Awareness program to decrease lateral violence (for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthen town/gown relationships between school and community - Counsellor role – native ways of knowing, traditional practices, available 24/8 not 9 to 4 - Establishing and maintaining collaborative working relationships between institutional and Aboriginal departments - Elders on site - Auntie and uncle visits within the institution or Aboriginal resource centre (also promote use of Skype) - Outreach to community and parents – Virtual tour of colleges, universities, the surrounding communities and services, the counsellor, the students - Training and familiarity with tools, ways of incorporating tools i.e. is this the telephone generation? - Mandatory Aboriginal awareness training within the institution – faculty, staff, student organizations to see cultural competency as a skill to non-Aboriginal faculty and staff - Institutional sensitivity, recognition and accommodation to unique needs e.g. need to go home for 2 weeks for healing - Safe spaces to access education and training - Bringing culture into school - Tours to Aboriginal resource centres at colleges and universities – the centre and the people - Role model supports – arrive early, stay late, always someone available, listening skills, open door, approachable, vision - 2nd and 3rd chances with support - Empowerment – what have you learned and what do you know - “how to” sessions i.e. writing essays, research, writing a lab report - Supporting self-esteem, self-identity, academic pursuit and ability (elementary or secondary) - Role models – alumni - Fear of failure, debunking the free ride myth – opportunities to practice job competencies and demonstrate abilities - Mentors from those in the field - Information sessions – explaining and getting people aware about responsibilities i.e. transportation, housing, child care, class materials, technology - Video a student providing help with navigation of all resources
<p>Social media – facebook, twitter, linked in, Skype</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Life style {of students} - Access to resources – links, networks, space, peoples for Aboriginal students, peers when needed - Buddy system – 2nd year students working with 1st year – orientation, ins/outs - Post notices - institution hires and retains Aboriginal staff and faculty - Ask a counsellor - Student forum – prospective, current/past students ask questions, share info - Peer groups of 10-15 for motivation and self-esteem, development geared to life-long discipline
<p>Discussion Groups</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More meetings with the Native counsellor i.e. issues, concerns, improve communication, what works or doesn't for First Nations - Chat rooms for families, parents, students, mentors to connect

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Student forum – prospective, current and past students ask questions, share information
Webinars (need to be informative and interactive)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Accepting the realities of human nature - Accepting the realities of academic institutions/bureaucracies, academic chauvinism - Prior Learning and Acceptance Recognition - Earning students trust/buy in - Peer to peer workshops (online forums) - Guidance counsellors to do workshops with students in communities
Info briefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Importance of communication - Using career tools in high schools (grade 8) so students are familiar with them, career days - Job shadowing - Communication with First Nations and institutions, dual promotion of services, conferencing/web meetings - Collaborations between colleges and universities - Electronic student handbook with relevant links, tools, resources, information on a user-friendly portal - More communication with college and universities with regard to sponsorship, understanding First Nations policies - Teamwork within institutions – work together to assist students as needed i.e. student awards, registrar’s office, academic advisors - Steps to get a tutor, what tutor services are at various colleges and universities - Help with using Blackboard system and Web CT – basic information, where to find marks, assignments, etc. - Goal setting - assist and allow students to make decisions about their education, utilize teamwork - Assisting with emotional trauma - Importance of self-identification - Counsellor training - constant follow-up and check in with students by support officer they trust re: resources, pertinent information, cultural events, listening, communication, consistent emotional support and counselling throughout post-secondary journey - Academic tips, learning strategies within institutions
Calendars - important dates, news, announcements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Post information from friendship centres i.e. cultural events - School events, sports, extra-curricular activities to bring school into other schools culture, socials, food - Post-secondary summer mentorship programs - International student model – emergency host available to student 24/7 - Parent/family/visitors day - Strong link and network with community resources, events, information to assist with post-secondary experience - Aboriginal community career fairs - Orientation initiatives of colleges and universities that bring students to campus
Links to other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community resources i.e. larger cities, friendship centres, students supports - Liaison with outside i.e. fast foods, employment equity (i.e. hiring Aboriginal students) - Funding sources and options, create a data base – for full and part-time students

websites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Culturally relevant curriculum i.e. principals of universal instruction origin includes cultural relevance - Aboriginal student services at institutions (too hard to navigate, often institutions and Aboriginal student services are separated) – Aboriginal advisors/counsellors, phone numbers, who to contact when having difficulty with electronic access, Aboriginal Education Councils - List of one person per college/university to contact First Nation, Inuit and Métis students – for community counsellors, better communication and would give students one person to deal with - Understanding First Nations funding policies - Services for students with special needs i.e. note taking, what institutions offer what - Strong institutional commitment to Aboriginal learning embedded in academic plan - Online recruitment strategies - Data base of jobs for First Nations, Inuit and Métis students, employment opportunities, Aboriginal employment centres, HRDC job bank, student specific job postings - Culturally relevant supports - Career assessments, career planning, career requirements (grades 6 and up), www.careercruising.com - Billeting – families can take in students – post notices - Documents and other resources - Who to contact for post-secondary information for students living off reserves or out of school for a long time - Online assignment planning tool - Estimator tool – cost of education, costs of living away from home - APSIP, Aboriginal list serves - Go on a post-secondary road trip (film it, a documentary) - Bill Gates scholarships - The Khan Academy – free website, 2800+ you tube lessons, first year university level math, algebra, chemistry, etc. - Amos Key Jr. E-learning website, Four Directions Teachings website, Native access.com (engineering) - Canadian legal information institute website (CANLII.ca?)– free legal access to all laws and court decisions - Student awards.com - Canadian Roots Exchange www.socialminds.com
Email	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - online application for students - electronic phone book on the phone - access to professors

4.3.3 Cochrane Focus Group

Tools	Possible Uses for the Tools or Content
Pod casts, blogs,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interview teaching staff with regards to First Nations Students - Orientation for teaching staff (i.e. racism, ignorance, Aboriginal awareness)

videos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Success stories of individuals that have successfully transitioned, how they did, and what helped them. Add a contact so other youth can get in touch with them. - Broadcasts/pod casts of community events (celebrations) happening back home - Role model profiles – Background of where he/she is from, talk about struggles, barriers that were overcome and success stories - Weekly/bi weekly pod casts for family and communities
Social media – facebook, twitter, linked in, Skype	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Open forum for questions for all (parent, student, guidance) - Open forum for communication/relationships between First Nation communities, post-secondary institutions, parents and students - Open communication between family and community for shipping/sending care packages via counsellors - Facebook page for student achievement and greeting - Weekend activities/excursions for sense of community and belonging i.e. dinners, outings and gatherings - Open communication between employers and students – Apprenticeship programs – Co-op programs – Possible job board or integrate something like Nation Talk into the website or links to these types of resources.
Discussion Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Time divided – availability online/web page for students to communicate with counsellors - Availability of programs to help students decide what and where they want to go i.e. career cruising
Webinars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Job market training - Orientation and transitioning workshops - Budgeting workshops that will address limited funds (learn to budget) - Cross cultural training
Info briefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students should look into funding well in advance – Maybe have an online application through own community - Each band community should have an (donation) emergency fund for students that are in need of it like an “account specifically for that purpose”. - Native “tutors” for the young students to help the one in need - Newsletters between First Nation & colleges/universities i.e. academic achievement, family announcement, community events - Cross cultural training plus guidebook - Funding, bursary and scholarship information, deadlines and dates - A students guide for independent living – Life skills - Instructions for students on how to connect to the schools online network in order to check grades (Online school black boards) - Course in high school offering information about post secondary and links to other resources - Lists of colleges and universities and requirements to get into each program - Goal setting, working on barriers, taking baby steps i.e. time management, organizational, budgeting - “How to” for cover letters and resumes, job interview skills, mock interviews - Confidence building workshops, dress for success workshops – or links to these types of resources - Introduction to college and all social issues that students may be faced with - Child support, transportation and housing information - Success stories from family members, how they were successful at transitioning

	and what helped them - Counsellor tips i.e. very important to meet First Nations students on arrival at the school
Calendars	- Social events. - Ensure students know course requirements and apply for funding well in advance
Links to other websites	- Links to First Nations Education Departments and entrance requirements to colleges/universities - Housing complex availability, lists for low income housing

4.3.4 Fort Frances Focus Group

Tools	Possible Uses for the Tools
Pod casts, blogs, videos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students need to learn to apply for assistance - Community celebrations that include teachers/principles for school/home communities to get together and celebrate success - Specified training for counsellors in students retention - Orientation videos – How to videos - Take pride in your accomplishments and celebrate them, share success - Communities need to make sure students can attend their graduations - Transition from elementary to secondary/secondary to post-secondary – change in school size, responsibility, and lack of student mentors - Best practices – what works and what doesn't *Implement Skype as a resource for better communication between communities and the student, web conferencing also
Social media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Post used books
Discussion Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Aboriginal counsellor at the institution being attended, have student make contact - Regional career fair circuit that ends with participating schools, visit university - Each community take a theme for their career fair (health, education, etc.,) - Post secondary orientation make it compulsory - Cumulative every year to address arising/current issues - Attendance - Incentive such as pay monthly per attendance
Webinars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Online tutoring
Info briefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Funding criteria available, know the graduation policy at the school - you need to apply to graduate - Parents need to know the application process - Awareness on the institutions part, or our role as counsellors and what we are responsible for - Information on date rape - Picture of person and explanation of their job - Parents page – What to say, what not to say when you are talking to your child who is at school (the wrong words may encourage the child to come back home) - Information regarding Skype - From high school to college students need to know ahead of time what pre-requisites are needed - Requirements checklist – Entry, graduation, programs, submitting paperwork

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Graduation checklist – Timeline for forms, graduation gown, course requirements, visa/mc payments, marks and key dates
Calendars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Time table - Events for students
Links to other websites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social agencies - places to go for help, food shelf, shelters, crisis centres, sexual health centres - College and university videos, services and contacts, safety walks etc - Links to scholarships and bursaries for students, ones relevant to specific areas - Links to First Nations website, funding guidelines need to be known for all students as well as deadlines to apply, application requirements, document requirements - Job links, accommodation (set student accommodation prior to getting to city) - Links to pertinent statistics (categorized by field) and resources, user friendly - List of awards and bursaries regularly updated

4.3.5 London Focus Group

Tools	Possible Uses or Content
Pod casts, videos, blogs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Virtual orientation visit for students and parents to ask questions and get their questions answered - Parents - supports, FAQ's, how parents can promote self-esteem and career pathways in young children - Space needed at institutions for study, socializing, spiritual/elders, outdoors(smudge, growing medicine), quiet/meditation - Cultural teachings for students – identity i.e. spirit name, clan; coping mechanisms/strategies - Cultural counselling/cultural teachings for counsellors, faculty and others – identity bias assessment, cultural awareness and sensitivity, increase 'bank' of strategies - Budgeting/money management for healthy student living - funding applications, essential expense items, revenue sources, gaps - Life skills - independent living - First Nations 101 for professors – to alleviate racism, discrimination, create understanding of Indigenous worldview - Transitioning to city life – time management, work/life balance, upgrading, lifelong learning, technology, training, bridging - Elders helping counsellors, student, staff, etc. - How to engage the community in post-secondary to keep students on track – motivators, friends, volunteer drivers, role models in the job market, community placements/summer jobs, volunteer experience - Career planning (explore strengths and weaknesses), career peers, resume writing, mock interviews, careers, - When will I know I am successful(journal writing, recording progress, goal setting) - Student profiles – competitive funding, access to post-secondary, mistakes and turn-around, make it specific to programs at institutions - Are you prepared for post-secondary – competitive entry, academics, cultural differences

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Your prejudices damage your progress – student focus and faculty focus - The road to sustainability – the long-term picture - Succeeding as a part-time student – balancing study while working - Mentors in every level of education - Step by step how to apply for post-secondary – what to do and why - I'm not ready for post-secondary – options i.e. jobs, apprenticeship - Letting Go of Student Life - Motivating students in a culturally sensitive manner - How to navigate the university administration - Self-esteem and spirituality – represent different nations
Social media – facebook, twitter, linked in, Skype	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication linkages community to post-secondary counsellors and support staff - Advertise institutional recruitment of Aboriginal faculty and staff - Virtual pen pal mentorship program - ONECA student chat - continue to follow students after they leave high school, FAQ's - Chat rooms – exchange ideas, life skills, loneliness
Discussion Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Elders, traditional helpers and healers - Finding your voice - Keeping lines of communication flowing both ways i.e. parents/students, students/counsellors, students/faculty, secondary to post-secondary - Class lectures that result in the need for counselling i.e. residential school and other sensitive topics - Students helping students – academic support - Students talking about their struggles, meeting people on line that attend same institution, post questions for peers - Aboriginal parents association - Volunteers helping students
Webinars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students helping students with funding applications for awards, grants, scholarships, research funds, employment funds - Cultural education - Creating linkages between community and post-secondary i.e. registrar, support services, financial aid office, faculty - For parents and students – workshops on study time, study skills, learning curve to post-secondary - Writing and numeracy - Introductory preparatory workshops - The power of networks for student success – have a good network system
Info briefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - FAQ's for students, for parents and grandparents, instructors, agencies - Budgeting - Data base of information: funding, incentives, job market, demand, aboriginal access, academic programs, counselling services, part-time work, policy, upgrading, 2nd career - List of funders with education counsellors and post-secondary institutions and supports - Online assessments (culturally sensitive) for learning style, emotional intelligence, study skills, strengths - Keeping organized i.e. tracking applications

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Applying for bursaries and scholarships - Study skill tips i.e. smudging to reduce anxiety, incorporate spiritual component - Tips for keeping students accountable i.e. federal funding from local communities - Assisting students with disabilities i.e. reduced course load and Band funding - Institutions with facilitated admissions processes for First Nations students - Qualities of a Good counsellor i.e. trusting relationships, open door policy, accessible, trained, motivated, healthy - Research ethics that include Indigenous peoples - How to apply for scholarships and bursaries i.e. writing good letters - Preparing for a competitive job market – the harsh realities - Cultural competency - What is student success? - Benefits of student involvement in institution and broader community - Differing world views - Promoting student success i.e. programming from Aboriginal perspectives - Environments conducive to learning - Finding the “right fit”, “right program” - Transition courses (grades 6, 7, 8) - Time Management Tools i.e. calendars - Challenge Smart Kids - for retention and success - Role of school boards in student success - What do I do when the money runs out i.e. food vouchers, free luncheons - Setting boundaries for success in education/independent living - Check lists for students, what do I need to graduate starting in high school, filling out applications for post-secondary, funding options, literacy test, community services
Calendars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Political action in Indigenous education - Scholarships and bursaries - Community language programs - Institutions hiring Aboriginal faculty - Student incentives - How institutions support the Aboriginal community
Links to other websites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Career testing/exploration, qualifications for careers, how interests relate to careers/professions - Jobs in communities, job market/economy, summer jobs, part-time jobs, exchange programs - Names and links to Aboriginal support people at institutions - First Nations, Inuit and Métis websites for funding sources, community services, referral services - Industries in the area - Policy guidelines for funding, institutions, etc - Funding sources - Interactive software for cultural teachings, history, current information, heritage - Services at post-secondary institutions i.e. child care, housing, transportation, student support, funding - Bridging (college to university) and Aboriginal programs at post-secondary institutions, transfer/articulation agreements - Online preparatory courses – university readiness, how to study

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Public transit - Recruitment videos from institutions - Student supports before getting to post-secondary - high schools, community funding agencies/services - Community services i.e. computer labs, internet, connections to post-secondary - Online academic support, tutors, TA's in all fields of study - Aptitude tests for college and university programs - Academic support at institutions - Professional schools – career information, student testimonials, where to find information/apply, entry requirements - Computer training for adults and students - Education research reports and other documents - Access to laptops, technology assistance - Support for students with addictions, self-help groups
Email	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Student/faculty communication - Regular communication between students and counsellors

4.3.6 Sioux Lookout Focus Group

Tools	Possible Uses for the Tools or Content
Pod casts, videos, blogs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Role model videos - Video conferencing or Skype so students can communicate with their families - Families of students can connect with each other - Feature elders and counsellors - Video interviews with a variety of university and college students regarding their experience of how they got to college/university - Tutors on line i.e. http://www.tutor.com/ - Budgeting software/budgeting help - Career cruising and online surveys
Social media – facebook, twitter, linked in, Skype	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support chat from program to program - Counselling support chat, 24/7 online advice counsellors - Open forum for communication between all parties - Networking with other countries - Peer to peer support - Meet the staff online
Discussion Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What programs are available and ensure the student knows what they want - Ensure Native Language is made available - Peer support system for students families (i.e. spouse at home with kids while mom's at school) - How to ensure students have access to computers and web based services - Non partisan online education counsellors to help grades 7 and 8's with career planning and also through high school - First Nation support – what services do they offer, more communication and involvement
Webinars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Job market training - Orientation/transitioning workshops - Elder and advisor support

Info briefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Career development page i.e. show direction of online course paths to careers - More parental support - FAQ's - Tips for money management - List sources of additional funding (i.e. if children come with spouse) - Applications/policies for funding - What is the students right to education - Parental resources to help kids that don't want to go to school - Students responsibilities - Research to survey drop outs, identify issues and solutions for improvements - FAQ (Elders) – Cultural support - INAC/First Nations policies on funding, who decides who gets what - Strong guidance counselling information - Database of scholarships /bursaries / co-op programs - Labour market trends and information - Understanding the student dropout rate - Funding resources to attend career fairs, conduct college tours, etc.
Calendars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Student calendar/Time table
Links to other websites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Links to social support resources - Connect students to local services i.e. municipal, recreation centres, etc. - Grade 12 orientation visits and virtual tours of college or university - Links to bursary information and funding agencies - Links to chat areas - Directory of jobs/salaries/opportunities - Career interests based on courses you have, career information - Access to employment counsellor and job board - Advertised needs/jobs in communities so students know jobs are in demand

4.3.7 Sudbury Focus Group

Tools	Possible Uses for the Tools or Content
Pod casts, videos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Motivation, communication, encouragement, consequences of neglecting school - Counsellor visit to secondary school - Orientation session for parents and students – what to expect – gear to elementary and secondary students - Testimonials from students on experiences at post-secondary - Cultural identity online workshops with elders - Orientation to city and school (mandatory for some communities) - Career days highlighting successful community members/role models - Successful student profiles, role models - Mentors, study groups, tutoring - Self-esteem workshop - Parents - Supporting Students without Interfering - How to get back to school (target adult learners) - “Perspectives” from First Nations people - Career Planning (high school to post-secondary) – how do personal interests and talents relate to a career, what programs/pathways i.e. paint/draw – visual arts –

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - graphic design – fine arts – careers: graphic artist, teacher, etc - How to write academic papers (MLA, APA, etc) and provide examples - Student responsibilities and accountability - Avoiding Procrastination (may have learning disability, homework instead of partying) - Education pathways, apprenticeships, partnerships, First Nations post-secondary institutions (blended delivery model), transition to college programs, transferable (credits)
Social media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support from each other - Information about study groups - Connecting to other students across the province or by field of study
Discussion Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mentors and tutors - Role models - Student health 101 - Monthly sharing circles with topics - Youth online forum and supports - Skype it - ask an ambassador
Webinars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Workshops for parents and students as an orientation to post-secondary - On-going workshops/webinars for students and their parents re: budgeting, housing (living on own), finding support services, etc. - Workshops for graduating students re: pertinent information needed
Info Briefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parent handbook - Student work book to record, track applications, forms, checklist, etc. - FAQ's for parents - Responding to Racism - Caring for your children while at post-secondary (laws to avoid losing children, child care centres, subsidy information); free clothing outlets i.e. baby clothes; applications for the "Ontario Childcare Supplement", studying/no evening care - Funding information - Budgeting information (limited funding) - For students, webpage with information on applications, bursaries, deadline dates, FAQ's - Task list, check list - Resources for parents, youth, children's programs, etc. - ONECA directory of counsellors list with email and contact information at the post-secondary institutions - College and university open houses "make the family trip" - Orientation sessions at post-secondary institutions - activities and events (best practices) to normalize the experience - Successful student profiles - Promote good health and well-being - How to get back to school – target adult learners - Students need to be aware of who they can contact for help i.e. with online applications, deadline dates, scholarships and bursaries, etc. - Skills on how to access post-secondary programs, what is needed, what is available in communities i.e. Contact North, Ontario Learn.com, how to access subsidy

Calendars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Important deadline dates for students i.e. applications, bursaries - Post secondary community orientation sessions - Study group information - Recognition/promotion of academic achievements, annual education banquet - Annual academic incentives
Links to other websites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Links for counsellors and students for special needs services and other services - Funding information - Resources for counsellors – listing of professional counselling services by city for referrals, listing of community programs, services - OSAP calculator - Links to directory of First Nations - Aboriginal alumni connection - Health and well-being links at post-secondary institutions - How to access food banks at post-secondary institutions - Website for study group information - ONECA link to APSIP and APSIP link to ONECA - Local Native specific employment and training programs i.e. Job Connect - Direct links to housing and day care sites (search by city, region, etc) - Transportation services by city - Up to date directory of native education counsellors by institution - Community friendship centres for programs and services - Post-secondary institutions for financial information, bursaries and scholarships, housing, tutors - Link to Career Cruising software for local communities
Email	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Aboriginal alumni - First Nations counsellors has access to online student accounts to access schedules and grades - Monthly contact with First Nation counsellors

4.3.8 Thunder Bay Focus Group

Tools	Possible Uses for the Tools or Content
Pod casts, videos, blogs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Student wellness and health – meditation software, wellness instructional video, list community wellness centres - Introduction as to what to be prepared for - Challenging funding applications - Education on systemic racism and ignorance - What to do for victim of racism - Dealing with stress (for students) - Motivating students to continue attending post secondary education - How to deal with “culture shock” - Videos on budgeting, time management - APSIP (Aboriginal Post Secondary Information Program) virtual fair - Net working between education counsellors - Student testimonials - Role models to talk to parents, students and community - Options for parents/children to learn about high school programs and careers

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Graduates of universities talking to high school students - Keeping motivated, encouragement - Video for parents by counsellors/support workers - How to prepare secondary students before they leave the community - How to prepare students for culture shock - Funding preparation – Multimedia presentation - Expectations of post-secondary - Counselling for mental health - Balancing school and life outside of school - Video streaming for parents and community members i.e. graduation - Goal setting prior to attending post secondary - Information regarding cost of living, preparedness when students are moving to cities / larger towns - Culture workshops for students - Team building activities for Native Counsellors and guidance counsellors
Social media – facebook, twitter, linked in, Skype	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Online chat group for racism - Social networking would allow staff to connect with more than 1 student - Student should be able to chat with staff - Strong communication connections between students, teachers, and counsellors - Regular contact with students, online counsellors - Counsellors from secondary connecting with post secondary – coordinate services - Question and answer blog - Education counsellors and guidance department network - Peer mentors, support for students - More Native Counsellors who can understand the Native side and who has the language to speak. More understanding of the North is needed – chat - Ask a counsellor section i.e. pre-requisites to get into university
Discussion Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Space for drop in centres for transition from reserve to urban city - Mental health help/counselling - Tools to encourage and motivate - Adopt a family program - More support for both counsellors, parents, foster parents, more counsellors - Get a space for both counsellor/students and have a person who understand the issues - Cultural based programs, positive events - Strong guidance department - Guidance counsellor provide career options, be supportive of options, do not discriminate based on where student received K-8 schooling - Online charts to elementary students for course selection challenges – working with college/university students - Should be a Native speaker on hand in schools, possibly a counsellor - More preparation from First Nation - More support workers to accommodate both students and workers before and after leaving their community and with the receiving community - More work with students before they leave their community and after – More people to work with community students upon entering post secondary - How to address faculty issues in class – Through online - Counsellor checklist

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Educating band council about issues in education - Workshops – have child care provided during session - Student counsellors possibly set up a meeting with band council and how they can get funding to support graduates - Cultural involvement from both, traditional and people who can support the students
Webinars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cultural based training - Set up group meetings on who will or can organize program and training for dealing with students and counsellors - Talk to Aboriginal Recruiters from different colleges and universities - Teleconferencing / video conferencing with current students, staff, faculty, etc - Web based chat option featured students transition stories - Family video conferencing - Culturally based sensitivity training for staff i.e. Native family dynamics - Workshops online to ask for help – How to ask - Self esteem workshops - Curriculum seminar for K-12 - Create a video conferencing network - Online classes
Info Briefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Aboriginal student services handbook i.e. bursaries, day care information, course prerequisites (prepare students in secondary) - How to set up a youth council - Tips on how to find and complete bursary information - Sharon McIver case, Bill C3 - Parents guide - Why support is necessary for their (parents) children, importance of education and empowerment - Not the right institution - Provincial guidelines for HS level to give to counsellors, teachers, and parents - How to prepare a student for a possible “unwelcoming” environment - Unsuccessful graduation rates - Services for the learner disabled - Student loans mess up good credit - Post secondary counsellor or student counsellor – financial assistance - Addictions - Family dynamics of Native Student - Students and family responsibilities, checklist for feedback on parental readiness - No self care time – Finding the time - Resource or information for single parents on child care and/or housing - Have more academic support and more tutors and mentors
Calendars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sports, groups, volleyball, hockey (floor) and others, cooking classes (weekends or Friday afternoons), beadwork, crafts, skating program (weekends), games, programs, or movie clubs - Application deadlines
Links to other websites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SERA helps regarding racism and support for housing - Link to APSIP website which is currently being constructed - Career centres, job postings online, career planning tools - Tours of colleges and universities in Ontario, information Bus routes, car pooling, subsidized day care, adequate boarding homes

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Programs encouraging parental involvement i.e. workshops, excursions - Help single parents with furniture, transportation, donations for people who are in need of stuff – Where to go - Tutors - Online survey regarding space needs - Financial support for computers, living expenses, moving expenses , up to date cost on rent, child care and transportation - Funding policies - EI funding, OSAP, ODSP, WSIB, ads/listings for homes, jobs, employment counselling, etc - Ombudsmen and contact information, landlord tenant act, Aboriginal Housing Strategy, affordable and reliable child care - Upgrading grade 12 English – how to start - Easy access to bursaries / scholarships - Career planning tools i.e. Guiding circles
Email	- Web based connection with each First Nation

4.3.9 Existing Resources (from the focus groups)

Existing resources that were identified by focus group participants fall into two main categories: 1) web-based resources and, 2) people or positions. The people or positions that were identified as resources to students include all of those people that interact with and are in positions to influence student success through their lifelong learning journey (early learning, elementary, secondary, post-secondary) and within community networks, such as, community organizations, friendship centres and Aboriginal employment centres. They include:

- First Nations mentors, alumni, past graduates
Aboriginal peer helpers, tutors, study groups
- First Nation education counsellors, administrators, directors, guidance counsellors, Aboriginal advisors and other support staff, student support workers, teaching assistants, volunteers
- Aboriginal education councils [at colleges and universities], Native trustees, Ontario Chiefs
- Traditional elders, visiting elders
- Disability counsellors, Aboriginal psychologist

The web-based resources identified by participants of the focus group sessions were added to the internet research report entitled, *ONECA Student Transitions Project Web-Based Resources, March 2011*.

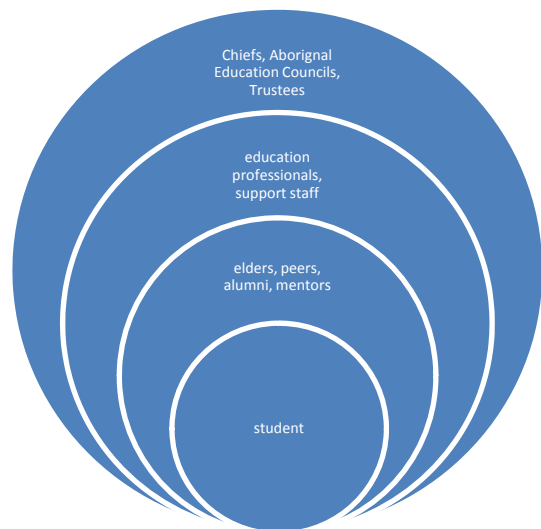


Figure 5 - Resource people to support students

Section 5 – Web-based Survey

5.1 Respondent Profile

The web-based survey received an excellent response rate. There were three hundred and eighty-eight (388) visits to the survey and one hundred and three (103) surveys completed on line. Another two surveys were completed manually, giving a total of one hundred and five (105) completed surveys – an astounding response rate of thirty-seven percent (37%) given the survey design (open ended questions).

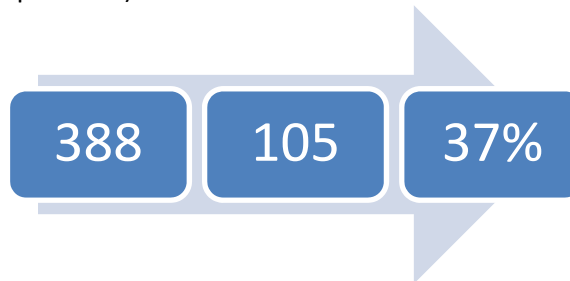


Figure 6 Survey response rate

Of the one hundred and five (105) surveys that were completed, respondents identified themselves in the following categories: 50% or fifty-two (52) students, 24% or twenty-six (26) education professionals, 14% or fifteen (15) parents, 13% or thirteen (13) counsellors and 12% or twelve (12) others. Survey respondents were not asked to indicate whether they were male or female.

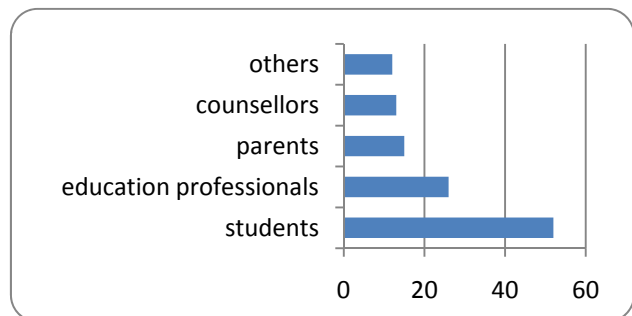


Figure 7 Survey Respondents

5.2 Survey Feedback

Some survey respondents made suggestions for “web-based” tools while others simply offered their suggestions and ideas. Similar responses were grouped and responses were inserted into categories of web-based tools and possible uses for the tools or content. Suggestions that did not fit nicely into web-based categories were simply added to the list of responses.

5.2.1 Personality Prepared

Student Wellness – One hundred and one (101) survey respondents offered suggestions for resources to support student wellness. One (1) respondent did not offer a suggestion and one respondent expressed the concern that “more counselling services are needed but who funds them?” Respondents identified a need for resources in the following areas:

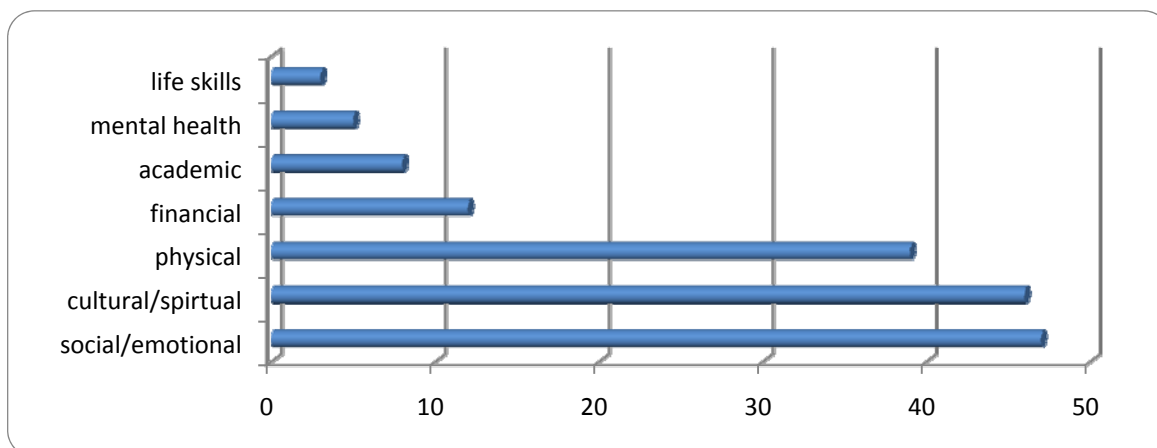


Figure 8 Student wellness

The specific suggestions were as follows.

- Webinars/information – how to be a successful student, sacred medicines, demonstrate skills useful in classrooms, positive healthy thinking, student support, health and well being (nutrition for Aboriginal peoples, sacred medicines), traditional teachings, life skills, budgeting, time management, critical thinking, self-esteem, the cost of post-secondary, Step by step guide – what to do and who to contact at university, career guidance, crisis management, stress, addictions and diabetes, caring for our bodies, drumming, nutrition, cooking classes, cultural and spiritual awareness, writing skills, self care plans, research and writing assistance, career plans starting at elementary, character building
- Calendar – traditional healers/elders, social activities (and family) on and off campus, cultural activities, youth programs, sports, sharing circles/talking circles, socials
- Role models - peer mentors, tutors, buddy program, peer groups, discussion forums, guidance from and access to elders
- Students need to be grounded in who they are as Anishinabe, need a sense of community
- Student self-help group, face book page for students to share experiences, one on one support
- Access to information/services i.e. funding, students who are parents, regional programs, lap top computers, technology, library, fitness, gym memberships, extra-curricular, gathering place, Aboriginal health practitioner, travel home, child care, elder interaction at school, summer placements and coops before post-secondary, special needs, urban life, mental health resources, intergenerational trauma, disabilities, housing, books, local Aboriginal community, student success centre, resource list, list of post-secondary institutions, assessments
- Counsellor training i.e. mental illness, readily available crisis counselling, regular communication with First Nations counsellors (individual and group), communication with school boards, monitor students throughout student years, recognition for retention
- Cultural education for faculty/staff

Language and Culture – One hundred and one (101) survey respondents offered suggestions in support of culture and language resources and four (4) did not. Of the persons that did not offer suggestions, one (1) person felt “current programs are adequate”, another stated it is, “difficult

given the number of different language groups". Three (3) survey respondents suggested a need for free language resources.

The specific responses to this survey question are listed below.

- Tools: flash cards, books, magazines, first hand stories, dictionaries, free classes, language courses, social activities, downloadable resources (Ojibwe Cultural Foundation), text books, audio/video resources, video conferencing computer games, movies, reading and writing materials, workshops, buddy system, tutors, mentors, sharing circles on line (Sioux Hudson Literacy Council), visiting elders, speakers and other community members, socials, immersion camps/retreats, elders teaching booklets, CD's, charts(posters), story-telling, use of language in newsletters, local language conference, language plan kits for academic settings, teaching tools for children and guide (integrating aboriginal needs/culture), workshops on how to save our languages, learning forums and fun forums, e-learning role models, broader range of Native programs at secondary school
- On and off campus resources, high schools too, community based, partnerships with community organizations, community support
- Links – schools with language and culturally relevant programs, associations and agencies that offer cultural support, Native student support centres, list of resource people and resources i.e. cultural centres, friendship centres, on line connections/database connecting Cree communities
- Cultures/languages referenced: Anishnaabemowin, Cree, Michif, Ojibway, Oji-Cree
- Topics: arts, crafts, drama, dance, drumming, making regalia, sweats, ceremonies, today's trends, social problems and politics, stories from the past and how they relate to today, cultural awareness for school staff/faculty and students, multi-cultural workshops and diversity days, powwow dancing, sewing, medicines, song, speech, traditional health, ceremonies, traditions of the past, local history
- Meeting places to share success stories, language room, smudge room, clubs, drumming, transportation to ceremonies
- Calendars - community events, First Nations job fairs, motivational speakers, socials
- Culture and language teachings by Aboriginal professors (holistic approach and to hear the language), local classes, mandatory indigenous language courses first year and incentives to continue, credit courses and conversational language, Flexible delivery times like evenings and weekends
- More funding, same funding support as for French

Setting Educational Goals - All of the one hundred and five (105) survey respondents (except two) made suggestions to assist students in setting educational goals. One respondent stated, "school boards are doing a good job assisting students with setting career goals".

The specific responses were as follows.

- Links - Aboriginal career fairs, education institutions with counselling and guidance services, accessible tutor/mentorship programs (Natives helping Natives), Indigenous based studies, credit recovery, summer school, Native counsellors at post-secondary institutions, community career info/internships, youth forums, supportive community initiatives, child care, affordable housing, summer jobs, funding, scholarships, bursaries, newsletters, Career Cruising (software), part-time employment, coops, labour market information, self-

assessment tools and support to complete the tools, career testing/support, FAQ's for students, early identification and intervention, private learning centres

- Webinars/information - career planning/choices/requirements (start at grade 9, evaluate yearly), guidance programs, talking care of self, visioning, time management, advising sessions at beginning of year, mini-workshops throughout the year, setting education goals & monitoring progress, life skills, parent info sessions, life stories, career planning, public speakers share stories, tutors, peer mentors, range of career possibilities, overcoming stereotypes, giving back to community, understanding Anishnabe issue, learning styles (hands on) and teaching styles for Aboriginal students, elder support, Native language classes, cultural awareness training for faculty, bridging community with post-secondary institutions, goal setting exercises, personal growth, positive reinforcement, academic preparation, research and essay writing, how to apply for scholarships/bursaries, budgeting, healthy lifestyles, volunteerism, strength based exercises, how to become a mentor, leadership skills, interaction with local political leaders, study skills, education planning, guide to determining your passion in life, community support to make the transition, step by step how to's i.e. (access to school email, citing sources, MLA, writing bibliographies)
- Videos – sharing experiences (post-secondary students talking to secondary, post-secondary students talking to post-secondary), highlight Aboriginal people in jobs, motivational speaking tour, students talking to students, careers in the culture and in Aboriginal organizations, teaching circles, meet and greet Aboriginal professors, post-secondary orientation sessions, career opportunities, community role models/elders/mentors in schools to assist and inspire,
- Technology and assistance (computers, printers, scanners, fax)
- Education professionals and counsellors trained, knowledgeable and committed to helping students succeed, bias free, academic counsellors/advisors (4x/year), counselling programs, flexible/regular/monthly access to counsellors (email and in person)
- Calendars – aboriginal advisor meetings, Friendship Circle Lunch Program, Post-secondary recruitment activities
- Job shadowing, student shadowing, mentors assigned to 1st year students, buddy system, group support, individual support, big brother programs
- Funding - urban living, travel home, tutors, website subscriptions and resources, understanding funding restrictions, increased funding for staff, financial assistance

Empowering Students - All survey respondents except two (2), offered suggestions to support empowering students in continuing their education. The specific responses were:

- Funding - for guest speakers, trips to post-secondary institutions and career fairs, secure and adequate funding to graduate, to address student needs, for extra-curricular activities
- Links/access to services - Local education programs searchable through regional data base, transition programs at high school level, Turtle Concepts programs, life coach, mental health, services at post-secondary institutions, career cruising in public school, Ontario Skills Passport, apprenticeship, connect with advisors and faculty, awards and scholarships, visits to post-secondary institutions, employers in the field/coop placements
- Support systems on and off campus - family, peers, elders and other community individuals/supports, Native peer mentors, peer meetings, mentorship programs, webcams for connections between home communities and school
- Role models – First Nations, Inuit and Métis speakers, voices of leadership, elders, elder circles, counsellors, role model videos, industry people, skilled trades, more First Nations teachers in non-First Nation programs, visioning, seeing and building on small successes

- Live chat or blog - stay focused, believe in yourself, student support groups, self-reflection
- Webinars and information (flexible times)- motivation, building confidence/self-esteem, writing skills, group dynamics, team building, life skills, coping skills, essay writing, research skills, math formulas, staying focused, traditional teachings by elders, culture and language, effects of drugs and alcohol, overcoming addictions, skill building, self-help tips for students (resources and assistance), parental involvement, how important is post-secondary education, critical thinking, money management, learning styles, study techniques, interpersonal skills, building a support network, overcoming obstacles, leadership opportunities, mental health, healthy living, budgeting, communication, cultural identity, graduates giving back, time management, goal setting, motivational quotes, IBM type interactive camps for literacy and numeracy skills, handling stress, surviving abusive relationships, proud of heritage, coaching skills, Mini workshops throughout the post-secondary experience (traditional activities, guidance through the stages), achieving your education goals, student success stories like “chicken soup” books with relevant content, preparing for exams, leadership and facilitation skills, elders for motivational speech
- Calendars – special events at post-secondary institutions, drumming circles, elders roundtable, traditional dance teachings, stay in school initiatives, extra-curricular activities, social gatherings, recognition events
- Counsellors and advisors - who take active role in motivating students, need to be available, create comfort zone, regular contact, link community to post-secondary institutions
- Recognition and completion awards, incentives to return to school (welfare)
- Encourage Student Associations and leadership, funding for student groups
- Place to practice ceremonies

Assisting Students with Housing – One hundred (100) respondents offered suggestions to assist with student housing issues. The other five (5) respondents had this to say:

- housing is not a big problem
- on reserve students need to have a way to get a home from the Band without the common notion of having a family
- [housing should be] tied to academic success
- would like to hear from students on how they manage
- No need for homelessness if we look after our own

The specific responses are captured below.

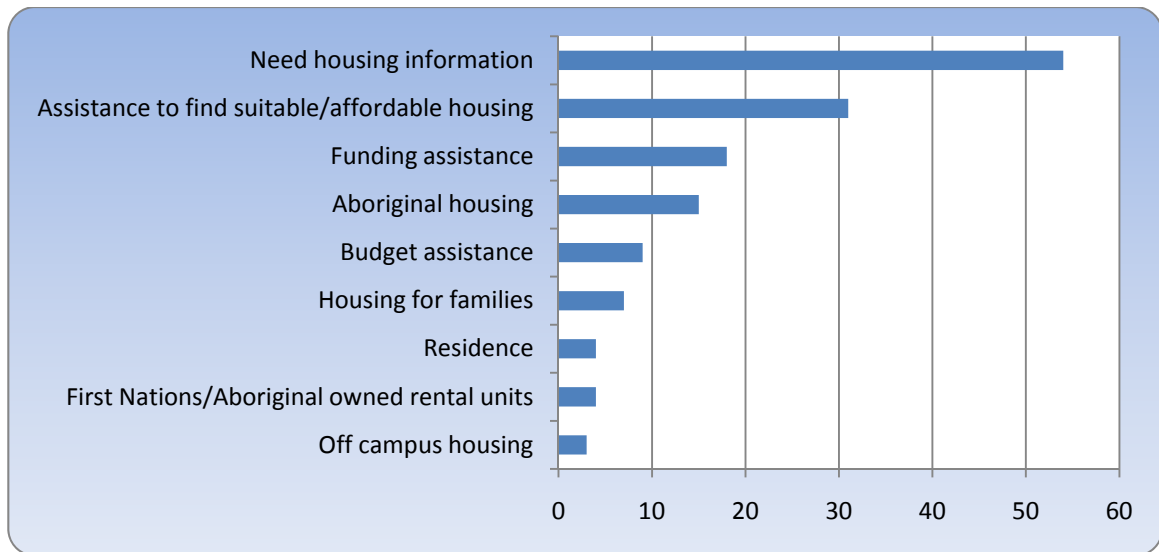


Figure 9 Assisting students with housing

Note: Suggestions for funding assistance included a facilitated admissions process for students applying for housing, and assistance with bursaries.

Support Networks - Of the one hundred and five (105) respondents, one hundred (100) offered suggestions to assist students in developing a supportive network, five (5) did not. Specific suggestions included the following.

- Social networks - buddy system/peers/clubs/face book (for furthering education, communication, problem solving, upcoming events, sharing circles, storytelling), to contact family, counsellors, chats with support staff and student to student
- Links to local community support, community resources i.e. schools, support groups, drop in centres, youth leadership opportunities, child care/subsidy information, friendship centres, health resources, networking between communities, friendship centres and schools, elders, volunteer opportunities, motivational speakers, parenting groups/classes (positive reinforcements, health choices), volunteer opportunities at school and community
- Links to Aboriginal units at post-secondary, counsellors and Aboriginal professors willing to support student, tutors, programs options, First Nations and other post-secondary institutions, committees, conferences, regular meetings
- Community support i.e. reach out to post-secondary institutions, visible support, committed leaders
- Liaison between secondary and post-secondary institutions, friendly environments, build relationships for student success, family/parental support
- Videos - role models/mentors (i.e. goal setting, FAQ's, placement and job help, poster campaigns), empathy and understanding, Native leaders, post-secondary grads, senior students counsellors, live feeds of community events, peer support (academic), how to use online databases/support networks
- Elders i.e. support, traditional teachings, ceremonies, crafts, talking circles
- Calendar/email – upcoming events, cultural activities i.e. drum group, dance troupe, family activities, community recognition and other events, orientation sessions, fun activities, comedians, post luck events, guest speakers, community events

- Stay home one extra year for maturity and life experience
- Webinars/information – inspiration, leadership, role models, crisis centre for kids, abusive families, drug and alcohol awareness, budgeting, healthy eating, life as a post-secondary student, Aboriginal language, planning, mentors (peer helpers, general issues, academic support, careers), speakers on Aboriginal culture, life skills, current issues facing First Nations, Inuit and Métis families, motivational speaking tour, peers who have been there, family and community role in post-secondary (PHD thesis Chantelle Richmond), student success stories and testimonials, resources for families
- Funding – camps, support staff
- Assess student needs then connect with local support groups
- Any help would be great

5.2.2 Selecting a Career

Assisting Students in Selecting a Career - All of the respondents except for one (1) suggested the need for resources to assist students in selecting a career. The specific responses included:

- Funding – summer employment, funding information
- Links – career fairs (elementary, secondary, adults, with Native role models) in First Nations and in city, career testing and assessment tools (secondary and post-secondary), guidance programs, online career questionnaire, technology to explore careers, career exploration with Indigenous base or in local community, internships, coops at secondary level, career paths, Myers-Briggs testing (secondary), visits to post-secondary institutions (meet with faculty, attend classes, meet peers), visits to real job workplaces, transitional programs at post-secondary, career shadow/job matching programs, resources, career requirements, employment/education/training centres, job postings for Native students, take youth to work days, Career Cruising for Native students, career “briefcase” game, special interest magazines, First Nations career recruitment, job fairs
- Guidance (individual and group sessions), seek out and engage Native students, on site
- Start post-secondary with general education courses
- Family support and guidance
- Community support to create awareness of opportunities, ongoing throughout education
- Webinars/information - career counselling, career planning, resume writing, how to search for jobs, testimonials, labour market statistics (starting pay/future pay for careers, career options (not just common ones), current and future job trends, income if no post-secondary), summer employment, guidance counsellors with social work skills, sponsorship, employment opportunities, research help, job shadowing, how to complete career test, helping students find their strengths, FAQ's, education counselling (requirements for careers), counselling to stay in school, finding work in your career path, career software, making it in the work world, establish academic network, study habits, time management, researching occupations, stepping stones to getting there (certificate, diploma, degrees, high skills major), linking careers with Aboriginal business plans (local to international), K-12 using career centres, how education leads to careers, greater focus on careers at secondary, impacts of education, how to get there (education to career), handbook of local careers and others, recruiting for skilled trades, career posters in secondary schools, linking interests with careers, careers to give back to community, transition information
- Not everyone wants to leave their community, data bank

- Videos - experiences from people in careers, community role models/speakers, cooperative learning, mentors, support and encouragement to continue education, motivational speaking tour, recent grads in the workforce, job shadowing, the trades
- Live chat, blogs – with people in different careers, peer to peer

Staying on Track – One hundred and one (101) survey respondents offered suggestions to assist students with staying on track after selecting a career pathway, four (4) did not. A common theme emerged throughout the responses that included the need for frequent and continuous monitoring by the support team (teachers, counsellors, advisors, faculty, tutor, mentors employers) from the community right through to post-secondary graduation.

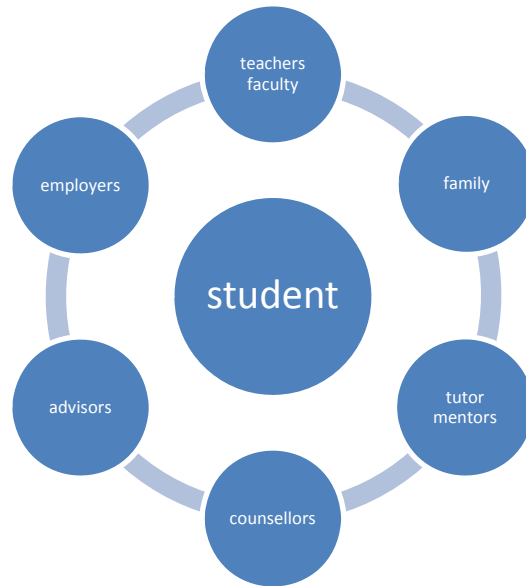


Figure 10 – Staying on track

The specific responses included:

- Support –family, friends, community members/organizations, schools, political leaders, free assistance, job finding groups, continued assistance at all levels, faculty, within communities, access to support networks/mentors in chosen career, counselling teams
- Monitoring/follow up (i.e. on campus) – continuous or intermittent, monthly reporting, assessments, assistance until employment, every term, by teachers and counsellors, with academic advisors, online tracking for students, family and peer mentors, tutors
- Webinars/information – motivation, building confidence/self-esteem, achieving goals (career or achievement), is this the right career for me, identifying and addressing barriers, coping in an urban setting, intergenerational teaching and learning models, best order to take education courses, time management, same career support groups (i.e. monthly), alternatives, following interests and strengths, no post-secondary program is easy, guidance techniques, keeping the spirit happy, making the right choice, staying focused, staying on track, staying motivated, goal-orientation, assistance when you need it most, promote awareness that assistance is available, FAQ's pertaining to specific careers (jobs, who to talk to), consequences, cultural awareness for faculty, researching career options before post-secondary, changing careers, work habits, assistance to MA/Phd levels, good work habits, tracking progress forms, healthy social environment, resume writing, cover letters, the need to aim for excellence, setting and achieving goals, guidance for university applications
- Links – social networks (i.e. study groups), career choices, OSAP, bursaries, certificates, culturally relevant content in programs, work placements, mentorship opportunities, personal/academic/traditional role models and resource people/organizations, community networks/mentors/supports, counsellors at post-secondary, academic support/tutors, life in the city, Aboriginal counsellors/faculty/ reps from different faculties, career counsellors, peer helpers, online surveys, newsletters, success stories at different stages, career/professional

network, employment opportunities, coop placements in chosen field, achievement support groups

- Calendar – community recognition/awards, celebrate successes (even small ones)
- Videos - motivation, building confidence, chat with the experts, advice, advice circles, Nish role models, employers, motivational speakers, learning strategists, emotional support, a day on the job, student success stories, support
- Funding – increased funding for living allowance, etc., incentives (i.e. money for good marks), funding assistance tied to attendance/grades, financial support for career choice, funding sources to attract employers

5.2.3 Academically Prepared

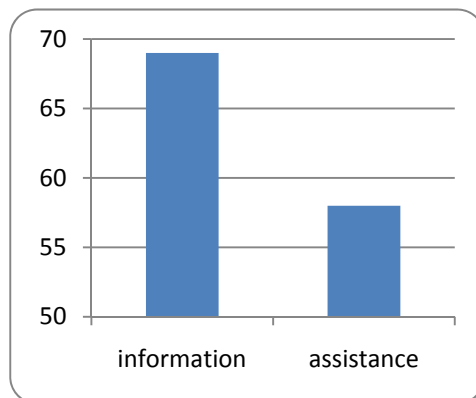


Figure 10 - Making decisions about post-secondary

Making Decisions About Post-Secondary – One hundred and one (101) survey respondents suggested resources to assist students in making decisions about post-secondary and four (4) did not. Of the total responses, some respondents made specific suggestions as to when assistance should begin. Five (5) stated assistance needs to at the elementary level or during the early grades. Twelve (12) suggested assistance is needed at the secondary level.

Sixty-nine (69) respondents suggested that information was needed to assist students. Fifty-eight (58) respondents suggested students require assistance to make decisions about post-secondary education.

The specific responses were:

- Programs/courses – focus programs such as outdoor education to engage students, variety of technological education courses, optional courses to help students make the right decisions, mandatory study skills course in high school i.e. academic writing, transition program, academic readiness, ½ credit career studies course in high school, Career Cruising
- Financial/budgeting – personal budgeting resources, understanding the actual costs of programs, especially ones that require extra materials prior to enrolment
- Information – workload/expectations at college and university, GPA requirements, career pathways, breadth of career options, post-grad planning, make course selections sooner, non-bias (program) information, promoting higher learning, presentations at high school, presentations from post-secondary counsellors, past grads talk to students, how to achieve, sharing circles (personal perspectives) with post-secondary students, student handbook/parent handbook, urban life, job market, interest evaluation, form geared to readiness, encouragement, why post-secondary, ontariocolleges.ca (compare courses area), local community labour market information, promote math, English and sciences, options for changing directions, interconnectivity of careers, funding opportunities, applying for scholarships, research to make the right decisions, motivational speakers/workshops, degree programs, understanding course outcomes, life planning, issues/barriers for students in northern communities, FAQ's (print, discussion forum) grad testimonials, accessing funding
- Videos, webinars – academic professionals, career/academic planning services, determining the best fit (program), feedback, guidance counsellors/parents and communities work closely

with students, admissions procedures, talk to high school students to discuss and guide, career goals, academic advisor assistance in decision making/system procedures/letters of permission, choosing the right school, selecting the right courses/pre-requisites, employment assistance, First Nations reps talking to students, videos/pictures of local (on reserve) grads, engage students (questions, concerns), role models in different careers, the actual recruitment people, Aboriginal counsellors talking to students

- Links – tutors, study groups, peer mentors, talking circles/workshops/discussions (goals, preparation, commitment, check list for readiness), tours of colleges and universities, info packages for areas of study, career assessment tools, newsletters, Aboriginal student services at institutions, summer employment opportunities in different careers, coop placements
- Calendar - Information sessions, Aboriginal career and education fairs, workshops, conferences, meetings, trade shows, enrolment and application deadlines, orientation, First Nations day, First Nations enrolment day

Study Habits, Research and Writing Skills – One hundred and one (101) respondents suggested resources to assist students with study habits, research and writing skills, and two (2) did not. Of the suggestions that were made, some general considerations were offered.

- Preparation needs to begin at elementary
- Students require family support, support from community members and a community support group
- Safe spaces
- Quiet spaces (open after library hours, attached to resource centres)
- Students require computer and internet access
- Students require assistance in and out of class

The specific suggestions included the following.

- Webinars/workshops – study habits, research, writing skills, academic writing, internet research skills, mandatory English course (grammar, style, APA and MLA format), statistics course, study skills, learning styles, critical thinking, the planning process, meeting deadlines
- Information – tutorials on line (sponsored and paid), use of electronic calendar/day planners/organizing tools, study spaces(quiet areas), better support at home, Information - essay writing, tests and exams, how to apply for bursaries/scholarships, options to graduate quicker, handouts with information/resources, how to work, a deadline is a deadline, reasons to study, ways to improve writing skills, how to kits, samples, access to healthy food – food affects moods/depression/learning, benefits of encouragement to read and write short stories, building study groups/achievement support groups, career prospects, choosing the right career path
- Videos – talk to/hear success stories of students and grads, profile students, FAQ's, First Nations reps making contact with student before they get to university, communications counselling (resume, cover letter, proofreading assignments), moving on after residential school experience, cultural adjustment concerns (moving away), motivational speakers, encouragement, importance of education/staying focussed, setting priorities (assignments, studies), services and resources at library/resource personnel/learning or student services centre (for writing papers), how to get more money in your pocket (studying, time management), how to be a better student, how to access library and online resources, First Nations role models, cultural teachings – self care, video for parents on how to raise post-secondary graduates, real life experiences from peers/role models/community members/career professionals, college/university prep learning skills

- Discussion/groups – buddy system, mentors and tutors in communities and at post-secondary, coaching, study groups with assistance, Native study group, community connection to post-secondary support personnel, communications tutor, classes or information sessions
- Links – existing resources, online research library (resources, developing topics), submit essays to check for APA format, online support programs, contacts for support (who to talk to), Aboriginal contacts at post-secondary institutions, tutor/mentor jobs, incentives for good grades, laptops and internet access, services in and out of class, newsletters, bursaries/awards/incentives, contests to win school supplies, interactive websites for study and writing skills
- Social Networks and Email – regular emails/tips/reminders, consistent encouragement, compassionate listeners (faculty)

Selecting the Right School – One hundred and one (101) respondents offered suggestions to assist students in selecting the right school, one (1) did not. One (1) respondent believes this is being done really well and another stated, these resources are available but require the support of an excellent liaison person. Common responses are captured in the following chart.

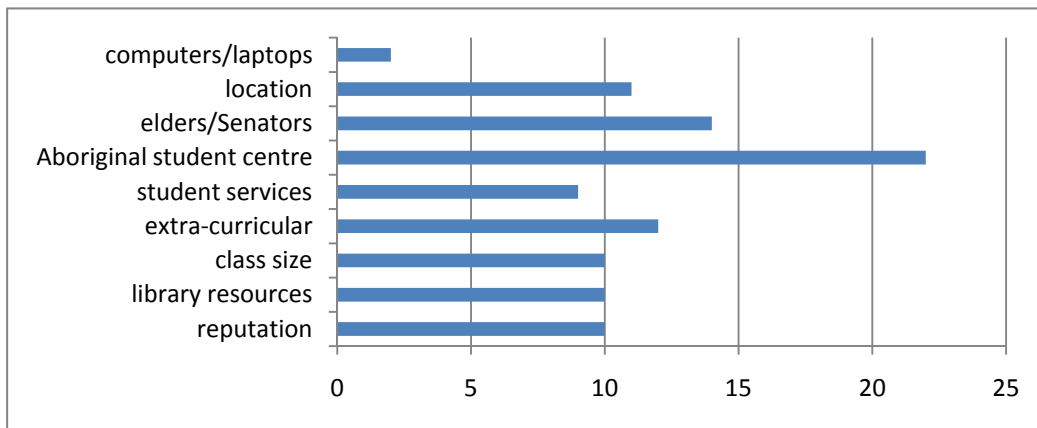


Figure 11 - Selecting the right school

Notes: Reputation includes i.e. First Nations programs, class size also includes minimum class size, Aboriginal student centres includes cultural activities. Considerations that were mentioned only once were: parent/guardian support, internet access, Aboriginal faculty and community living.

Other suggestions that were made included:

- Assistance i.e. liaison person, recruiters knowing support systems, guidance counselling on a regular basis, at career fairs, visits to schools and one on one sessions with students, career counselling, faculty and recruiters to visit high schools one at a time and time to talk, FN staff, ability of teachers, social supports
- Videos - word of mouth promotion, how to select the right school, student experiences and from specific schools, recruitment videos/school tours, working together to assist students in making the right decisions, orientation, past/current students help/mentor, career pathways, transitional assistance, research in planning to attend post-secondary, current/grad/employed students experiences, Credibility Best Choices for You, meeting your individual needs, encouragement (even if you mess up), what are my choices, best option for best results, where can I get the best deal, a planning process (grade 7 and on), perfect attendance, life in the big city, know yourself to create a career pathway, feeling part of the school community, 1

or 2 day orientations at institutions, speakers/professionals (what's best for student, sacrifices), prep at community, what is the desired career path/what is important to the student, what to expect

- Discussion – student chat rooms to discuss experience, student mentors
- Webinars – research on the topic, goal setting (early),
- Information (needs to be accessible to communities)– complete program/course information, schools and services, budgeting, how to compare, how to use public transit, career choices, how to accelerate to graduation/options, community programs, booklet of different schools in chosen field, comparison of post-secondary institutions, application processes, questionnaire to narrow options, Aboriginal learning styles, where do Aboriginal students attend post-secondary, pictures and testimonials from students
- Links - online searchable data base for institutions, course catalogues/course outlines, school fairs, info on selecting the right school (institution websites, easily accessible, options), APSIP current tour dates, high schools and First Nations, services at institutions, housing, newsletter, job availability, online programs, Maclean's rating, employers that hire from institutions, employed graduates ratings

Assisting Students Academically – Ninety-seven (97) respondents suggested resources to assist students academically in the community, at the secondary school and at the post-secondary institution, eight (8) did not.

The suggestions included:

- Assistance evenings and weekends, be visible, meet every student, night classes, internet access/cafe, library (in community and at post-secondary), computers, smart boards
- Support needed - secondary, post-secondary, community, Aboriginal student support centres, outreach by friendship centres or Aboriginal centres in areas of post-secondary institutions
- Who - youth groups, youth voices, other students, mentors, free tutors (variety of subjects) on line, social workers, child and youth workers, positive role models, a provincial network, research to assess where students need help, monitor success regularly e.g. pilot projects, family, elders, good Native counsellors/assistance, peer counsellors, education assistants for one on one help, support from First Nations staff, Native advisor
- Information – life skills, well-defined counselling services, realistic development models for individual circumstances, promote services, economy stability, seminars, guidance programs in schools, taking responsibility for learning, career planning (grade 8, earlier), goal setting/visioning, competitiveness of post-secondary admissions/scholarships, posters, pictures, books, articles, help with questions from each department, student placements in later years, importance of education, preparing for the transition, campus life/college life, study techniques, budgeting, communication skills, many opportunities to get help, graduates/role models promoting success and education, teaching strategies, training re: disabilities, attitudes and ways of working, collaborative supports, workshops, positivity, career and academic counselling, good work habits, career options, prep for post-secondary, career planning, cultural support and exposure (at high schools), safe environment for learning, local HR strategies, motivation, pair grade 12 students with post-secondary students for the day (and graduate with undergraduate student), incentive programs, non-judgmental, adapting to change, solving problems, blending mainstream and cultural relevant supports (physical/emotional/social/spiritual), communication/reporting to parents and to community at least quarterly (funding and progress), early intervention/assessments,

engagement/retention strategies, learning style analysis, employers to relate to career choices

- Links – where to access food, housing, student volunteer and coop opportunities, math and English tutors, community events i.e. feasts, summer programs/opportunities, online courses to take in the community (with support and someone to monitor progress), community resources, bridging programs, social networks, scholarshipscanada.com, study places, child care, after school programs, forums for parents/students/communities, learning centres (homework help, use of computers, computer tutors)
- Email – information, announcements, multiple resources available (send multiple times), access to teacher assistance, extra help opportunities, homework clubs, drop ins,
- Calendar – socials, community recognition events to encourage/motivate and acknowledge hard work and achievements
- Funding – for tutor programs in community, transportation incentives, cash incentives, funding for all students, stay in school incentives, for scholarships

5.2.4 Financially Prepared

Understanding the Costs of Post-Secondary Education – One hundred and four (104) survey respondents provided suggestions to assist students in understanding the costs of post-secondary education and one (1) did not. One (1) respondent suggested these resources are already available in our schools from both the Ontario University Admissions Centre and the Ontario College Application Service. Survey respondents suggested assistance was required in the following categories.

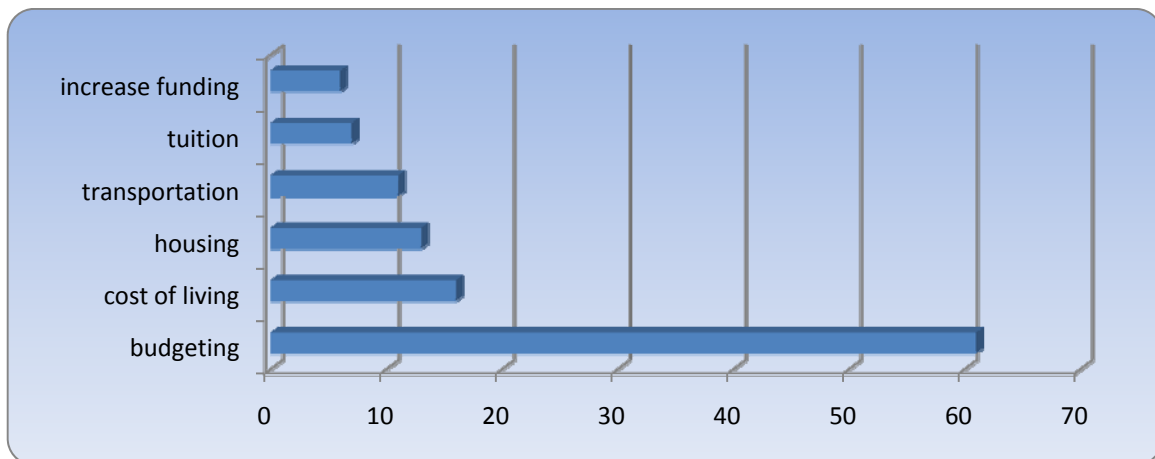


Figure 12 Cost of post-secondary

Other suggestions that were provided included the following.

- Webinars – life skills training, independent living vs. community that cares for each other, how to apply for scholarships and bursaries, financially stable while in school, budgeting, funding options, financial planning, value of money/sensible spending, value of receiving funding support, how funding works and what to expect, cost breakdown per course/semester, money management, understanding the costs of education

- Information - funding application dates and guidelines, sample costs of attaining a post-secondary education, cost of bad habits (recreation), budget sheets, promote education savings accounts at birth, costs of living (and away from home) by semester and by housing choice, how to balance the bankbook, cost of food, use of credit cards, cost of everyday items, planning steps, information for parents and teachers, time and budget management, city to city cost of living analysis and housing availability, keeping track of hidden costs, how to save money, budgeting tips, setting financial goals to meet educational needs, create cost scenarios for different communities, living within your means, monthly budget sheets and keeping receipts, FAQ's, jobs and tax rebates, the importance for saving for post-secondary, terms and conditions of funding support, cost of living increases/tuition increases
- Videos – students/graduates share budgeting experience, sample budgets with average costs (include hidden costs/unexpected costs) by college or university based on which city, real stories by community members, counsellor visits, liaison workers in schools
- Calendars – fees due, when to look for housing, application deadlines, reporting time lines
- Links – where to access food/coupons, scholarships and bursaries, community resources, online financial summary, community support services (i.e. printing), Native specific scholarships and bursaries, NAAF, OSAP information, online learning to prepare students for life away from the comforts of home and family, summer employment, part-time employment, adequate housing options, funding for textbooks, bank volunteers
- Budgeting education earlier i.e. grade school, ½ credit mandatory course in high school, private budget consultations for students and parents

Understanding Financial Obligations – Ninety-seven (97) respondents made suggestions to assist students in understanding their financial obligations, seven (7) did not. Of the respondents that did not offer suggestions, one (1) thought there is enough information on this, two (2) felt this is being done now, and two (2) suggested that no improvements are needed in this area. Suggestions that were stated repeatedly fall into three main categories: funding or increase in funding, importance of deadlines and funding policies, limitations and obligations.

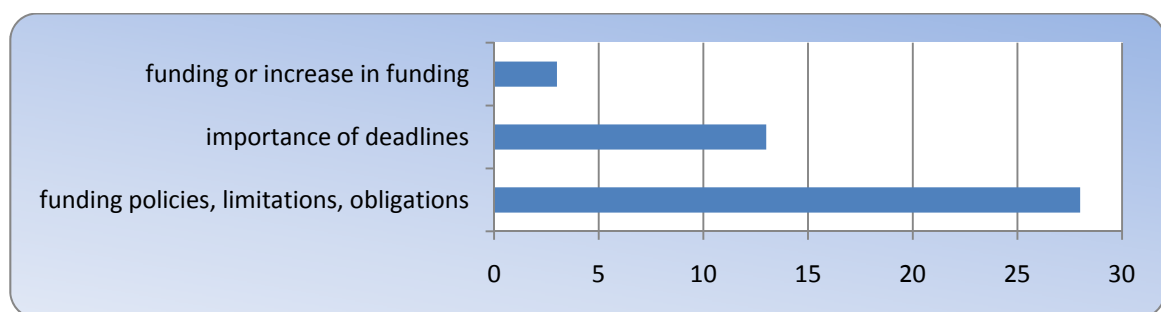


Figure 13 Understanding financial obligations

The specific suggestions included the following:

- Mandatory workshops/course in community and at school, community resources, be careful of information overload, budgeting program
- Videos – successful students, consultation with guidance department and regular follow-up first year, group sessions and one on one counselling, what it means to be a post-secondary student, preparing for post-secondary, student obligations, students talking to counsellors

discussing obligations, check-ups with informed people, real life scenarios, information sessions, how to complete applications, grateful for funding, FAQ's

- Webinars or information - cost-analysis web based forms, self-evaluation each semester, list all fees and costs i.e. dropping courses, limits to funding, needs vs. wants, sample budgets i.e. laundry), funding policies, budgeting, dedication + hard work = success, awareness of all costs, obligations/accountability to funders and consequences, banking, ONECA First Nations Sponsored Student Handbook (what to consider before applying to post-secondary), information about bursaries, importance of maintaining good grades (maintaining and getting funding), Fact sheet on paying for loans, pros/cons/options for funding, managing money for the first time, money for education is a serious matter, dealing with stress, consequences of poor attendance, student contracts, educational plan, school talk with our Chiefs, time management, research on First Nations, Inuit and Métis funding for education, nothing is free, how OSAP works, clearing OSAP debts, PSSSP wait lists, sponsored vs. OSAP, posters, examples, information packages, budgeting, importance of meeting deadlines (funding and academic), Facts about Funding, saving money, keeping money
- Links - funding sources, newsletter, financial offices at post-secondary institutions, First Nations funding offices, Aboriginal student counsellor
- Email – reminders, counsellor assistance, bankers that volunteer, post-secondary facilitators, advising program, support staff, read institution guidelines
- Calendar –post reporting deadlines, deadlines for funding applications
- Transition period to teach what is needed
- Students need to place a down payment to be reimbursed upon completion
- Monthly support groups for students

Obtaining Funding - Ninety-nine (99) respondents suggested resources to assist students with obtaining funding for post-secondary, five (5) did not. Of the five that did not offer suggestions, one suggested that all funding is assumed, one stated that the Timiskaming First Nation is doing a good job and one stated the Board of Education is doing a good job in providing information.

Of the respondents that offered suggestions, three main categories emerged. They include the need for: information, assistance and technology incentives or equipment.

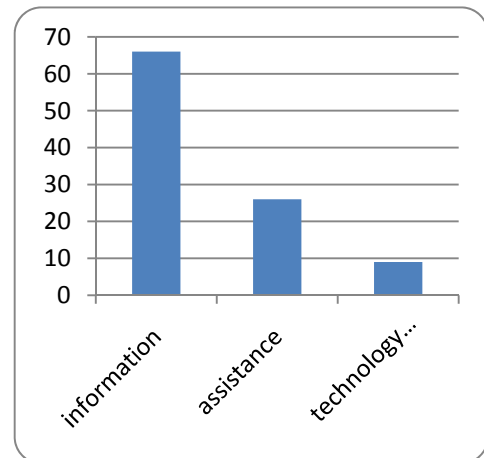


Figure 14 Obtaining funding for post-secondary

Other suggestions included the following.

- Calendars – deadlines to apply
- Information –institution specific scholarships and bursaries, central repository of information related to obtaining funding for scholarships, bursaries, technology incentives, money incentives and contact information, career specific information, newsletters, job opportunities, help with managing money, FAQ's, funding options, explain scholarships and bursary options/processes, benefits of accessing the university/college disability service office, how employment equality/equity works and government quotas, scholarship writing labs,

where and how to apply, how to find scholarships, portfolios as a source for scholarship and job applications, financial assistance for single parents

- Discussions – guided group sessions
- Workshops - how to apply, why apply, benefits, one on one application assistance
- Links - scholarships, bursaries, technology incentives, money incentives and contact information, for determining costs, applications for funding, industry professionals that provide funding, guidance counsellors who can help, link to other websites to promote information, personnel available to help, newsletters, websites dedicated to informing students, Career Cruising for Native students, summer jobs (save money for education), student loans, www.scholarshipscanada.com
- Social networking/emails – lists of funding information
- Currently all funding is assumed, if changed then a transition period will be needed, more advertising of funding sources, user friendly website, need scholarships not based on academics or financial need, one stop resource, more bursaries for Aboriginals, info at secondary school level, easy to use search engines, up-to-date and available info, funding that is not age discriminative, info available in community, bursaries with return of service in educating others, more bursaries, scholarships and grants available to those less fortunate, reduce loans if good grades, good relationships between school support staff, education managers from local community organizations for FAQ's, be more understanding, accessible info, extended deadlines, let government know they cannot keep chipping away at our education dollars, check the email and bulletin boards for info, academic support bursaries specific to field of study, more liaison workers in schools (elementary, secondary and post-secondary) and visible, simplified application processes, your work in completing the application is proof you want an education
- Financial – money and technology incentives (start up) available at high school level, First Nations funding to obtain technology or help offset the costs

Finding Part-Time Work – One hundred and two (102) survey respondents offered suggestions to assist students in finding part-time work while attending post-secondary, three (3) did not. The suggestions from respondents fall into two (2) main categories: information is needed and assistance is needed.

Of the total number of respondents that offered suggestions, eight (8) made cautionary statements on the subject of working while attending post-secondary. The following were the cautionary statements.

- awareness of study time vs. work time, it might interfere with schooling
- employers expect more from students than they are capable of giving but it's a solution to the money problems
- part-time jobs only if needed
- part-time work while attending school is tough and something that I struggled with throughout my post-secondary experience
- going to school is a full-time job with all the assignments
- even strong students get behind quickly if work comes into the schedule

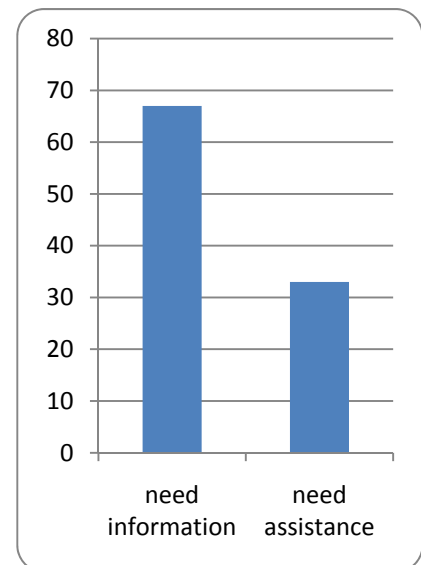


Figure 15 Assisting with part-time work

- students should be able to focus on academics only
- Part-time work raises the issue of child care

The specific suggestions included the following.

- Information – job boards (college, friendship centres, etc), services that are available, where to go to get assistance, where to go to look for jobs, job placements, employer visits, hiring Aboriginal youth is good for your business, how to look for jobs, assistance from employment counsellors/officers, jobs on campus (complete OSAP application for eligibility/data collection) recognize time commitments to education, how to pamphlet, coop opportunities close to community, help with buying work clothes, there are many opportunities just apply, transit information, list of employers, partnerships between business and colleges/universities for student employment opportunities
- Workshop/assistance – writing cover letters and resumes (tips), job readiness, organizational skills, time management, job search skills, self-esteem, how to use job banks, employability skills training, homework assistance, study skills
- Videos – tutors, guided and on-going group sessions and one on one counselling, get community more involved in hiring students, jobs that support local Aboriginal community, finding career related jobs, personal stories, career guidance (at all levels of education)
- Link – employment services/career services/Aboriginal student services at post-secondary institutions, job fairs on and off campus, industry opportunities, Kijiji, Workopolis, Monster, First Nations/Aboriginal businesses, Aboriginal student associations, employment offices in and outside of Aboriginal communities (around school hours, in field of study), internship opportunities, newspapers, business listings, local employment agencies, career centres
- Caution – awareness of study time vs. work time, it might interfere with schooling, employers expect more from students than they are capable of giving but it's a solution to the money problems, part-time jobs only if needed, part-time work while attending school is tough and something that I struggled with throughout my post-secondary experience, going to school is a full-time job with all the assignments, even strong students get behind quickly if work comes into the schedule, students should be able to focus on academics only
- Funding – more funding so students don't have to work, funding for part-time work

5.7 Preparing for a Post-Secondary Environment

Preparing for Campus Life – Ninety-eight (98) respondents offered suggestions to prepare students for campus life, seven (7) did not. Factors that affect preparing students for campus life fall into the following categories: class size, independent living, study habits, cultural diversity information and events, tours and orientations.

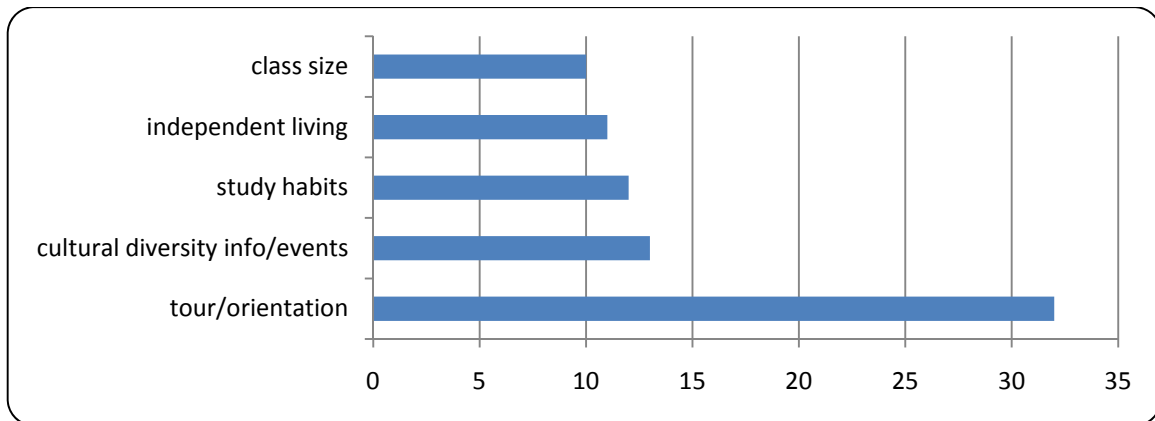


Figure 16 Factors affecting preparation for campus life

Note: It was suggested that the duration of post-secondary tours and orientation sessions may last up to one week or even a month.

The specific suggestions included:

- Information - campus maps, organizations, program info, cultural diversity, life skills, classroom settings, preparation for post-secondary (get housing and child care set up before school starts, financial, budgeting), FAQ's, encourage/motivate, booklet of what to look for, cultural identity, truth about our history, study habits, advantages after graduation, engaging activities during site visits, preparing for college life (class size, deadlines, making friends, balance life), checklist to keep organized, how to use libraries and transit systems, peer tutor information (before post-secondary)
- Link – one stop info source to assist with preparation, friendship centres, study groups, campus life, cultural diversity, Aboriginal centres/programs, services at institutions (i.e. special interest groups, computer access), organizations in surrounding community, campus tours, institutions, forums, Lakehead Aboriginal Incentives Department
- Use all kinds of media (social networks, facebook, blog, web tours)
- Discussion – other students (challenges and opportunities), guided group sessions, one on one counselling, weekly gathering of students to inspire each other, ask students their needs
- Videos - success stories (existing/grad students), assistance from recruiter, education counsellors, someone who has lived this, guest speakers, mentors, shadowing, someone from community, peers/students, peer modeling, what's out there and what to expect (reality), Aboriginal tour guide, introduction to school community, class location tours, Native student support worker, liaison workers, info sessions, assistance to keep organized, guest student (one or two days), How to Prepare for Campus Life (living in student residence, eating habits, cultural diversity), meet advisor, meet Aboriginal professor, role models, senior student support
- Webinars/workshops – self-esteem, cultural teachings, cultural sensitivity/awareness, prep course in community, expectations (APA format, writing skills, etc), transition to college or university
- Mandatory, 5 buddy system, tours/prep/reality course at secondary level spring or early summer live and virtual, family/loved ones at orientation, collaboration between secondary and post secondary counsellors and visible in the schools, start educating at a young age (reading, writing, math, culture, personal management), transition time

- Email – two way communication with guidance/student services and peer mentors for smooth transitions to deal with external factors (culture shock, being away from home, class sizes)
- Funding for visits to post-secondary institutions particularly for northern students



Determining the Best Learning Environment - Ninety-five (95) survey respondents suggested resources to assist students in determining the best learning environment (college, university, Aboriginal institution), eight (8) did not. Of the respondents that offered suggestions, nine (9) supported the idea of tours to post-secondary institutions as a measure to assist students in determining the best environment.

Respondents that did not offer suggestions, included one (1) person that stated, “I think the secondary courses is enough to prepare them academically”. Another respondent commented that “Confederation College and Lakehead University are addressing such issues admirably”.

Specific suggestions to assist students in determining the best learning environment for them included the following.

- Information –budgeting, long-term goals, career assessment information, show the options and their services (i.e. IT services, housing, Aboriginal services, employers that recruit students, reputation for fields of study, student support services), student success rates and retention rates, student employment rates after graduation, student satisfaction info, college/university catalogues, facts, list of institutions with short bios/introductions from current/past students, college vs. university and why, FAQ’s for parents and students, students history of education (what worked in past, what’s best for them), how institutions complement each other (i.e. college before going to university), understanding high school marks, surveys (students, people from within the communities), colleges prepare students for the workplace, pros/cons of different kinds of institutions, research to support career choices, training for guidance staff, a checklist to prioritize options, student testimonials (address learning styles)
- Assessments - assess learning, map out learning plan, aptitude test for academic ability, career testing/matching (i.e. Myers-Briggs), psychological tests to determine learning style and suitable environment, strengths and personally tests, personality assessments
- Videos/blogs – presentations from institutions, students sharing experiences (inc. learning styles), guided group sessions and one on one counselling to share experiences, finding your fit, support the student’s choice, mentors/people from programs, “a day in the life of”
- Assistance – liaison worker working closely with guidance department, one on one advising/counselling/in-depth assistance for grades 9 – 12, program advising, family, someone to speak to, career counselling in the community, targeted support for Aboriginal students, student support workers, work closely with guidance and student success teachers to support student goals and learning abilities,
- Links – to research the topic, credit transfer information, college/university fairs, youth conferences, information sessions, Aboriginal resource centres, cultural centres, career fairs, programs, careers

- Tours – to each school, sitting in on lectures, demonstration week to see what it’s like, one week transitional programs to grasp student life, a day or two to attend the different levels to see which they prefer

Finding Career Fairs and Post-Secondary Tours - Ninety-nine (99) respondents offered suggestions for resources to support students finding information about career fairs and post-secondary tours and seven (7) did not. One respondent suggested there are lots of resources available and students just need to access them. Fifteen (15) suggested the best way to assist students with this is to have the information in one place – one website that is central, up-to-date and well-maintained.

The specific suggestions included the following.

- Transportation and time away from school to go to career fairs and post-secondary tours
- Links – one central well-maintained website (ONECA or APSIP), where and who to call, searchable online links by region or institution, First Nations have links to web-based current information, community web pages, post-secondary institutions, upcoming or annual events, employment centres, college and university contacts, on line directory, student portal, student support services, ONECA listings
- Information - Information guides, how to look online, traditional information sharing, classroom presentations, careers and trades, have one visit at a time to focus on attraction rather than competition, list (at band office), focus on the students responsibility to research and make contacts, value of career fairs/post-secondary tours, information sessions, booklet with regular events, a complete understanding i.e. deadlines, etc., what do students say about career fairs and post-secondary visits, students to lend knowledge and support, students visit high schools to present/share information
- Promotion - posters, newspapers, newsletters, flyers, ads on facebook, radio, email, blogs, displays, billboards, wherever students are, wherever students access information, make info accessible, pow wows, webinars/workshops, online forum, community centres, text, ipads, twitter, feeds, ONECA communications and marketing (faster, shorter blurbs, catchy ads) through diverse mediums, better branding on campus, online schedule, email secondary students, schools and communities (include northern communities)
- Calendars for each community, newsletters sent to students
- People resources – family, Aboriginal guidance counsellors, counsellors at secondary schools, education counsellors, on-going guided group sessions and one on one counselling, coordination between schools and communities, profs giving out information
- Funding to support students attending these events

Section 6 - Internet Research and Existing Web-based Resources

A wealth of information was gathered throughout the duration of the project to locate existing web-based information that may be helpful in supporting Aboriginal students transitioning to post-secondary. The bulk of the information accessed through the internet search includes a title or name, a brief description (if necessary) and the web site address. The information obtained is organized into different subject headings. In some categories the research may appear incomplete, when in actual fact

the information that is presented is limited due to what was available on the internet, for example, some schools and community agencies were not found to have web sites.

Existing web-based resources identified by focus group participants was added to the internet research for a complete list of web-based information gained throughout the duration of the project. The compilation of existing web-based resources is organized into the following categories.

Schools for First Nations, Inuit and Métis	Financial Assistance
Community Education Services	Employment Assistance for Students and Grads
Aboriginal Student Centres, Colleges	Applying for Post-Secondary
Aboriginal Services, Universities	Child Care
Organizations Supporting First Nations, Inuit & Métis	Safety
Language and Culture	Youth Voices
Academic Support	Youth Employment
For Counsellors and Educators	Advocacy in Education
Career Support	Social Media
Health and Wellness	Other Resources

The report of existing web-based resources is entitled, *ONECA Student Transitions Project Web-Based Resources, March 2011* and is available at the ONECA website at www.oneca.com.

Section 7 – Evaluation of Information

7.1 Participation

The project attracted high numbers of counsellors and education professionals at the focus group sessions. This was expected given the data base of contact information ONECA had available to them. There was a lower rate of participation from students and parents in the focus groups, which was also anticipated as the sessions were facilitated during school and work hours. While the need for more student voices was articulated at several of the focus group sessions, the web-based survey attracted a fifty percent (50%) participation rate from students.

Overall, the project attracted two hundred and fifteen (215) participants, who came from all geographic regions of Ontario and beyond. The distribution of participants as per the ONECA membership districts was as follows:

Brantford, 19	London, 18
Fort Frances, 7	Nakina, 5
Georgian Bay, 29	Peterborough, 27
James Bay, 16	Sioux Lookout, 10
Kenora, 4	Sudbury, 56
Lakehead, 16	Other, 7

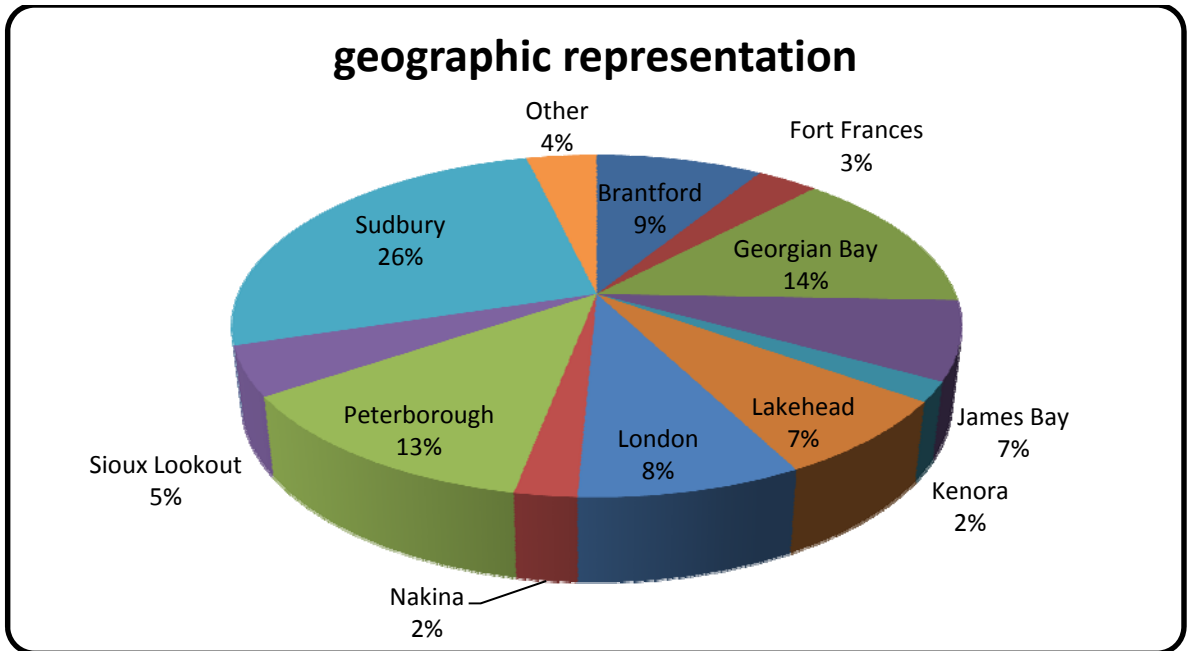


Figure 17 Project participants by ONECA districts

Note: Participants in the category “Other” were from outside of Ontario. One person did not provide an address.

The project was of significant importance to participants given the distances travelled to attend the focus group sessions i.e. Cape Croker First Nation to Barrie, St. Catharines to London and Garden River First Nation to Sudbury.

7.2 General Feedback



The nature of the project raised both fear and concern from participants. The question was asked more than once, “Is this project [to develop web-based tools to support students] intended to replace the need for counsellors?” Participants were reassured that the creation of web-based tools by ONECA is intended to support the work of counsellors, parents, educational professionals and others as they assist students on their educational journey.

Focus group participants expressed their appreciation for a process that encouraged both individual feedback and small group discussions. This is what they had to say:

- “It was a good process. It kept moving. The discussions really evolved as the process continued. I found that I was sounding my voice passionately in the end. It isn’t just a place where the collective is heard. It’s a place where everyone can have a voice.”
- “I liked the process. It was so informal. When working in the institutions, everything is so formal. In some forums, some voices tend to get lost in the process. This process allowed

everyone to have their voices heard, whether you worked independently or if you participated in discussion. I like the discussion because I get ideas from other people. “

Participants of the focus group sessions were eager to participate. They brought excitement and enthusiasm to the project. Participants had this to say:

- “I am already thinking of what you can do now.”
- “The focus group was very exciting and there was great dialogue. ONECA is definitely on to something and hopefully they can find the funds to develop these badly needed tools. Thank you ONECA!”

7.3 The Data

Participants revealed a host of challenges that need to be addressed to support students as they transition to post-secondary and through to graduation. Students that were considered included elementary, secondary, new high school graduates, special needs students, gifted students and adult learners who may be returning to school.

Several recurring themes emerged from the data - the need for regular communication between all stakeholder groups (students, parents, educators, administrators, counsellors and other support staff), the need for access to information and assistance, the need for funding support and assistance, the need for culturally relevant services and content (courses and programs) and the need for ongoing support to assist students transitioning to post-secondary education.

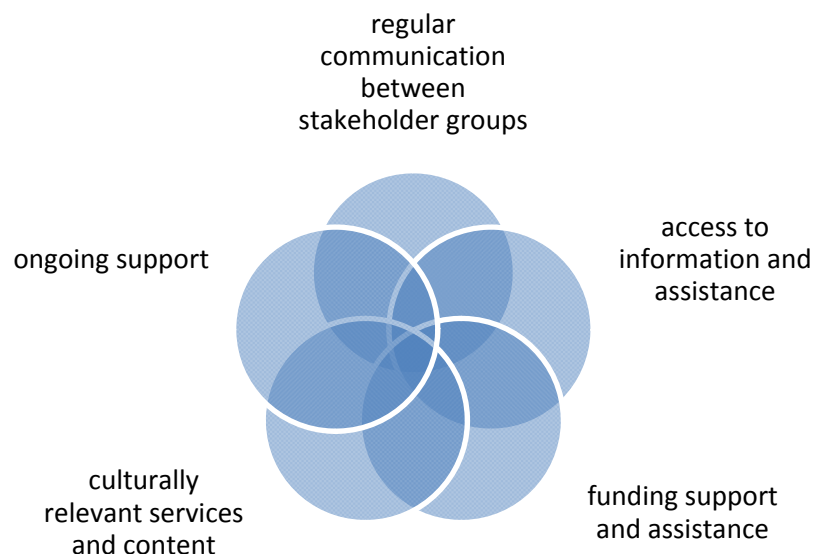


Figure 18 Recurring themes

Project participants also offered suggestions that will affect the overall design and presentation of the content for the web portal. Their suggestions are reflected in the following recommendations.

1. Web-based content needs to reflect First Nations, Inuit and Métis people, their histories, their knowledge and their perspectives.
2. Present content in a variety of ways to attract interest from a wide variety of learners.
3. Utilize a variety of social media and forums to reach the maximum number of people.
4. Information must be informative, interactive and delivered in real time whenever possible.
5. Employ a concentrated effort to maintain current and up-to-date information.
6. Consider the creation of a web-based application to seek ongoing feedback on web-based tools for continuous improvement.

Given the participant profile information gathered, ONECA may want to consider further research to examine the correlation between the home community and current positions (i.e. student, professional, other) to further assess the influential factors that attribute to student transitions and success in post-secondary. This data is also useful in selecting persons to share their stories and testimonials.

Section 8 – Conclusion

The Aboriginal Student Transitions Project was highly successful in gathering a wealth of information from a variety of stakeholders within and outside of Ontario to support the creation of web-based resources to support First Nations, Inuit and Métis students transitioning to post-secondary. Students, parents, educational professionals and community members offered considerable time and energy to the project. Participants were eager to assist in the development of web-based tools to enhance the work that is currently being done to support the educational goals and visions of First Nations, Inuit and Métis students.

Project participants supported the need to present cultural content and culturally relevant services in a variety of ways to increase access to information and assistance to students. Culturally relevant and appropriate content has the potential to increase the recruitment, retention and success of students as they pursue their post-secondary studies.

“It’s absolutely great to see how we can all work together when we have a common goal. ONECA is right on track with this project and the benefits are endless. It’s nice to see a project that is grassroots driven.”

Appendix – List of Charts and Illustrations

Description	Page
Figure 1 Persons of influence	7
Figure 2 Map of Ontario	10
Figure 3 Gender of focus group participants	10
Figure 4 Participant categories at focus groups	11
Figure 5 Resource people to support students	28
Figure 6 Survey response rate	29
Figure 7 Survey respondents	29
Figure 8 Student wellness	30
Figure 9 Assisting students with housing	34
Figure 10 Staying on track	36
Figure 11 Making decisions about post-secondary	37
Figure 12 Selecting the right school	39
Figure 13 Cost of post-secondary	41
Figure 14 Understanding financial obligations	42
Figure 15 Obtaining funding for post-secondary	43
Figure 16 Assisting with part-time work	44
Figure 17 Factors affecting campus life	46
Figure 18 Project participants by ONECA districts	50
Figure 19 Recurring themes	51