

# Creating Culturally Respectful Administrative Policies: Admissions, Data, Research, and Self-Identification

Treaty One territory, on the traditional territory of the  
Anishinaabe peoples and the homeland of the Metis Nation.

Location of self in writing and research is integral to issues of accountability and the location from which we study, write and participate in knowledge creation

- Absolon and Cam Willett

This goes beyond us as individuals.

Self location and reflection on the institutions we work in is integral to understanding the complicated histories, strengths and weakness that exist within our institutions.

This is key when thinking about policy because these need continue to be appropriate and relevant after we are gone.

# Why it matters...

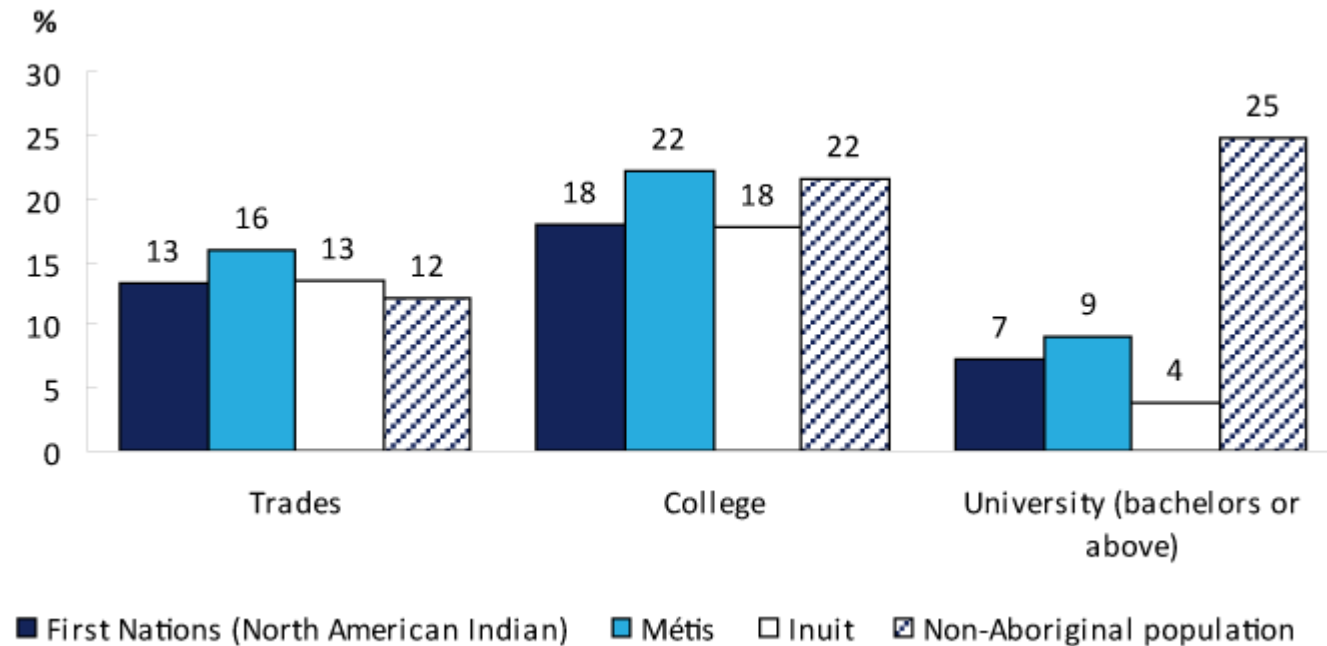
- Aboriginal Demographics
- Government Mandate
- Population trends and intuitional Capacity
- Economic and industry imperatives
- Institutional strategic imperatives

# Demographic Trends

- Projections suggest that the Aboriginal population could increase to approximately 1.4 million by 2017 from 1.1 million in 2006. The proportion of the Canadian population that identify themselves as Aboriginal is projected to increase to 4% in 2017 from 3% in 2001.
- 5% of British Columbia's population, 6% of Alberta's population, and 15% of Manitoba and Saskatchewan's total population.

(Stats Canada 2015)

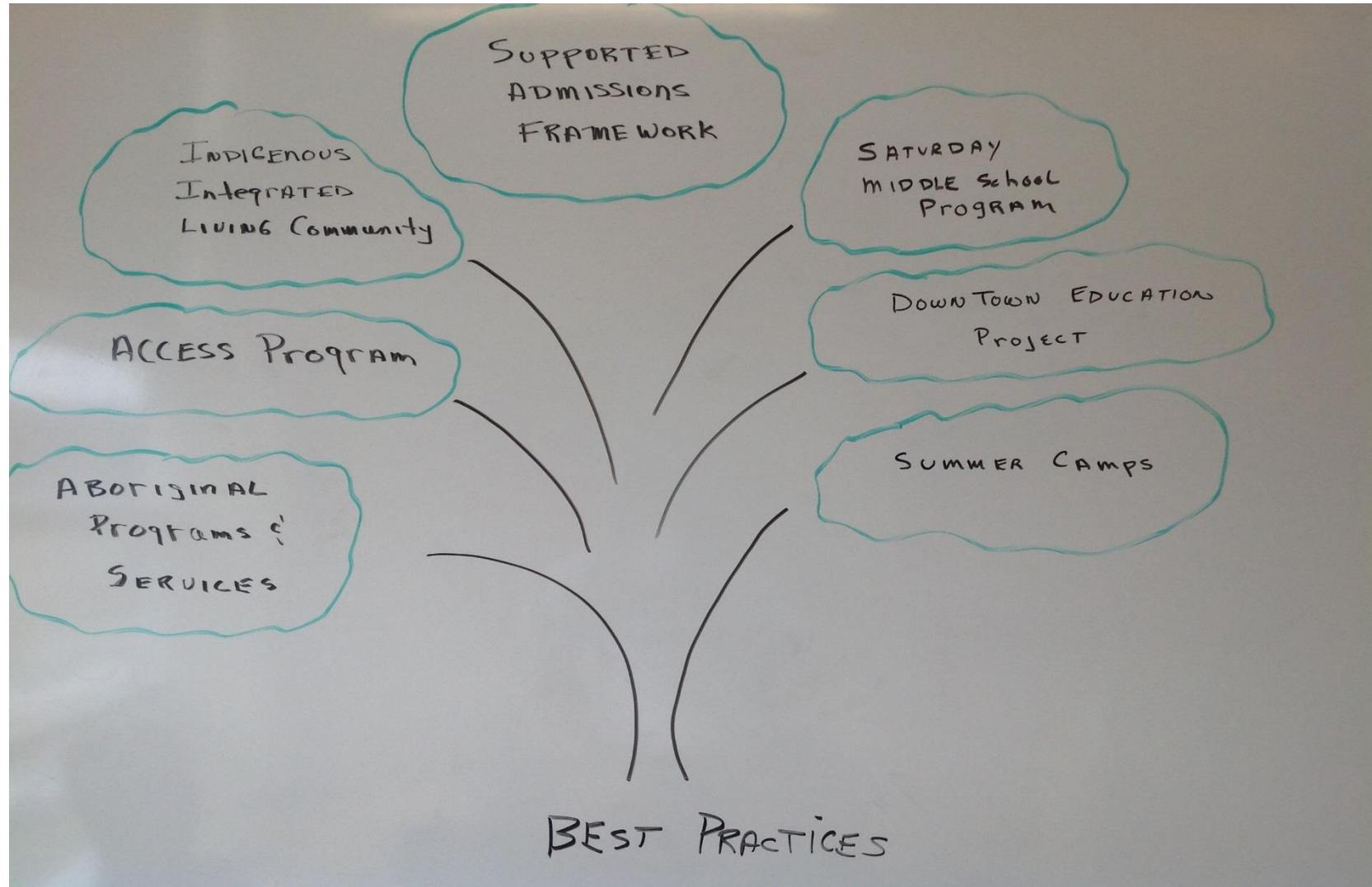
# National Education Participation and Trends



# 6 Year BC Student Transitions Report 2005-2010

- 53 % of aboriginal students did not graduate high school
- 39 % of those that did graduate did not have a GPA
- 4% Graduated with a GPA but where not university eligible
- 4% Graduated with a university eligible GPA (695 Students)

# Best Practices at our Campus



# Aboriginal Programs and Services

- Aboriginal Centre
- Peer Program
- Access Program
- Indigenous Integrated Living Community



# Aboriginal Admissions Policy

- Individual consideration of Aboriginal applicants who do not meet a program's competitive threshold, but who are above the university minimum (Dean's Discretion)
- Supported Admissions Framework
  - **Category 1:** Applicants who are directly admissible and those whose average of admission may be slightly below the competitive threshold, but whose admission is endorsed by faculty
  - **Category 2:** Applicants who are not directly admissible but who have demonstrated competency in key subject areas and whose average of admission is within a certain range. Offer of admission includes recommendations regarding course load and tutorial participation. Contact information for a designated faculty liaison and an APS advisor is also

# Aboriginal Access Program

- Aboriginal students can apply directly to this pathway program, and students who cannot be admitted to a degree program are given an automatic eligibility to enroll through AAS
- Students receive holistic (academic, social, emotional, and cultural) supports that are imbedded in the program, such as peer mentoring and tutoring, weekly tutorial workshops, registration in courses specifically designed for Aboriginal first-year students (e.g.. ENGL 114; MATH 126; EDUC 104), regular check-ins with APS staff.
- 18 credits completed in AAS can serve as a basis of admission to a degree program provided each course grade is at or above 60%, a first-year English course is complete, and 12 of the 18 credits were completed on campus

# Community Outreach

- Summer Camps
- Downtown Education Project with the Kelowna Friendship Society
- Saturday Middle School Project

# Final but critical considerations

- You need a very strong and collaborative relationship with Enrolment Services and the Registrar. They were instrumental in supporting both the Access Program and the Supported Admissions Framework and are essential in the sensitive handling of these files.
- Very regular meetings and communications with Faculty Liaisons are critical. We talk with them about admissions, student progression and retention concerns as well as students of concern.
- These practices are the result of 10 years of concerted, intentional and concentrated effort with the Provost, Deans and Registrar. The arguments must align with their priorities and institutional strategic priorities. Each element laddered on the previous one.

Policy, data, research, and self-identification have had significant negative impacts on the lives of Indigenous people and there is significant suspicion about the ways this information is used.

We will look more in depth at the reasons that these concerns need to be taken seriously by universities as collectors and thus guardians of this data

# Contextualizing Community and Institutional History

In an attempt to raise awareness about Indigenous issues the first Drum Beat conference was organized in 1989. This conference was supported by both the Six Nations community and McMaster University, welcoming Indigenous people from across North America. The three day event, co-hosted by the Six Nations Confederacy, marked the beginning of new possibilities for Six Nations and McMaster to increase the presence of Ojwehoweh people on campus.

McMaster University has heeded Chief Harvey Longboat's call to support "the Confederacy and raise visibility in both the community and the university which will help all of us"; this has been our guiding compass for the past two decades. The program is a main focal point for McMaster's enhanced commitment to, and support of, Indigenous students.

# Contextualizing FNMI Education Policy in Ontario:

Aboriginal Education Strategy - comprised of several policy frameworks from both the Ministry of Education, as well as the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.

Provincial Bill 10, *Early Childcare Modernization Act* - passed December 2014

# Growing concerns over Indigenous learner rights to privacy, confidentiality and autonomy:

Assumption that self-identification data is a reliable metric for "measuring" Indigenous learners.

Needs to be more discourse around the "reliability" of these data sets. Many communities/families/learners choose not to participate in these types of surveys for a multitude of reasons.

Potential implications of Schedule 5 of Bill 10, *Early Childcare Modernization Act*



# Proposed Plan:

Agreement amongst stakeholders that all information collected *with* an assurance of privacy, confidentiality and aggregation *must* be honoured. For example:  
"Your information will be collected confidentially, stored privately, and reported in aggregate only.

Any change in legislative authority/compliance obligations will be reported to learners - there is an obligation to be transparent and accurate in messaging re: how data will be used.

Suspension of existing survey, and launch of new survey with modified language about privacy, aggregation and risk of data being used for research purpose without further notice/consent.

# Three take-aways:

There is a lack of free, prior and informed consent when it comes to using data collected on internal surveys for larger research agendas. Many could (and do) argue that this is a violation of research ethics and the rights of learners.

Assimilation, dispossession and the devolution of rights.

Either make a privacy, confidentiality and aggregation statement that has meaning as a standalone assurance, and honour it. Otherwise be sure to articulate the risks of data usage in transparent, accurate and accessible language.

Reluctance to engage in research and policy is common in the Aboriginal community as there are many competing priorities for staff time.

This is exacerbated by institutions' reactionary interest in Indigenous Administrative Policies which calls into question the institutions' commitment to the Indigenous community.

“Indigenous grounded policies not only work toward alleviating alienation and marginality; they also enhance the participation of Indigenous peoples in the policy process, thus providing first hand knowledge of the complexities associated with policymaking”  
Maaka & Fleras

Finding ways to re-image my connection to policy has been quite empowering

Like any type of healing I can't force someone to do it on my time, I can only be prepared to support them when they are ready.

- Traditional/culturally based methods and frameworks to develop policies and priorities
- More appropriate timeline and time requirement
- Ability to have community based themes as the foundation of the policies development

The first challenge with this is finding the time begin thinking about the issue in more detail.

Keller Pap

Many of us have policy that we would like to see changed to improve Indigenous enrollment and student experience, but have not had time to discuss this with others who have knowledge about it.

We would like to divide into groups based on area of interest.

- Admission
- Self Identification
- Support for Indigenous faculty/staff
- Incorporation of Indigenous understanding into research requirements
- Space