

# ASSOCIATION OF IROQUOIS & ALLIED INDIANS



## POST SECONDARY DISCUSSION PAPER

JULY 2010

Prepared by Gina McGahey  
AIAI Education Coordinator

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians (AIAI) consists of 8 Member First Nations consisting of Batchewana First Nation of Ojibways, Caldwell First Nations, Delaware Nation Moravian of the Thames, Hiawatha First Nation, Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation, Oneida Nation of the Thames, Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte (Tyendinaga) and Whata Mohawks. The AIAI provides services to its Member Nations by supporting, communicating, networking and strengthening education management on education policy initiatives and to maintain a formal consulting relationship with government Ministries.

Our formal consulting relationship results from our Treaty and inherent rights which are recognized and affirmed in S.35 of the 1982 Constitution of Canada which identified an education provision as a treaty entitlement and First Nation jurisdiction. This is further supported by United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People Article 13 and 14 which provides First Nations the right to maintain our own culture and to control our own education systems.

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this discussion paper is to examine and to have an open discussion regarding the delivery options in supporting AIAI position on direct Member Nations jurisdiction of the Post Secondary Education Program. (PSEP) This discussion paper will be looking at five major areas; Accountability, Accessibility, Funding and Student Success, Consultation. Post Secondary delivery options will be presented in this paper to initiate discussions with the intent to prepare AIAI Post Secondary position paper. It is not intended to be the end all and will be subject to other alternatives, amendments and/or withdrawals. Our next steps will be the development of the AIAI Post Secondary position paper along with a lobbying and a communication strategy.

## **HISTORICAL UNDERSTANDING**

Since 1984, the PSEP purpose was to ensure employability of First Nation people by providing funding to students to gain access to colleges and universities. Also, to learn new knowledge and skills to be contributed member of Canada's society. (INAC Post Secondary National Program Guidelines) It includes tuition fees, living allowance, book and supplies, travel and award incentives to students.

INAC provided funding directly to First Nations and/or an aggregated of First Nations such as the Southern First Nation Secretariat (SFNS) through block funding which was based on prior years funding or population. The PSEP is currently being delivered by First Nations and the Southern First Nation Secretariat –Post Secondary division. Each organization keeps in line with INAC Post Secondary National Guidelines and has developed their own effective operating policies to meet the needs of their membership. These operating guidelines included selection priority criteria, appeal process and emergency fund criteria. In 1997, the PSEP funding was capped at 2% each year thereafter which placed a lot of hardship on the First Nations due to increase applications resulting from the arrival of B-31 students, rising tuition costs, cost of living and relocation costs.

## REPORTS

### **NO HIGHER PRIORITY – February 2007**

In February 2007, the “No Higher Priority: Aboriginal Post Secondary Education in Canada” report from the Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Northern Development indicating the following recommendations to INAC,

- establish a national website illustrating Post Secondary programs and initiatives success.
- information and annual reports to be widely distributed.
- elimination of the 2% annual cap.
- funding be based on actual costs and indexed annually.
- collect data on students denied Post Secondary funding.
- to work with First Nations, national, regionally and locally to establish management framework on data collection and tracking.
- to consult with Aboriginal Post Secondary organizations to develop a new Post Secondary policy, management frameworks, methodology and evaluation mechanism.
- to consult with NAAF, Metis, Non-Status and urban Aboriginal organizations to develop an access plan.
- to work with Human Resources and Social Development to develop vocational and skills training programs.

### **FACTORS AFFECTING THE USE OF STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM – October 2008**

In October 2008, the “Factors Affecting the Use of Student Financial Assistance Program” report from the Malatest Program Evaluation & Marketing Research was produced. Its conclusion indicated the following;

- lack of data on First Nation students accessing PSEP funding.
- React to INAC viewpoint that there is a decrease in a PSEP students being funding but to indicate there is an increase in student enrolment resulting in the establishment of waiting lists.
- off reserve membership denied access to PSEP funding because of lack of connections to the First Nation communities
- lack of data to support First Nation students accessing other forms of financial assistance available
- students lack information and understanding of the PSEP program
- First Nation students to access other forms of financial assistance but are reluctance to the repayment of loans due to cultural and political reasons.
- First Nation students indicated demographic and socio-economic reasons as to why they are less likely to access or plan to attend schools.
- First Nations students are more likely to be mature with dependents which increases costs to attend school.
- a central database be established indicated all available financial assistance.
- there are research gaps on reasons, impacts, waiting list, costs, limited funding that affect students participation, success/completion and attrition levels.

### **AUDIT OF THE POST SECONDARY EDUCATION PROGRAM: January 2009**

In January 2009, the Audit and Assurance Service Branch completed an audit on INAC regarding the Post Secondary Education Program. The conclusions indicated,

- limited tracking of how funds are spent which do not support the management of the Program funds.
- the current allocation methods do not ensure equitable access to the program
- lack of performance measurements data to evaluate Program results
- inadequate auditing and limited monitoring on First Nations to ensure compliance of funding and program requirements

As a result the following recommendations were made to INAC,

- to review INAC funding authorities regarding their funding and reporting polices on the use of the PSEP and the intended purposes.
- a review of the allocation methodology to ensure equal access across regions.

- establish a process to develop a performance measurement framework to ensure appropriate analysis evaluation and reporting.
- a process for conducting First Nations monitoring and compliance auditing and adherence to the PSEP.

## **FOCUSING INAC POST SECONDARY EDUCATION PROGRAM: TARGETS & IMPACTS - June 2009**

In June 2009, a paper was prepared for the Assembly of First Nation by Bert Waslander. This paper concluded;

- First Nation students tend to be five years older than non-Aboriginal in obtaining a diploma or degree. They have families and need more funding support.
- First Nation people are at par with non-Aboriginal in participating in colleges.
- First Nation people lag behind by 30% compared to non Aboriginal in attending universities.
- First Nation people on reserve are less likely to participate in college and universities.
- twice as many First Nation women attend college or university than First Nation men.
- better education brings better jobs, which brings higher earnings that support the economy.
- PSEP to remain as status quo and to leave the delivery in First Nation jurisdiction.
- in order for First Nation people to reach parity with non-Aboriginal in graduating from a higher learning institution, it would take 21 years.

### **Barriers**

- low income families unable to support their children and need to obtain other sources of funds.
- unable to seek loans due to level of income of the family. Modest incomes result in higher debt and interest on loan.
- level of education of parents to support their children education aspirations. Children of low income families are only half as likely to attend university.
- on reserve indicated lack of funding available, poor academic preparation and difficulties in transitioning to a higher learning institution.

### **Recommendations**

- address the academic disparities in elementary and secondary program. There is a need to have First Nation students' graduate high school 5 years earlier.
- to increase First Nation participation at the university level.
- First Nations people are underrepresented in engineering and commerce program. These skills are needed to support the progress of First Nation communities.

### **Support for the Post Secondary program**

- employer judge people on credentials.
- higher education, increase in labour force, higher spending to support the economy
  - High school diploma - \$847,000.00 lifetime earnings
  - University degree - \$2,227,000.00 lifetime earnings
- it will cost \$642 million, twice as much as the present budget to close the gap to non-Aboriginal.

### **Post Secondary Audit Arguments**

The findings in INAC Post Secondary Audit report indicates improving the administration of the program only and did address the issue of adequate funding or the rationale of the program. INAC needs to solicit First Nations to assist in complying with reasonable requests for information about the management and results of their PSEP.

Also, the audit report addresses the use of funding for other purposes. This may happen in some cases but not all First Nations. It is the autonomy of the First Nations to make decisions but generally they follow the allocation of funds between programs closely. In no cases did the report uncover large transfers away from the Post Secondary program. Any indirect costs may be a result of lack of clarity or inadequate funding of indirect costs. It does not indicate a major departure from the intent of the program and it should be easy to fix.

## **THE POST SECONDARY STUDENT SUPPORT PROGRAM: AN EXAMINATION OF ALTERNATIVE DELIVERY MECHANISMS – November 2009**

In November 2009, Alex User completed a report to INAC on the “Post –Secondary Student Support Program: An examination of Alternative Delivery Mechanisms which indicated 5 options

**Option 1: Status Quo**

Continued First Nation Administration with modifications to address concerns raised by audits and reports

**Option 2: Regional Aggregated Education Organizations**

A four level structure to include Post Secondary and the K-12 education. It would be located at an Aboriginal Nation level or a Multi-Nation level either through a Treaty organization or at a provincial level.

**Option 3: A Pan Canadian First Nation Organization Administered**

Administered by a pan-Canadian non-government entity. E.g. National Aboriginal Achievement Foundations or a newly created entity.

**Option 4: INAC direct Administered**

Post Secondary funds directly administered by INAC

**Option 5: Human Resource and Skilled Development Administered**

Post Secondary funds directly administered by Human Resource and Skilled Development

## **FREE TO LEARN: GIVING ABORIGINAL YOUTH CONTROL OVER THEIR POST SECONDARY EDUCATION – March 2010**

This report provided an option for consideration to the federal government which was produced by the MacDonald-Laurier Institute for Public Policy.

**Option 6: Aboriginal Post Secondary Saving Account**

To gradually phase out the Program and create a saving account for all registered Indians. It would start with \$4,000.00 at birth and earn interest. Each year from Grade 6-12 an additional \$3,000.00 would be credited. At secondary graduation, a student would have \$25,000.00 plus interest to use towards a Post Secondary program. They have 10 years to use this fund. After ten years has lapsed, it would be redistributed to other students' account. Donations from non profit organizations could contribute to “top up” the students saving accounts.

## **TAKING ACTION FOR FIRST NATIONS POST SECONDARY EDUCATION: ACCESS, OPPORTUNITY AND OUTCOMES DISCUSSION PAPER - June 2010**

In June 2010, the Assembly of First Nation compiled a discussion paper on the “Taking Action for First Nations Post Secondary Education: Access, Opportunity and Outcomes” The discussion paper was supported by;

1. AFN Declaration on First Nation Jurisdiction over Education
2. Treaty and agreements on the provision of a formal education fully competitive to today's society
3. Affirming 1972 Indian Control of Indian Education policy statement

**Funding Arguments** are,

- a. It would reduce costs in Social Assistance, Health Care and Unemployment for First Nations by investing more funds into PSE. It included First Nation data on Diabetes being 3x the rate of Canadians, the unacceptable housing standards at 65%, incarceration rate of 5x the rate of Canadians and the homicide rate at 6 xs than the broader population.
- b. Research was provided on the comparability costs of incarcerating a person for one year at \$100,000 compared to \$13,200 provided for PSE per year, per person.
- c. Research indicated comparability costs of providing welfare to First Nations which is 2 times the amount than a Canadian citizen. Also, First Nation budgets are declining at 13% yet the Canadian Health and Social Transfers are growing at 6.6% per year.

- d. The report proposed a real cost for the PSE which is a more equitable level of funding. To receive a four year B.A. at a university, its cost assumption is \$80,498.00. Therefore a more yearly equitable cost would be \$20,000.00 per year. Now compare this cost of \$13,273 First Nations students are currently receiving.
- e. It is important to increase the PSEP funding because it is essential to First Nation capacity building, governance which is necessary for nation building.
- f. First Nations have been patient on inadequate funding and have been successful with the limited resources provided by INAC. At the same time, being put into a position to deny thousands of eligible students. This should not happen.

#### **The report presented a Post Secondary Action Plan**

1. Respect the authority of First Nations to exercise control over education
2. Acknowledge lifelong learning journey in a First Nation context
3. Recognize First Nations successful administration of the PSE program within the limitation of funding and producing better student outcomes and results.
4. Acknowledge First Nations work in developing and maintaining higher learning that incorporates Indigenous learning and knowledge foundations.
5. Ensure adequate resources for ongoing research and production of Indigenous knowledge
6. Provide progress reports from colleges and universities that demonstrates how they are ensuring our students are succeeding and graduating.
7. Accept First Nations commitments to make a serious effort to incorporate Indigenous knowledge, learning styles into the curriculum and programs.

#### **Report Recommendations**

The focus on the recommendations were to strengthen and finance the PSE program. The current budget is \$314 million and it would require an additional \$370 million more to close the 30% gap in university enrolment. The recommendations includes;

1. That the 2% cap be eliminated immediately. Spending increase to be based on actual costs. It is to include child care, special needs and special shelter. Adequate funding must be a priority.
2. That actual cost of the PSEP be allocated and secured as a statutory education program. The PSEP to be an aggregate of First Nations for administrative costs, regional approaches for economy of scale and the recognition of resource linkages.
3. That adequate and sustainable resources are provided for effective PSE program delivery as a separate allocation distinct from student funding. This would acknowledge the PSE coordinator role as part of student access, retention and graduation rates.
4. To require reciprocal relations with higher learning institutions to promote and assist in student success.
5. To have all level of governments and First Nations recognize, champion and support Indigenous Institutions of Higher Learning
6. To have an agreed upon comprehensive PSEP funding framework
7. To have a cost based on data collection of the PSEP expenditures.
8. To establish a national standard on data collection and reporting that will illustrate clearer outcomes and to be housed in a central place under First Nation control.
9. That the PSEP be First Nation driven and administered
10. To have a human resource data collection on PSEP graduates and academics
11. That a statutory mandate be affirmed and implemented by INAC to support Indigenous Higher Learning institutions and to provide annual public reports on their PSEP outcomes.
12. That a core funding formula mechanism be developed to support adequate, long-term funding and human resources.

#### **Post Secondary Delivery Options**

Three options listed are to facilitate discussions with First Nations/Federal/Provincial/Territorial on how to obtain First Nation success in the delivery of the PSEP. Options listed are designed for diversity, autonomy of First Nations and acknowledges region based on local requirements and needs.

The options proposed in this report are modeled and reflected to illustrate the **direct impacts to the AIAI Member Nations**

**Option 6: First Nations Administered**

1. Transfer of funds to First Nations for direct delivery.
2. Community based PSE Coordinator provides direct counseling, intake application process and delivery of funds to students.
3. Separate Finance entity to oversee the finances, reviews and approves applications, adheres to First Nations goals and presents an annual report.

**Option 7: Aggregated First Nations Administered**

1. Transfer of funds to an Aggregate First Nations to administer, coordinate and are accountable to the aggregated First Nations.
2. Community-based Post Secondary Coordinator will provide direct counseling services to the students, intake application process.
3. Aggregate First Nations to establish policies which will include process, applications and appeals.
4. Separate Finance entity to oversee the finances, reviews, approves applications, adheres to First nations goals and presents an annual report.

**Option 8: Regional Aggregated Administered**

1. Transfer of funds to a Regional entity to administer, coordinate and are accountable to a regional aggregated First Nations.
2. Community-based Post Secondary Coordinator will provide direct counseling services to the students, intake application process.
3. Separate arm-length entity to oversee the finances, review, approve intake submissions, respond to First Nations goals and produce annual reports.

**Note:** These options fall short of AIAI Position of direct control and delivery of the PSEP by Member First Nations. It allows for an independent group to select the applicants and not the Member First Nations.

## **AIAI POSITION STATEMENT**

**AIAI Member Nations firmly support the position to retain direct First Nation jurisdiction of the Post Secondary Education Program as mandated by the Treaties, the Constitution and the Declaration of Indigenous People.**

**Therefore the AIAI position support the report on the Post Secondary Student Support Program: An Examination of Alternative Delivery Mechanism known as the Usher Report**

**Option 1: Status Quo which indicates continued administration by First Nations with some modification to be addressed.**

## **ISSUES**

The above reports raised the following issues which must be addressed along with our commitment to support AIAI position. The issues to be addressed are,

### **1. ACCESSIBILITY**

#### **POLICY ISSUES**

- Selection inequity of students due to nepotism and favouritism in First Nations
- Lack of transparency to the membership on the selection of students.
- Difficulties in students reporting academic progress.

#### **COMMUNICATION**

- lack information and understanding of the Post Secondary program.
- Lack of community connection with off reserve students which results or perceived as being denied access.

## 2. ACCOUNTABILITY

### PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- lack of data to support accountability of the PSEP.
- lack of performance indicators to measure the effectiveness of the PSEP.
- limited monitoring to ensure compliance of funding and program requirements.

### ACCESSIBILITY DATA

- Lack of data on students accessing PSEP.

### FUNDING DATA MANAGEMENT

- Limited data in tracking how PSEP funds are being spent.
- Lack of data to support First Nation students accessing other forms of financial assistance available.

## 3. FUNDING

Inadequate funding of the PSEP are;

- management of the Post Secondary program.
- an equitable allocation method.
- mature students with families requires additional funds.
- not reflective of rising tuition fees, relocation and living costs.
- Limitations imposed on funding on how they are used.
- Lack of funding to fund more students.
- Carryover of deficits and identifying surpluses requirements.
- Different reporting timelines requirement.
- Address Multi-year funding agreements deficits and surplus requirements.
- Requiring students to use loans which conflicts with their income levels, cultural and political reasons and repayment difficulties.

## 4. STUDENT SUCCESS

### STUDENT READINESS

First Nations are not participating in the PSEP due to,

- relocation, poor academic preparation and transitioning.
- families with low incomes unable to support their child.
- Unfamiliar with additional sources of funds.
- Parental support due to low level of education.
- lack of support from the institution to assist student success.
- lack of accountability by the institutions on student success.

## 5. CONSULTATION

- lack of consultation by the federal government on the PSEP delivery options from the reports or meaningful discussion on the First Nations options.



## **PROPOSED PSEP DELIVERY OPTIONS**

**DELIVERY OPTIONS:** First Nation delivery and control of the Post Secondary Education Program.

### **Option A: First Nation Selection Council of Elders**

- Member Nation collects applications, disperse funds and prepares data collection reports to the Member Nation Selection Council of Elders/AIAI/INAC.
- **Member Nation Selection Council of Elders appointed by Member Nations with off reserve representation to approve applications.**
- Member Nations develops a data management policy for access and accountability purposes
- Work collaboratively with INAC in the development of national PSEP performance indicators.
- Independent consultant to conduct the PSEP evaluation every 5 years by the
- Member Nation .
- PSEP Five year Improvement Plan prepared by the Member Nation.

### **Option B: AIAI Selection Council of Elders**

- Member Nations collects applications, disperse funds and prepares data collection reports to AIAI Selection Council of Elders/AIAI/INAC.
- **AIAI Selection Council of Elders appointed by the Member Nations with off reserve representation to approve applications.**
- Member Nations develops a data management policy for access and accountability purposes.
- Work collaboratively with INAC in the development of national PSEP performance indicators.
- Independent consultant to conduct the PSEP evaluation every 5 years by the
- Member Nation..
- PSEP Five year Improvement Plan prepared by the Member Nation.

### **Option C: Independent Selection Board**

- Member Nations collect applications, disperse funds and prepares data collection reports to an Independent Selection Council/AIAI/INAC
- **Independent Selection Board consisting of area Native organizations appointed by Member Nations with off reserve representation to approve applications. E.g. Tecumseh Development, IEC, Native Trustee etc.**
- Member Nations develops a data management policy for access and accountability purposes
- Work collaboratively with INAC in the development of national PSEP performance indicators.
- Independent consultant to conduct the PSEP evaluation every 5 years by the
- Member Nation/SNFS.
- PSEP Five year Improvement Plan prepared by the Member Nation.

### **Option D: Status Quo**

- Member Nations collects applications, disperse funds, prepare data collection reports
- **Member Nations approves applications through their own internal selection process with modifications to the PSEP operation policy**
- Member Nations develops a data management policy for access and accountability purposes
- Work collaboratively with INAC in the development of national PSEP performance indicators.
- Independent consultant to conduct the PSEP evaluation every 5 years by the
- Member Nation.
- PSEP Five year Improvement Plan prepared by the Member Nation.

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

How can Member First Nations illustrate to the federal government in addressing their reports and to support AIAI position on First Nation direct control of the PSEP?

### **Accountability**

1. What delivery option will Member Nations support regarding the management, selection and collection of data for the PSEP?

### **Accessibility**

2. How will Member Nations ensure,
  - fair and equal access in order to ensure nepotism and favouritism does not exist?
  - assist off reserve students in establishing a connection with the community?
3. What data and performance indicators should be collected to illustrate student success?

### **Funding**

4. What additional supporting arguments should be included in lobbying for additional funds for the PSEP?

### **Student Success**

5. What recommendations would you included in supporting student success?
  - a. Preparation for College & University
  - b. Parental Support & Engagement
  - c. Academic Success

## **NEXT STEPS:**

1. Development of a AIAI Position Paper on Post Secondary delivery option
2. Lobbying Strategies
3. Communication Plan