
SUPPORTING INDIGENOUS STUDENT SUCCESS

PRESENTED BY

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Topics of Discussion

Indigenous
Access and
Retention

Terminology
and
Demographics

Definitions
and Imagery

Supporting
Indigenous
Student
Success

IE&E Services



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



Humber College is located within the Treaty Lands of the Mississaugas of the Credit. Known as Adobiigok, the Place of the Alders, in the Mississauga language, the territory is uniquely situated along the Humber River Watershed, which historically provided an integral connection for Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee and Wendat peoples between the Ontario Lakeshore and the Lake Simcoe/Georgian Bay regions. Now home to people of numerous nations, the land continues to provide a vital source of interconnection for all.

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- Acknowledges the importance of land as a living being.
 - Recognizes that Indigenous peoples were living and thriving in place long before the arrival of settlers.
 - Sheds light on histories and practices that displace Indigenous peoples from land.
 - Recognizes Indigenous peoples have made, and continue to make, enormous contributions to Canadian society – socially, politically, economically, and culturally.

WHAT DO LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS DO?

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- Indigenous ways of talking about and connecting with land have been suppressed and silenced over time, having profound impacts on how Indigenous histories and relationships with land are viewed and represented.
 - Because we only know what we have been taught....land acknowledgements represent a different way of seeing the land and the histories that flow from place.
 - Provides a connection that helps us think about how we position ourselves in relation to the land, history, and Indigenous peoples.

WHY ARE LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS NECESSARY?

DEMOGRAPHICS

In 2016, there were more than 1.67 million Indigenous people in Canada, representing 4.9 per cent of the total population, up from 3.8 per cent in 2006.

- Almost 900,000 of those individuals lived in urban areas with a population of 30,000 or more, accounting for more than half (51.8 per cent) of Indigenous people in Canada.
- Today, there are over 630 First Nations across Canada – about half of which are in British Columbia and Ontario. ^[1]

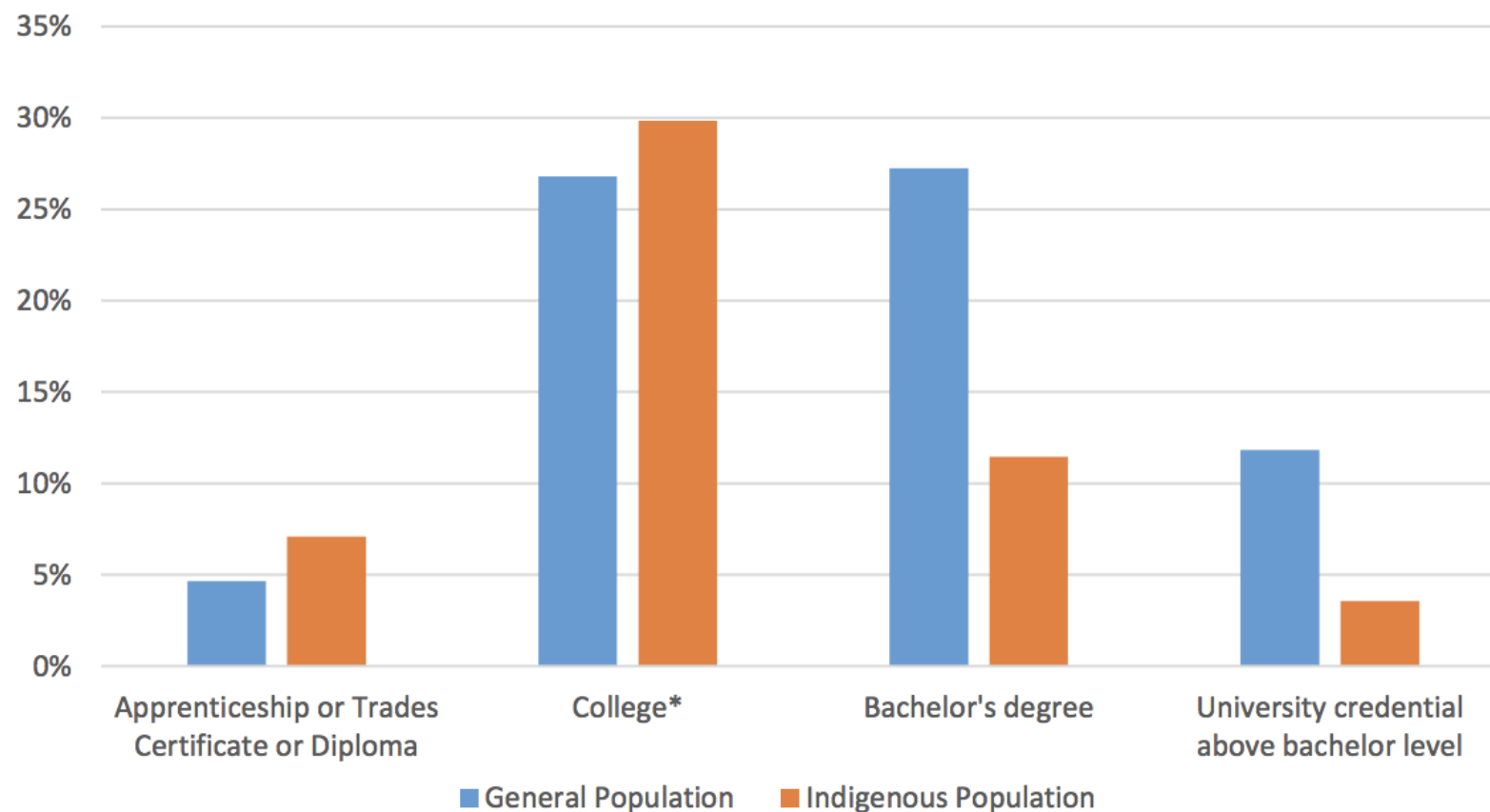
According to the 2016 Census,^[2] there are over 70 distinct Indigenous languages recognized across the country, however UNESCO's World Atlas of Languages in Danger recognizes over 80 distinct Indigenous languages in Canada, including those that no longer have speakers.^[3]

1. Aboriginal peoples in Canada: Key results from the 2016 Census: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/171025/dq171025a-eng.htm>

2. Census in brief. The Aboriginal languages of First Nations people, Métis and Inuit: <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/as-sa/98-200-x/2016022/98-200-x2016022-eng.cfm>

3. UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger: <http://www.unesco.org/languages-atlas/index.php>

INDIGENOUS STUDENT ACCESS AND RETENTION



*Includes university credential below degree Source: Statistics Canada (2016)

Important note: The issues affecting Indigenous enrollment and retention are complex, deep and longstanding.

Discussion Question: What are some barriers and/or challenges that Indigenous students face.

The pathway to PSE starts early in the life; there are multiple points of possible disengagement along the way, exacerbated by systemic barriers and challenges.

- Income is strongly correlated with completion of postsecondary education; students whose parents did not complete PSE are twice as likely to drop out of high school.
- Literacy gaps show as early as Grade 3 in low-income students compared to middle- and high-income students, this gap grows over time, impacting grades and academic ability later in life

SYSTEMIC BARRIERS AND CHALLENGES: INCOME


- Racialized students, especially boys, are more likely to be deemed to possess fewer “soft” skills and streamed into vocational programs
- First-generation students, LGBTQ students, Indigenous students and students with disabilities are much more likely to decide not to pursue higher education early in middle and high school, believing that postsecondary is simply “not for them”
- Students in specialized arts, gifted and French immersion programs are disproportionately white and wealthy while students in special ed. and trades programs are disproportionately racialized and low income

SYSTEMIC BARRIERS AND CHALLENGES: RACIALIZATION

Whether accurate, or perceived, many prospective Indigenous students, their families, and communities hold the following perceptions of postsecondary institutions:

- Indigenous historical presence is insufficiently represented, denied, or suppressed; students feel disrespected, minimized and disregarded
- Curriculum does not reflect Indigenous histories and perspectives; students feel disrespected, minimized and disregarded
- Campus communities are predominantly non-Indigenous; students feel they won't fit in
- Indigenous diversity is not recognized (institutions hold inaccurate perceptions of what it means to be Indigenous); students feel misrepresented

SYSTEMIC BARRIERS AND CHALLENGES

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- What happens in one aspect of students' lives influences the other aspects.
 - For these reasons, success for Indigenous students must be defined in a holistic way -taking each student into account as a whole person, mentally, emotionally, physically and spiritually.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SUCCESSFUL INDIGENOUS STUDENTS

Michelle Pidgeon (2008) identified a wide range of characteristics of a successful Indigenous student based on interviews with participants. These characteristics included

- an ability to maintain cultural integrity;
- an ability to “find their gifts”;
- engage in reciprocity by giving back to one’s individual community or the larger Indigenous community; and
- finding balance between intellectual, physical, spiritual, and emotional realms and being able to find balance between the student’s individual needs and those of the community.

The participants in Pidgeon’s study also added mainstream understandings of academic success, such as coursework completion, a high GPA, and graduating from the program in a timely manner. However, Pidgeon added that mainstream notions of success reflect assimilative practices.

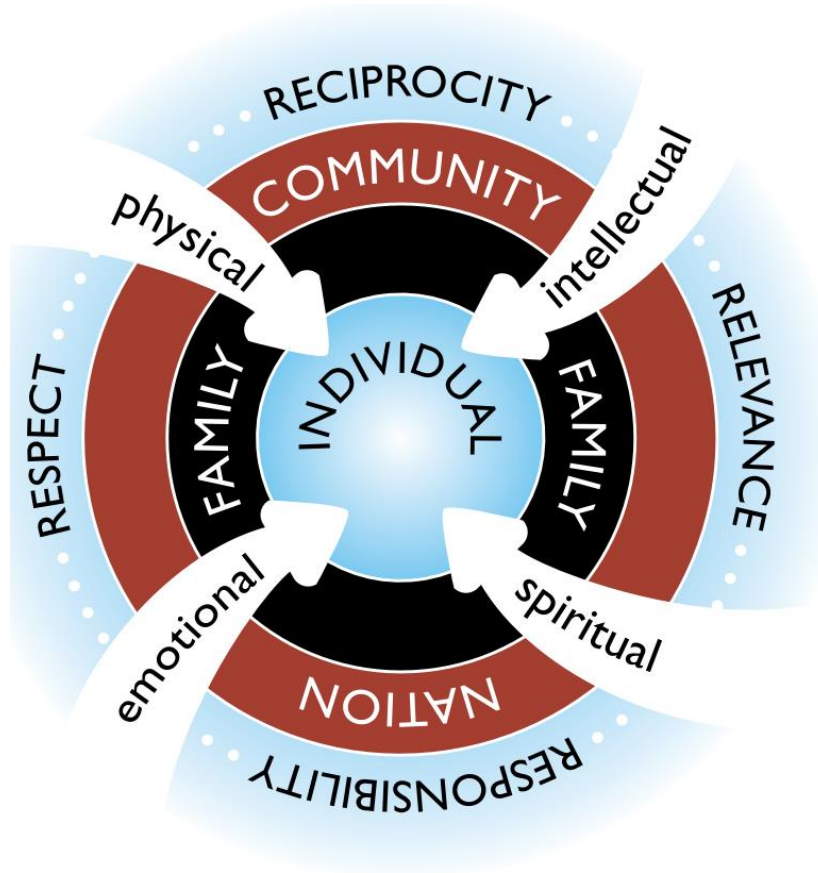
In their core, Indigenous students feel it is important to know their culture, speak their language and have access to Indigenous Knowledge Holders, cultural practices and knowledge specific to their people.

- There is a desire to reclaim Indigenous language, ceremony and practices and to learn about what makes them uniquely who they are.
- They also want to belong, not only to their families and communities but within the post-secondary spaces they enter.

Indigenous students want to find balance by feeling equally comfortable and welcome as they walk in two worlds.

CULTURE, IDENTITY AND BELONGING

SUPPORTING INDIGENOUS STUDENT SUCCESS



Pidgeon, 2008

RESPECT for perspectives that Indigenous students bring into the learning environment.

RELEVANCE means that Indigenous students' interests and diverse learning needs are considered in the development and delivery of policies, practices, programs, and services.

RECIPROCITY involves establishing mutually beneficial relationships between local Indigenous peoples and the institution and between and among faculty, staff, and Indigenous students.

RESPONSIBILITY entails taking critical and meaningful action at personal and institutional levels that contributes to removing systemic barriers and to engaging all students and communities in the long-term processes of reconciliation.

What does being responsible and accountable to Indigenous peoples mean to you in your professional practice?

What is one thing you can do to create better learning environments for Indigenous students?





MIIGWECH,
THANKS FOR LISTENING AND
CONTRIBUTING