

Reinventing the Wheel? Designing an Aboriginal Recreation and Community Development Program

Karen Wall

Athabasca University

In recent years, studies and reports by organizations concerned with Aboriginal community and economic development (including government departments, educational institutions, career counselors, and social agencies) have affirmed the importance of recreation and leisure in Aboriginal community wellness. Another area of growing interest is the potential economic and social benefit of developing cultural tourism for Aboriginal groups in Alberta. However, in both these related fields, the province lacks comprehensive postsecondary education opportunities for leaders and workers. This article discusses the development of a college-level program in Recreation and Tourism Leadership designed for Aboriginal youth in central Alberta. The planned program emphasizes the integration of learning into the community through innovative delivery systems and flexible accommodation of cultural learning styles. The article explores program rationales and philosophies, related community programs, proposed sociocultural and technological contexts of delivery, and the process of consultation with Aboriginal community leaders and educators. Finally, it considers the obstacles to program implementation with reference to institutional constraints on innovative program delivery in Aboriginal recreation and community development training and to indicators of its success in other jurisdictions.

Introduction

Over a decade ago, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP, 1996) deemed recreation and leisure to be critical elements in the holistic journey to health. This insight is echoed in government, academic, and public policy studies arguing that recreation is a fundamental human need, a social service like health and education (Interprovincial Sport and Recreation Council, 1987). The recreation management profession targets individual wellness through activity design and leadership, but is more broadly based in principles of building community capacity in areas such as health, employment, entrepreneurship, and cultural preservation. Postsecondary training prepares students for careers in related areas such as arts administration, sport management, tourism, community governance, and leadership. Despite the relevance of this career path to Aboriginal communities and although a range of related courses and programs are offered in Alberta institutions, there is no comprehensive program in the province designed specifically for Aboriginal students. In this article I trace the development of an Aboriginal Recreation, Tourism and Community Development (ARTCD) program proposal for Red Deer

College in central Alberta. Although it was not implemented, the unanimous support for the program by stakeholders suggests that an overview of the process may contribute to an awareness of the potential for Aboriginal educational programs in related disciplines. It also offers insight into the conditions that have typically prevented the development or survival of such programs in the region.

Red Deer College, situated centrally near a major highway and between Treaty 6 and Treaty 7 territories, provides geographic access to a substantial portion (65%) of Alberta's total Aboriginal population, of which 44.3% are under 19 years of age (Alberta Chamber of Resources, 2005). In the early 2000s, according to conversations with local community leaders and students, the college was not reaching its potential to serve Aboriginal people in the area and was perceived as unwelcoming by many local First Nations people (the college does not keep a record of Aboriginal student numbers). Although there were and still are no dedicated programs, college administration recognized in principle the importance of Aboriginal education and supported the development of a proposal based on the existing university-transfer Recreation, Tourism and Community Development (RTCD) program.

Because both faculty members were non-Aboriginal, the process was fundamentally linked to consultation over the course of two years with Aboriginal educators and community leaders as well as with local organizations serving First Nations and Metis people. Design of the program was also based on scholarly literature on Indigenous education, on private- and public-sector documents related to employment training, and on the studies and recommendations of Aboriginal organizations and advocates. For example, it took into account Assembly of First Nations (AFN, 2000) concerns about control and partnership, mentoring, laddering and transfer, and community-based delivery of postsecondary education (PSE). Curriculum planning would build on established RTCD program content as a grounding for PSE transfer options, but would be situated in culturally specific content and learning modes, student access and retention, and community involvement eventually leading to administrative autonomy.

In response to the emphasis placed on degree accreditation by both bands and government funding agencies, an initial one-year certificate would qualify students to lead recreation programs while providing the option of continuing to a two-year diploma transferable to university degree study (see Appendix A). A module structure and components of distance delivery were developed to allow flexible combinations of coursework (on campus or onsite), fieldwork or internships, and online study with year-round access. The option to pursue up to two thirds of the program in the home community would also permit a balance of contact with instructors, peers, and family as well as of experiential or hands-on

situational learning, group work, and individualized academic study. Special credit projects could be pursued depending on individual or community need. These might include developing a small-business plan, an interpretive experience, a teaching game based on traditional sport or knowledge, a historical research project, or a fundraising scheme. Special skills option areas included coaching certification, museum/archives technician training, language study, traditional healing teaching, wilderness knowledge, or outdoor activity leadership certification (see Appendix B). Graduates of the program would initially work primarily in Aboriginal communities, specifically reserves and settlements, but would be qualified to move into mainstream contexts as desired.

Program Design and Delivery: Making and Sustaining Connections

Having established the potential market niche and structure for the ARTCD program, we continued foundational research into development principles. Community development projects imposed on Aboriginal communities have often been regarded with suspicion. The key to success is emphasis on autonomy and local leadership, which are key ingredients of programs such as Alberta's Future Leaders. Also of critical significance is respecting and sustaining the broader network of social connections between students and community. In general, social connections are as important as content to Indigenous ways of learning; information acquired must be transformed or circulated as knowledge by the community in the course of everyday life. First Nations students, for example, tend to weigh community against personal interests and agenda in making education choices, and personal priorities take second place to family needs. As Heber (2006) puts it, for Aboriginal people the Elders are library and their archives, and the communities are research institutes. Some key goals of education programs for and by Aboriginal people are:

- Grounding in a cultural understanding of land, culture, history, and spirit;
- Interaction and overlap between specific subjects and disciplines;
- Flexibility to meet participants' needs;
- Consensual personal interaction of community members in a holistic context valued as equivalent to bestowed or attributed credentials;
- Mutual respect between Aboriginal and other interests (Archibald & Urion, 1995; Watt-Cloutier, 2000; Simpson, 1998; Armstrong, 2000; AFN, 2000).

Both content and delivery modes, then, are intrinsic to the success of Aboriginal education schemes. Learning in culturally appropriate models, according to Freire (1970), can allow marginalized peoples to analyze critically and transform their realities. Respect for Indigenous learning styles need not, of course, mean excluding mainstream academic techniques and goals. The proposed ladder transition scheme was based on

existing program transfer agreements including to the University of Alberta's Recreation and Leisure Studies degree program. Recognizing that Aboriginal applicants have historically been underrepresented in this field, the Faculty has initiated incentives and student outreach services. Lewis Cardinal, Director of Native Student Services, calls these critical because the main reason "for Native student dropout rates is [that] they just don't feel like they belong" (Hargrave, 2005). Native Student Services administrators strongly supported the proposed ARTCD program, particularly in view of new federal funding for youth leadership training (Young & Jones-Smith, personal communication, October 11, 2002). Capacity-building leadership training programs is attracting increasing numbers of students in the region, but most are non-accredited (Ottmann, 2005).

Cardinal (2002) describes a transformational approach to leadership that recognizes that both white and Indigenous cultures have gifts to contribute when working together toward goals based on common ground. Urion (1991) suggests using "two pairs of eyes"—First Nations and Euro-Canadian academic—fostering not translation, but access to multidimensional experience. Richardson and Blanchet-Cohen (2000) envisage a paradigm of Aboriginal partnerships as parallel to larger institutions, in which collaborative program design and objectives move toward autonomous control. Successful such settings balance scientific or profession-specific information with holistic and experiential learning techniques; the concentric circle of family, community, teachers, and institutions is sustained in the containing element of land or place. A mixture of oral and textual resources, of academic discourse and spirituality with experiential approaches, are evaluated in the light of the particular learning objective (Heber, 2006; McCormick, Neumann, Amundson, & McLean, 1999). As Wheeler (2002) put it, "There is no point in reinventing the wheel—if a wheel is called for." In other words, it would be important to respect successful learning and teaching methods from both Western and Aboriginal traditions, to learn to see where solutions already existed to challenges of program design and delivery.

These paradigms suggested the most feasible model for PSE recreation and community development training for Aboriginal youth. For example, although course content would follow established program curriculum preparing the student for success in the field, learning structures would not isolate the individual, but develop skills in group and community contexts. This principle reinforces the relevance of geographical location(s) and the combination of flexible in-person, onsite, and classroom delivery with distance education technologies.

The Role of Distance Education

The initial research and consultation pointed to the crucial aspect of student flexibility in terms of time and space; they needed to retain access to

their communities according to necessity or tradition outside the bounds of standard college scheduling. Community capacity-building stresses that social capital be developed along both vertical paths of governments and institutions and horizontal links between individuals and communities. A flexible program structure would benefit from mixed delivery methods, and distance education is increasingly significant in Aboriginal contexts. Alberta's Aboriginal PSE institutions also offer a variety of online courses that could be shared and integrated into a new program (Malatest & Associates, 2004). The RCAP and AFN, as well as numerous scholarly studies, have noted the utility of computer-mediated communication for individuals continuing to study at home in a familiar social context while able to link electronically to other Aboriginal communities and institutions (Hermes, 2000; Henze & Vanett, 1993; Urion, 1991). There are strong arguments that digital media are culturally appropriate for the exchange of traditional knowledge and that the Internet corresponds to social aspects of traditional tribalism (Pannekoek, 2006; Wheeler, 2002; Davis, 2000; Howe, 1998; Sanchez, Stucky, & Richard, 1998). Technologies such as the Internet and mobile devices can reinforce existing social networks, supporting instructional programs. Much research remains to be done on the adaptability of digital media to Indigenous cultures, languages, and protocols, but at its best distance education allows a dialogical model of interaction, effective access strategies, cost-effectiveness, field programs, and flexible access. It is

particularly appropriate for [Aboriginal] students, who are, on average, significantly older than traditional college students ... and who suffer both financially and emotionally while in traditional colleges ... The key is ... distance education that ... understands the individual as part of a cultural community ... recognizing that "distance" can be both cultural and geographic, and that effective learning requires the reduction of both... (Sanchez et al., para. 22)

The Province of Alberta's \$280 million broadband initiative includes the goal to provide high-speed connectivity to all First Nations reserves delivering the provincial curriculum. The Campus Alberta initiative and reports from the Alberta Universities Association (AUA, 2005) also call for developing resources for Web and network learning (Smith & Magee, 2005). The Aboriginal Voice project envisages a comprehensive approach to e-learning in a community infrastructure including mentoring programs, tools for leadership, entrepreneurship, community development, and capacity-building (Aboriginal Voice, 2006). Treaty 7 peoples among others have worked to advance an ICT agenda to enhance business, services, education, and cultural promotion and close the so-called digital divide (Treaty 7 Aboriginal ICT Forum, 2004).

Necessary conditions for successful distance education on reserves include First Nations-led research on effects and maintaining personal contact and relationships between students and instructors (Facey, 2001; Nickerson, 2005). Hodson (2004) also notes the importance of direct

human contact, along with the incorporation of spiritual elements, in attempts to create a virtual community on line through Internet-delivered education. Although Hodson's project was terminated for lack of funding support, Canadian federal agencies have since become more interested in programs using Internet delivery for First Nations peoples' education and job training (Canada, 2005b).

An important precedent for ARTCD distance education proposals was the Sunchild Cyber School on the Sunchild First Nation an hour west of Red Deer. When the Sunchild community added e-learning to the regular school program in 1999, credit and course submissions to Alberta Learning rose by nearly 100%. In 2004 the school enrolled 220 students from 12 First Nations reserves, 60% of whom were adults completing high school or upgrading (Sunchild E-Learning Community, 2003; Greenall, 2005; Blue, 2005; Zeilinski, 2004.) Principal Martin Sacher and members of the Sunchild band council provided consultation and expressed strong support for the proposed program, estimating prospective student numbers at 25-30 from this band alone (Brennan, personal communication, July 10, 2003; Howie, personal communication, October 15, 2003).

In sum, initial research and consultations with First Nations representatives addressed program content, employment projections, and partnerships. Reserve communities were the trial student market, with provision for access by off-reserve students and optional high school upgrading components. The program would provide training in recreation and community leadership; tourism, sport, and facility management; and basic entrepreneurship. Conceived as a collaborative program composed of flexible modules drawing on existing resources in both Aboriginal and mainstream PSE institutions and agencies, the program would combine community delivery with online distance courses and practicum segments. As a result, students would be directly involved in projects at home, and communities would benefit from the presence of learners and targeted initiatives.

Program Rationales: Leisure and Recreation in Community Development

ARTCD program development and design emphasized training in leadership for individuals committed to long-term community cultural and economic sustainability. Effective practices in Aboriginal education, some key components of which are summarized above, correspond to established principles of community development practice, which

- incorporate broad views and long-term consequences;
- focus awareness on local conditions and realities, diversity, and strengths;
- promote community ownership of processes and visionary decision-making;
- recognize systemic challenges, alternatives, and opportunities; and
- build consensus through effective leadership (Canada 2005a).

As an aspect of this practice, the goals of capacity building, or the interaction of people, organizations, and social capital in the interests of overall well-being, align with central principles of the recreation management profession (Chaskin, Brown, Venkatesh, & Vidal, 2001; Marines, Roehlkepartain, & Benson, 2005). Core tenets of both the recreation and community development fields include the importance of trained leadership and transformational agency, inclusion and sustainability, and a balance between social and economic welfare (Mayer, 2002; Bryson & Mowbray, 2005). Advocates and scholars of recreation management have long argued that its contribution to cultural maintenance and growth goes beyond the benefits of simply providing diversion from boredom or labor. Recreation opportunities offer the means to enhance both individual and community well-being, economic sustainability, and the conservation of natural resources (Herchmer, Rabinovitz, & Petersen, 1999; Mahaffy, 2002).

The integration of mind, body, and spirit in Indigenous leisure contexts also resonates with the grounding philosophies of recreation in community development practice. The Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (n.d.) highlights the need for "opportunities for diverse Aboriginal ... groups to participate in recreation activities representative of their respective cultures." According to Reid and Welke (1998), leisure can help preserve Indigenous cultures in that practices such as sports, drumming, and storytelling traditionally functioned as frameworks for passing on knowledge, resolving disputes, and training youth for full membership in society. Today organized leisure opportunities help replace or heal negative behaviors such as substance abuse, and as in the case of powwows and tourist events, can be an agent of intercultural education. Education in the arts, therapeutic practices, outdoor activity, and sport can further individual rehabilitation and cultural expression in communities. Related studies have demonstrated the effect of recreation and leisure opportunity in Aboriginal communities on pro-social behaviors, economic diversification, and lower health costs (Burke, 2000; Dawson, Karlis, & Georgescu, 1998; McCann, 1998; Cole, 1993).

Aboriginal leaders also recognize these benefits of recreation training and participation, particularly among youth who are disproportionately at risk for suicide, substance abuse, and low levels of educational achievement (Nadjiwan & Blackstock, 2003). In one survey 95% of respondents associated recreation practices with developing career and leadership skills and curbing social problems; another cites the unanimous demand among Aboriginal respondents for recreation services in communities. Government agencies have supported youth recreation and leisure leadership in Aboriginal communities as a key factor in school attendance and eventual employment (Loizides, 2003; Nitzberg, 2005; Finn & Checkoway, 1998). Created in part to address the high percentage of youth in the

criminal justice system, the Alberta's Future Leaders summer program trains First Nations participants in the principles and skills of recreation leadership. The benefits of the AFL program include improved self-esteem and self-confidence; positive role models, morals, and values frameworks; teamwork, leadership, cognitive, and social skills; stress relief through constructive activity; opportunities for racial interaction; reduced risk factors for disease; and reinforced family and community pride (Alberta Sports, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation, 2008). The Future Leaders program offers a successful precedent for credentialed education, and its personnel were enthusiastic about a potential partnership with the ARTCD program to provide continuity for participants pursuing careers (Bentz, personal communication, September 19, 2002; Lindberg, personal communication, 2002-2003).

Other initiatives have also had notable success. When teacher Russ Sheppard introduced lacrosse to his students in Kugluktuk, Nunavut in 2000, the town had a suicide rate among the nation's worst. Within a few years of forming the lacrosse team, students had toured the continent, taken up other sports, and launched a pizza store and arcade; school attendance rose 122% in one year. Sheppard and Kyle Aviak have recently brought lacrosse to the Louis Bull reserve in Hobbema. Sheppard says that the tie between recreation and health is a good resource for dealing with social issues, and local staff and minimal funding for equipment now support a program offering an alternative to the prominent culture of gangs and crime (Wingrove, 2007.)

The benefits of sport in particular for both individuals (health and skills) and communities (social cohesion and economy) are well documented. A 2005 Conference Board of Canada study argued that governments must integrate sport policy within broader socioeconomic development (Bloom, Grant, & Watt, 2005). The benefits of sport described in this report also extend to other forms of recreation and leisure. So although sport is an integral component of a comprehensive recreation program, the ARTCD program emphasizes related transferable skills such as group leadership, teaching, collaboration, planning activities, and wellness management.

Communities and individuals continue to encounter barriers to leisure participation including racism, socioeconomic status, and education (Canada, 1999). These problems are worse for on-reserve people and others segregated from mainstream facilities and services (Canada Parks and Recreation Association [CPRA], n.d.; Marines et al., 2005; Manitoba, 2002). Some prairie-region provincial agencies have developed recreation and tourism policies in cooperation with band councils (Bakes, 1998; Inter-provincial Sport and Recreation Council, 1987; Canadian Council on Social Development, 2001). In northern Manitoba crime was reduced 17.3% in communities with sports programs and increased 10.6% in communities

without such programs. However, many well-intentioned programs still deliver generic activities based on a standard benefits model for middle-class Euro-Canadian consumers, with no specific adaptation to Aboriginal cultures. And recreation must compete for resources with services that it could well support and supplement such as policing, justice, health, cultural programs, and education (Cowie, 2001).

Market Survey: Employment, Economic Sustainability, and Demand

Beyond the social benefits rationale, development of PSE programs must meet the pragmatic criteria for institution and government approval. ARTCD program research and consultation with stakeholders focused on employment market demand and potential funding sources for both the program and individual students. The repeated call for transferable workplace skills was already represented in the program's emphasis on practical training and occupational planning. The program's ladder structure meant that credential levels would be achieved at intervals to meet corresponding market demand for trained workers. In particular, National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation (NAAF) standards for PSE were incorporated into program planning:

- Long-term strategies for training and education;
- Social support for workers, for example, mentor programs;
- Industry-based curriculum addressing skills shortages;
- Education programs offering work experience;
- More partnerships with the corporate sector;
- Free choice in pursuing career choices (NAAF, 2001).

In the early 2000s nationally, employment prospects in recreation and sport delivery were rated fair to good. Above-average occupational growth was predicted for credentialed recreation coordinator/supervisors, wellness consultants, therapists, and nature or heritage interpreters. Alberta has projected increased demand to 2008 for university-educated workers in tourism. As well as its relevance to community wellness, the projected job market for skill sets and qualifications was average or above average in all key areas (entrepreneurship, recreation and tourism, and human services, Alberta, 2003b; Canada, 2000). In 2007 Service Canada listed "Managers in Art, Culture, Recreation and Sport" among those positions with high job prospects in 2008 and 2009.

Positions specific to Aboriginal communities that now require PSE training include support workers for inmate services, addictions counseling, Elder and youth needs, and program coordinators (Alberta, 2003b; Blue Quills First Nations College, 2006). A 1996 Canadian government survey cited recreation and personal services as the highest area of Aboriginal job growth and the second highest area of self-employment overall; 11% of Aboriginal people completing PSE had certificates in education, recreation, and counseling services (Loizides, 2003). Although the 2001 Census reported that Aboriginal men were primarily enrolled in

trades programs, social services and elementary teaching were among the top 10 programs chosen; among women, health, education, and social services programs still dominated (Statistics Canada, 2003). In 2004 the highest overall rate of Aboriginal postsecondary enrollment was in education, counseling, and recreation (Malatest & Associates, 2004).

Numerous public and private agencies are mounting campaigns to attract Aboriginal tradespeople into oil and gas industries in Alberta's booming economy (Canada, 2006). As suggested above, however, employment in mainstream trades or industries will not meet the needs of all Aboriginal youth or their communities. And although the main areas of study for Aboriginal students are still the humanities, social sciences, and education, these degrees have not been focused on specific employment opportunities that build marketable skills related to holistic community wellness and prosperity on a core of liberal arts (NAAF, 2001). Alberta Learning currently encourages Aboriginal students into science and health care fields as well as trades, and health services education including wellness programs are offered by several First Nations colleges and institutes that are potential program partners. Federal and provincial agencies, including Alberta Economic Development and the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, have noted the potential of Aboriginal cultural tourism to adapt traditional activities, skills, and knowledge to economic diversification and sustainability.

Recent Canadian tourism studies cite growing interest in both Aboriginal cultural experiences and outdoor activities among North American and European travelers (Deutschlander & Miller, 2003; Research Resolution Consulting 2003; Williams & Richter, 2002; Burke, 2000). Successful educational outcomes for Aboriginal people in this industry are connected with training practica, mentorship, cultural sensitivity in the workplace, and apprenticeship-style business and entrepreneurship skills training. Notzke (2004) suggests, "If aboriginal people were to share in the tourism industry in proportion to their population, aboriginal tourism would be a \$1.6 billion industry, providing 30,000-40,000 jobs" (p. 32), but adds that in 2000 it accounted for less than .5% of the Canadian industry. HRSDC and the Niitsitapi Tourism Society of Alberta have both pointed to lack of staff and training and market research hindering tourism development (Beaver, personal communication, September 22, 2003).

Despite these indications, little to no development of comprehensive education opportunities in Alberta in this area has taken place, although programs in Saskatchewan and Manitoba (which has the second-highest rate of Aboriginal completion in the country) have featured community-based recreation and leadership (Malatest & Associates, 2004). In the early 2000s Bow Valley College in Calgary offered a now-defunct Aboriginal Adventure Tourism Integrated Training certificate. It attracted few students, partly because it offered no real transferable skills beyond this small

market area and no transferability to PSE (Pawlik, personal communication, September 20, 2002). The ARTCD program plan accordingly aimed to balance educational opportunity with applied work experience yielding a set of transferable job skills.

All these social and economic rationales were endorsed in community consultation, with many leaders expressing a sense of urgency for launching the program (Sacher, personal communication, July 5, 2002).

Funding Structures: Potential Sponsors and Partners

With program design principles and community support in hand, attention turned to the crucial matters of funding and practical implementation. Generally, a lack of core funding for Aboriginal postsecondary institutions, in part due to jurisdictional conflicts between federal and provincial governments, means that First Nations colleges receive less than half the funding of mainstream institutions. Alberta has six Aboriginal colleges eligible for provincial funding, but only through a matching grants program. Existing government funding is distributed on an annual rather than ongoing basis, making it difficult to establish sustainable programs (Anderson, 2007.) But Aboriginal PSE institutions' credentials are typically not formally recognized, and they remain reliant on mainstream institutions to broker programs, although Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) has announced plans to develop an autonomous education system and provides support for some programs (British Columbia, 2005; Hammer & Ofori, 2002; AFN, 2000; NAAF, 2001; Canada, 1996, 1999, 2002).

Flexible partnerships such as those between public institutions and First Nations tend to foster social capital through broad learning and increased participation in society (Johns, 2003; Woolcock, 2001; Gittell & Vidal, 1998). The National Aboriginal Youth Strategy and RCAP both recommend that Aboriginal education programs work with existing regional institutions. In Alberta as of 2000, 50% of the Indigenous population over 19 years of age had no high school diploma; 20% had completed secondary school, and 53% had at least some PSE, but only 3% had university degrees (Hull, 2000). However, a 2006 report found that the graduation rate of Aboriginal students in community colleges was almost level with that of the general population (Mendelson, 2006). Accordingly, the AFN emphasizes that because Aboriginal community needs are to a large extent regionalized, colleges and institutes rather than universities are the most logical partners (Association of Canadian Community Colleges, 2005). But college success and transitional programs for Aboriginal students tend to be unstable due to poor revenue generation (Lusty, 1999).

Human Resources Development Canada has suggested a new paradigm in which public authorities share responsibilities and resources while incorporating Aboriginal priorities, traditions, and values (Canada, 1999). Working through an established college, the ARTCD program proposed to incorporate components of curriculum and human resources

from existing regional institutions involved in Aboriginal education. For example, Athabasca University (2002) offers partnership models in related areas of health and human services and in public administration. The University, which hosts the Centre for World Indigenous Knowledge and Research, partners with Blue Quills College and Sunchild Cyberschool among others, offering several courses on site and on line. The University of Alberta and Blue Quills First Nations College recently signed an agreement supporting the province's commitment to expand the Aboriginal advanced education focus. Institutions such as the Nechi Training, Research and Health Promotion Institute and the Nakoda Nation Post-Secondary Education Center deliver specialized training, upgrading, and adult education programs with relevance to community leadership training. The University of Calgary operates a successful distance course in human services in partnership with colleges and education boards from the Treaty 6 and Treaty 7 areas plus the North Peace Tribal Council.

Noncredit or informal education programs such as Alberta Future Leaders also offer valuable resources and have expressed interest in partnership, as has the Rediscovery Program, an international community-based program that cultivates core personal development as a basis for learning and cultural transformation among Indigenous youth (Simon, personal communication, March 26, 2001; Lertzman, 2002). Because of their relevance to developing leadership and workplace skills, these initiatives and others are sponsored by a range of corporations including energy and resource industries and social services, health, and environmental agencies, provincial and municipal governments and charitable foundations (such as the Aboriginal Partners and Youth Society, Aboriginal Youth and Family Well-Being and Education Society, and Aboriginal Friendship Centres).

Sponsors and potential partners also include nonprofit agencies, resource industries, municipalities, and service clubs, which recognize the significance of youth leadership in Aboriginal communities (NAAF, 2001; Alberta Sports, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation, 2008). Aboriginal organizations that support Alberta Future Leaders and similar programs include the Aboriginal Business Resource Center, First Nations Adult and Higher Education Consortium, Aboriginal Multi-Media Society of Alberta, and Alberta Friendship Centres. National organizations include the National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC), Aboriginal Youth Council (AYC), and the (NAAF). The National Women's Aboriginal Council Youth Program coordinates a national leadership training program to provide access to government initiatives, and indicated ongoing interest in the ARTCD program (Golic, personal communications, October 14; 2002, May 21, 2003). Federal, provincial, and municipal governments also support the development of both community and economic develop-

ment education among Aboriginal youth; federal endowments promise to establish postsecondary scholarships, education, and training.¹

Other potential employment resources for fieldwork and graduate jobs include established Aboriginal cultural centers and career programs such as the Aboriginal Workforce Participation Initiative. The federal Young Canada Works office coordinates summer jobs in recreation-related areas. Corporations such as major banks support several community development-related ventures in western Canada, and Internet services to connect workers and employers proliferate (Canada, 2006; Loizides, 2003; Loizides & Zieminski, 1998; Miller, 2003). Other organizations that offer expertise in related education and career development include the Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers, which works through partnerships with economic development experts, academics, Aboriginal leaders, and representatives from the corporate and government sectors (Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers, 2008). The National Women's Aboriginal Council youth coordinator also described federal funding plans for youth leadership training.

Individual financial support in the form of scholarships is available from a number of public and private sources. Provincial sources, however, are inadequate for the numbers of First Nations college and institute students; First Nations band and federal program funding is also limited and does not meet demand. Most colleges and institutes continue to rely on tuition, operating grants, or base funding from provincial ministries to cover program costs (Association of Canadian Community Colleges, 2005). Therefore, one of the tasks of ARTCD program developers was to locate sources of funding to support student access to both education and the labor force through internships and practica. This necessitated the demonstration of target market numbers and projected employment figures, which were pursued through community contacts such as band councils and reserve educators.

Again, such contacts and commitment were critical to long-term program success. Stakeholders including Aboriginal employers, employment agencies, community organizations, and youth training programs in the Red Deer and Calgary areas approved the draft plan in principle based on its collaborative potential to meet education and employment needs. The City of Calgary's Aboriginal Youth Employment Centre, which regularly posts recreation-related positions, approved of the emphasis on academic and workplace culture preparation through a combination of mentorship and community involvement (Liddle, personal communication, September 22, 2003). An Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission officer in Red Deer also noted the appeal of the qualification for non-Aboriginal human resources and other service workers given the high proportion of Aboriginal clients and the current scarcity of training in culture-specific wellness guidance (Staniforth, personal communication, 2003). One Red

Deer Aboriginal counselor, an RDC social work graduate, noted that the program's unique cultural orientation and approach would have attracted Aboriginal students currently placed in human services programs (Lambert, personal communication, September 15, 2003). A representative of Alberta Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development strongly supported the ARTCD approach of mixed public and private funding to fill this PSE niche and to balance both economic and social goals in youth leadership training (Hayes, personal communication, October 20, 2003).

Outcomes

Although the proposal was well received by stakeholders, the provision of quantitative evidence of market appeal was complicated by institutional paradigms of program evaluation and implementation. First, to request the necessary budget to offer a postsecondary program, it is necessary to estimate student full-time equivalents; but any estimate of numbers of First Nations students must come from band councils, whose cooperation rests on trust in the projected institutional partnership. Councils also typically manage information on employment markets and human resources internally (McDonald, personal communication, February 20, 2003). All those consulted emphasized that the program must first be developed cooperatively with the Aboriginal communities before such resources would be made available. Interested band councils and educators were prepared to provide referrals to other Aboriginal organizations and community members as well as letters of support, but first needed detailed information about curriculum and learning outcomes and a firm commitment from the College. Meanwhile, unable to obtain clear quantitative assurance of economic success, the college declined to support further ARTCD program development.

In sum, the initial phase of program development was encouraged by Aboriginal youth, leaders, Elders, and counselors. Members of the public and nonprofit private sectors were also confident of its relevance and potential for success. The consensus was that the program met a need in PSE, employment training, and capacity-building. Relevant government funding and support programs for Aboriginal youth continue to be established, as does funding focused on training programs combining in-class and practical experience. Among the core contact group, band sources of student support were sufficient to initiate the first year's enrollment. But without a clear indication of institutional commitment, these avenues could not be pursued. Meanwhile, the College stressed the need to present quantitative data independent of the long-term social rationales or potential in order to project a marketable program. Other probable constraints were represented by the Alberta Learning accreditation and funding process, which relies on quantitative analysis of markets. Finally, concluding that College planning priorities were elsewhere, the past RTCD program chair suggests:

While the timing of this proposal was ideal for the aboriginal community, and for various other stakeholders consulted throughout the proposal process, Red Deer College was not ready for this initiative. Subsequent business plans have made reference to an increasing emphasis on programming for First Nations, yet the Tourism and Recreation proposal apparently did not resonate as a logical beginning to this process. (Morrow, personal communication, April 19, 2006)

Summary and Conclusions

Although numerous studies have found no definitive linkage between choice of training and employability, most economic development efforts tend to ignore components of social capital. Some models such as the "triple bottom line" advocate a more holistic fiscal policy that considers social and natural deficits as well as economic dimensions in calculating benefits (Hayward, 2002; Elkington, 1997). Social justice and environmental sustainability are key components of arguments that education programs be funded according to a balance of social and economic rationales. But in reviewing the potentials and strengths of new education programs, we need to be wary of making broad assumptions about probable outcomes and benefits. The effects of community development measures are difficult to calculate within standard economic models, and human capital in the form of labor does not transfer directly to social capital. Also, enhanced social cohesion in itself is not necessarily equitable or sufficient to guarantee community wellness in disadvantaged communities. Such qualifications point to the need for caution in optimistic prescriptions of education for capacity-building (Bryson & Mowbray, 2005; Mowbray, 2005; Berkman & Glass, 2000; Bourdieu, 1986; Mayer, 2003; Markusen, 2004; Johns, 2003; Woolcock, 2001).

Even in mainstream contexts, recreation and community development job wages are low, and it has become increasingly difficult to attract students. The field tends to be identified primarily with sport, one of the more economically lucrative branches of a much broader field of practice that includes culture and other leisure services. Several Canadian recreation education programs have closed over the past decades, in part reflecting the trend in PSE toward greater support for trades and applied sciences at the expense of more liberal arts and social sciences programs. Red Deer College's recreation program added tourism and community leadership emphases in 2003, with the result that enrollments grew significantly over a short period. However, although the college began a major expansion of its trades training facilities, the RTCD program was abruptly terminated in 2005 and remaining students moved into a more sport-focused university transfer curriculum stream.

This context is further complicated by the distinct characteristics of Aboriginal communities. The powerful role of leaders in band decision-making is noted above; at least one recent northern First Nations community economic development project failed specifically because of lack of their support (Goodfellow-Baikie & English, 2006). Other conditions

include, again, the preference of students to remain in or near their homes and social circles, the associated need for flexibility in scheduling classroom time, the importance of community involvement in education, and the perceived inhospitability of mainstream institutions for Aboriginal cultures.

Other programs of Aboriginal recreation and leadership education, once established, have proved unsustainable in the region for many of the same reasons faced by ARTCD program planners. In the mid-1990s, Grande Prairie Regional College's athletic director proposed an Aboriginal recreation leadership program based on one then offered at Keewatin Community College. Local band leaders were cautious, mainly because of problems of geographical distance, the widespread lack of high school preparation among potential students, and the lack of a committed full-time program coordinator, an important aspect of building community relationships and trust. Funding for such a position was unavailable because the GPRC projection of 10 students in the first year did not meet the numbers required for Advanced Education financial support. Without direct evidence of students' positive experiences, band councils could not guarantee higher numbers (Stevens, personal communication, September 20, 2002). The program was not implemented. The Keewatin College (now University College of the North [UCN]) program itself was cancelled in the early 2000s. Although the program was well regarded by local people and promoted and supported by a provincial recreation advisory committee, recruitment to attend classes on campus was an ongoing problem. Also, although graduates wished to return to their home communities for employment, recreation-specific positions were not always available (Scott, personal communication, July 8, 2008; Driedger, personal communication, July 9, 2008).

Nevertheless, other Aboriginal recreation education programs are successfully implemented in western Canada. BC's (2005) Aboriginal PSE framework overall emphasizes community-based development and delivery systems. Geography, higher tourism numbers, and population density are also likely to play a strong part in the fact that employment opportunities are available closer to home for many BC students. Malaspina University College, which has a First Nations on-reserve program, has introduced a new community development, recreation, and sport management project. It operates in partnership with the local Cowichan tribe, which has been awarded the 2008 North American Indigenous Games (British Columbia, 2005). A one-year certificate program in Aboriginal Sports Management, the first of its kind in Canada, was announced by Malaspina in 2006 to "teach students how to develop and support tourism and recreational opportunities, manage volunteers and integrate Elders within aboriginal communities." Dano Thorne, a community support development officer with the Cowichan organizers, states,

Any aboriginal program, especially in post-secondary education, is really, really needed ... the Aboriginal Sports Management Program is a catalyst for developing capacity building. It provides long-term grass roots development and experiences. That is really needed in our communities—to carry on the development of sport and recreation. And the best people to run those programs are our people. (Malaspina University College, 2006)

Capilano College now offers an Aboriginal Tourism Operations Certificate at its Squamish campus, and Selkirk College has also announced plans to develop courses in the field. Selkirk College and the Native Education Centre in BC are partners in delivering a successful community-based Aboriginal Tourism Diploma in Castlegar (Selkirk College, 2006; British Columbia, 2005). After a period of dormancy, the University College of the North revived a version of its Recreation Leadership program in 2006-2007, this time basing it at Cross Lake and Norway House. Students attend full time for one week per month, returning home in the intervals. UCN (2007) also offers tourism-related certificate programs with alternative delivery systems (Norway House Cree Nation, 2007).

In 2008 Inuit musician Susan Aglukark joined the University of Alberta as mentor to Aboriginal students, helping to create a new Native studies, recreation, sport, and community health program (Halme, 2008). The increasing numbers of urban Aboriginal people in the city and the university's ongoing commitment to integrate them into higher education may mean that another invention of this particular wheel will support a stable vehicle. The AUA (2005) has argued that relatively modest investments in the system such as "expanding transition programs" and other integrative resources can foster the presence of underrepresented groups. The immediate financial costs of doing so must be assessed along with long-term societal benefits in order to provide maximum flexibility in delivery. The AUA also urges the restoration of Alberta Human Resources and Employment's Aboriginal funding program and use of the Supernet as the delivery platform to make education accessible for many potential students. These initiatives and related PSE program approaches developed in a spirit of sharing and collaboration offer real promise for capacity-building in Aboriginal communities.

Note

¹HRDC Youth Employment Strategy; INAC First Nations and Inuit Youth Employment Strategy; Canadian Heritage Young Canada Works; HRDC Aboriginal Relations Office, Youth Initiatives; Alberta Community Development; Human Resources and Employment; Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development; Advanced Education and Career Development; Tourism Alberta; Alberta Health and Wellness; Justice and Attorney General; INAC; Industry Canada; National Association of Friendship Centres; NAAF; Conference Board of Canada.

References

Aboriginal Voice. (March 2006). *Final report: From digital divide to digital opportunity*. Vol. 4. Retrieved September 9, 2006, from: <http://www.crossingboundaries.ca/index.av.php>

- Alberta Chamber of Resources. (2005). *Aboriginal people in Alberta*. Retrieved January 3, 2006, from: <http://www.acralberta.com/ABDemo/PDF%20Files/Aboriginal%20Population%20in%20Alberta.pdf>
- Alberta Sports, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation. (2008). *Alberta's future leaders*. Government of Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation. Retrieved June 15, 2008, from: <http://www.tpr.alberta.ca/asrpfw/programs/sports/abfuture/index.asp>
- Alberta Universities Association. (2005, August 15). *Increasing accessibility for under-represented Albertans. A response to Alberta Learning documents from Advanced Education*. Retrieved September 15, 2005, from: <http://www.ualberta.ca/~univhall/vp/vpa/AdvancedEducation/UnderRepresentedAlbertans.pdf>
- Alberta. (2003a, April 4). *The Bulletin*, 23(14). Edmonton, AB: Community Development.
- Alberta. (2003b, Mar 7). *Press release. New publication shows where the jobs are*. Retrieved April 24, 2003, from: <http://www.gov.ab.ca/acn/200303/14011.html>
- Anderson, D. (2007, April 12). Falling behind: Funding for Aboriginal PSE lags. *The Weal*. Retrieved June 5, 2007, from: http://www.theweal.com/news/story/falling_behind_funding_for_aboriginal_pse_lags
- Archibald, J., & Urion, C. (Eds.). (1995). Honoring what they say: Postsecondary experiences of First Nations graduates. *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 21, 1-247.
- Armstrong, J. (2000). A holistic education, teachings from the Dance House: We cannot afford to lose one native child. In M.K.P. Nee-Benham & J.E. Cooper (Eds.), *Indigenous educational models for contemporary practice: In our mother's voice*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Assembly of First Nations. (2000). *General philosophy of First Nations education. AFN youth digitization Website project*. Retrieved November 2, 2002, from: <http://collections.ic.gc.ca/afn/edu5.html>
- Association of Canadian Community Colleges. (2005, June). *Final Report: Meeting the needs of Aboriginal learners: An overview of current programs and services. Challenges, opportunities and lessons learned*. Retrieved November 20, 2006, from: http://www.accc.ca/ftp/pubs/200507_Aboriginal.pdf
- Athabasca University. (2002, June 21). *The Insider*, June 21. Retrieved June 30, 2002, from: http://www.athabascau.ca/insider/2002/june21_02.htm
- Bakes, R. (1998). First Nation issues highlighted in InterAction '98 keynote address. *Recreation Saskatchewan. Lifestyle Information Network*. Retrieved June 30, 2000, from: <http://www.lin.ca/lin/resource/html/nation.htm>
- Berkman, L.F., & Glass, T. (2000). Social integration, social networks, social support and health. In L.F. Berkman & I. Kawachi (Eds.), *Social epidemiology*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Bloom, M., Grant, M., & Watt, D. (2005, August). *Report. Strengthening Canada: The socio-economic benefits of sport participation in Canada*. Ottawa: Conference Board of Canada. Retrieved October 20, 2006, from: <http://www.conferenceboard.ca/documents.asp?rnext=1340>
- Blue, L. (2005, July 4). Going the distance: Martin Sacher. *Time*. Retrieved September 15, 2006, from: http://www.sccyber.net/www/Time_MartinSacher.doc
- Blue Quills First Nations College. (2006). *Employment opportunities*. Retrieved October 6, 2006, from: www.bluequills.ca
- Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In J.G. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education*. New York: Greenwood Press.
- British Columbia. Ministry of Advanced Education. (2005, September 12). *2005-2006 Aboriginal special project summaries*. Retrieved November 15, 2007, from: http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/aboriginal/aboriginal_sp_fund0506.pdf
- Bryson, L., & Mowbray, M. (2005). More spray on solution: Community, social capital and evidence based policy. *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, 40(1), 91-106.
- Burke, M. (2000). Powwow: A healing experience. *Windspeaker*, 18(2), S7-8.

- Canada. (1999, March). *Human Resources and Social Development Canada. Lessons learned: Effective practices in Aboriginal communities*. Retrieved March 4, 2002, from: <http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/cs/sp/hrsdcedd/reports/1999-002478/page00.shtml>
- Canada. (2000). *Career profiles: Occupational profiles, Alberta*. Retrieved March 4, 2002, from: http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ps/ys/pdf/Folio_e.pdf
- Canada. (2002, December). *Our children—Keepers of the sacred knowledge. Final report of the Minister's National Working Group on Education*. Ottawa: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.
- Canada. (2005a). *Aboriginal human resources development strategy. Youth initiatives: Skills for the future*. Ottawa: Service Canada. Retrieved November 15, 2007, from: http://srv119.services.gc.ca/AHRDSInternet/general/public/youth/YouthInitiatives_e.asp
- Canada. (2005b, April 27). *Industry Canada. Broadband for rural and northern development pilot program*. Retrieved November 15, 2007, from: <http://broadband.gc.ca/pub/program/bbindex.html>
- Canada. (2006). *Aboriginal workforce participation initiative*. Ottawa: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. Retrieved September 11, 2006, from: www.inac.gc.ca/awpi/index.html
- Canadian Council on Social Development. (2001). *Recreation and children and youth living in poverty: Barriers, benefits and success stories*. Ottawa: Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA).
- Canadian Parks and Recreation Association. (n.d.). *Impact and benefits of physical activity and recreation on Canadian youth at-risk. Lifestyle Information Network*. Retrieved September 15, 2006, from: <http://www.lin.ca/resource/html/impact.htm#Holistic,%20Community-based%20Approach>
- Cardinal, L. (2002, October). *Applied Aboriginal/Indigenous perspectives on leadership and community decision making*. Paper presented at the Alberta Parks and Recreation Annual Conference, Red Deer.
- Chaskin, R.J., Brown, P., Venkatesh, S., & Vidal, A. (2001). *Building community capacity*. New York: Aldine de Gruyter.
- Cole, D. (1993). Recreation practices of the Stoney of Alberta and Mohawk of the Six Nation Confederacy. *Journal of Applied Recreation Research*, 18(2), 103-114.
- Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers. (2008). Retrieved June 14, 2008, from <http://www.edo.ca/home>.
- Cowie, H. (2001, October 22). *Recreation contributes to healthy communities*. Paper presented at the Alberta Parks and Recreation Annual Conference, Lake Louise.
- Davis, L. (2000). Electronic highways, electronic classrooms: distance education in Canada. In M.B. Castellano, L. Davis, & L. Lahache (Eds.), *Aboriginal education: Fulfilling the promise*. Vancouver, BC: UBC Press.
- Dawson, D., Karlis, G., & Georgescu, D. (1998). Contemporary issues in recreation and leisure for Aboriginal peoples in Canada. *Journal of Leisurability*, 25(1), 1-4.
- Deutschlander, S., & Miller, L.J. (2003). Politicizing Aboriginal cultural tourism: The discourse of primitivism in the tourist encounter. *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, 40(1), 27-44.
- Elkington, J. (1997). *Cannibals with forks: The triple bottom line of 21st century business*. Oxford, UK: Capstone.
- Facey, E.E. (2001). First Nations and education by Internet: The path forward, or back? *Journal of Distance Education/Revue de l'enseignement à distance*, 16(1), 113-125.
- Finn, J.L., & Checkoway, B. (1998). Young people as competent community builders: A challenge to social work. *Social Work*, 43(4), 335-345.
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Continuum.
- Gittell, R., & Vidal, A. (1998). *Community organising: Building social capital as a development strategy*. London: Sage.
- Goodfellow-Baikie, R.L., & English, M.L. (2006). First Nations and community economic development: a case study. *Community Development Journal* 41(2), 223-233.

- Greenall, D. (2005, October). *Formative evaluation of the Sunchild e-Learning community. Final report*. Ottawa: Conference Board of Canada. Retrieved November 15, 2007, from: <http://www.sccyber.net/www/Conference%20Board%20of%20Canada%20Study%2005.pdf>
- Halme, S. (2008, July 9). Susan Aglukark accepts U of A position. *Express News*. University of Alberta. Retrieved July 12, 2008, from: <http://www.expressnews.ualberta.ca/article.cfm?id=9396>
- Hammer, K., & Ofori, G. (2002, May). *Community-based sustainable Aboriginal tourism product development, a proposed model*. Paper presented at the 10th Canadian congress on leisure research, Edmonton.
- Hargrave, T. (2005, December 7). Are white people Indigenous? In *Healing whiteness: An exploration into the European Indigenous soul*. Retrieved April 24, 2006, from: <http://tadhargrave.blogspot.com/2005/12/are-white-people-indigenous-lewis.html>
- Hayward, S.F. (2002). The triple bottom line: Authentic new model or tripartite nonsense? *Religion and Liberty*, 12(5). Retrieved November 15, 2002, from: http://www.acton.org/publications/randl/rl_article_437.php
- Heber, R.W. (2006). *Aboriginal post-secondary education: Taiwan and Canada*. Aboriginal planet. Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada. Retrieved September 24, 2006, from: http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/foreign_policy/aboriginal/resource/canada/documents/rewesley-en.asp
- Henze, R., & Vanett, L. (1993). To walk in two worlds—Or more? Challenging a common metaphor of native education. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, 24(2), 116-134.
- Herchmer, B., Rabinovitz, T., & Petersen, C. (1999). *A learning and development plan to facilitate benefits-driven community services*. Edmonton, AB: Alberta Recreation and Parks Association.
- Hermes, M. (2000). The scientific method, Nintendo and eagle feathers: Rethinking the meaning of "culture-based" curriculum at an Ojibwe tribal school. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 13(4), 116-134.
- Hodson, J. (2004). Aboriginal learning and healing in a virtual world. *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 28, 111-122.
- Howe, C. (1998). Cyberspace is no place for tribalism. *Wicazo Sa Review*, 13(2), 19-28.
- Hull, J. (2000). *Prologica research. Aboriginal post-secondary education and labour market outcomes Canada 1996*. Ottawa: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.
- Interprovincial Sport and Recreation Council. (1987). *National recreation statement*. Retrieved September 15, 2006, from: www.lin.ca/lin/resource/html/statemen.htm
- Johns, S. (2003). Partners in the leadership dance: School vocational learning partnerships and community development. *Educational Forum*, 67(4), 317-325.
- Lertzman, D.A. (2002). Rediscovering rites of passage: Education, tranformation and the transition to sustainability. *Conservation Ecology*, 5(2), 30.
- Loizides S. (2003). *An Aboriginal economic development program*. Ottawa: Conference Board of Canada. Retrieved September 20, 2005, from: www.conferenceboard.ca/aedp
- Loizides, S., & Zieminski, J. (1998, November). *Employment prospects for Aboriginal people*. Ottawa: Conference Board of Canada. Retrieved November 15, 2002, from: <http://www.conferenceboard.ca/documents.asp?rnext=211>
- Lusty, T. (1999, November). Aboriginal education programs: Living on the edge. *Alberta Sweetgrass*. Retrieved September 20, 2005, from: <http://www.ammsa.com/sweetgrass/NOV99.html#anchor1137140>
- Mahaffy, C. (2002). *Proceedings of the Vision 2015: Leisure, wellness, prosperity and quality of life symposium, Calgary May 30-31, 2002*. Edmonton, AB: Alberta Recreation and Parks Association. Retrieved September 21, 2005, from: <http://www.arpaonline.ca/vision2015/VisionProceed.pdf>
- Malaspina University College. (2006, March 16). *News release*. Retrieved April 14, 2006, from: <http://www.mala.ca/media/release.asp?ID=859>
- Malatest, R.A., & Associates. (2004, January). *Aboriginal peoples and post-secondary education: What educators have learned*. Montreal, QC: Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation.

- Manitoba. (2002, February). *Aboriginal and Northern Affairs Aboriginal recreation resource manual*. Retrieved April 24, 2003, from: <http://www.gov.mb.ca/ana/publications/acrrm.pdf>
- Marines, M., Roehlkepartain, E.C., & Benson, P.L. (2005). Unleashing the power of community to strengthen the well-being of children, youth, and families: An asset-building approach. *Child Welfare*, 84(2), 233-250.
- Markusen, A. (2004). Targeting occupations in regional and community economic development. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 70(3), 253-268.
- Mayer, M. (2003). The onward sweep of social capital: Causes and consequences for understanding cities, communities and urban movements. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 27(1), 110-32.
- Mayer, S. (2002). Building community capacity: How different groups contribute. *Effective communities project*. Retrieved September 27, 2005, from: http://www.effectivecommunities.com/pdfs/ECP_GroupContribution.pdf
- McCann, J. (1998). Native niches: Aboriginal businesses are thriving by marketing their First Nations products and services to native and non-native consumers alike. *Marketing Magazine*, 103(34), 15-17.
- McCormick, R.M., Neumann, H., Amundson, N.E., & McLean, H.B. (1999). First Nations career/life planning model: Guidelines for practitioners. *Journal of Employment Counseling*, 36(4), 167-176.
- Mendelson, M. (2006, July). *Aboriginal peoples and postsecondary education in Canada*. Caledon Institute of Social Policy. Retrieved September 14, 2006, from: <http://www.caledoninst.org/>
- Miller, H.A. (2003, January). Manitoba committee helps young people get careers on track. *Windspeaker*. Retrieved September 15, 2006, from: http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_hb6364/is_200301/ai_n25513847?tag=artBody
- Mowbray, M. (2005). Community capacity building or state opportunism? *Community Development Journal*, 40(3), 255-264.
- Nadjiwan, S., & Blackstock, C. (2003). *Caring across the boundaries: Promoting access to voluntary sector resources for First Nations children and families*. First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada. Retrieved September 23, 2004, from: <http://www.fncfcs.com/projects/CABSUCCESSSTORIES.html>
- National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation. (2001). *Taking pulse: Connecting youth and careers*. Toronto, ON: Author.
- Nickerson, M. (2005). *Aboriginal culture in a digital age. Policy, politics and governance*. KTA Centre for Collaborative Government. Retrieved November 12, 2006, from: <http://www.kta.on.ca/documents/AboriginalCultureinaDigitalAge.pdf>
- Nitzberg, J. (2005). The meshing of youth development and community building. *New Directions for Youth Development* 2005, (206), 7-16.
- Norway House Cree Nation. (2007). *Education, training and culture division*. Retrieved July 4, 2008, from: <http://www.nhcn.ca/etc/communitybased.html>
- Notzke, C. (2004). Indigenous tourism development in southern Alberta, Canada: Tentative engagement. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 12(1), 29-54.
- Ottmann, J. (2005). *First Nations leadership development*. Banff Centre Aboriginal Leadership and Management On-line Library. Retrieved October 4, 2006, from: <http://www.banffcentre.ca/departments/leadership/aboriginal/library/>
- Pannekoek, F. (2006). Cyber imperialism and the marginalization of Canada's Indigenous peoples. In J. Baillargeon (Ed.), *The handing down of culture, smaller societies and globalization*. Grub Street Books.
- Reid, D.G., & Welke, S. (1998). Leisure and traditional culture in First Nations communities. *Journal of Leisureability*, 25(1). Retrieved April 20, 2006, from: <http://adp.lin.ca/resource/html/Vol25/V25N1A5.HTM>
- Research Resolution Consulting. (2003). *Demand for Aboriginal tourism products in the Canadian and American markets: Executive summary and conclusions*. Ottawa: Canadian Tourism Commission, Aboriginal Tourism Team Canada and Parks Canada.

- Richardson, C., & Blanchet-Cohen, N. (2000, January). *Survey of post-secondary education programs in Canada for Aboriginal peoples*. Institute for Child Rights and Development and First Nations Partnerships Program. Victoria, BC: University of Victoria. Retrieved November 23, 2005, from: <http://web.uvic.ca/iicrd/graphics/Canada%20Survey%20Report.pdf>
- Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. (1996). *The report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*. Vol. 3: Gathering strength. Ottawa: Author. Retrieved November 23, 2002, from http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ch/rcap/sg/si17_e.html#1.4%20Community%20Health
- Sanchez, J., Stucky, M.E., & Richard, M. (1998). Distance learning in Indian Country: Becoming the spider on the Web. *Journal of American Indian Education* 37(3), 1-17.
- Selkirk College. (2006). Innovative partnership produces award winning Aboriginal tourism program. *News at Selkirk College*. Retrieved September 26, 2007, from: <http://selkirk.ca/news/?id=81>
- Service Canada. (2007). *Research and analysis branch. Job futures*. Retrieved July 5, 2008, from: http://www.jobfutures.ca/noc/browse-occupations-work_prospects-Good-2009.shtml
- Simpson, L.R. (1998). Aboriginal peoples and the environment. *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 22, 223-237.
- Smith, R., & Magee, M. (2005, March). Value, spirit and purpose: Online resources for Aboriginal learners. *Alberta Online Consortium (AOC)*. Retrieved February 15, 2006, from: http://www.ataoc.ca/files/pdf/AOC_research.pdf
- Statistics Canada. (2003). Education in Canada: Raising the standard. *Analysis Series, 2001 Census*. Ottawa: Government of Canada. Retrieved June 15, 2008, from: <http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census01/Products/Analytic/companion/educ/contents.cfm>
- Sunchild E-Learning Community. (2003). *History*. Retrieved November 14, 2003, from: <http://www.scyber.net/www/events.php>
- Treaty 7 Aboriginal ICT Forum. (2004). *Annotated agenda. [Conference] information and communication technology for First Nations, March 30-31st, 2004, Calgary*. Retrieved April 24, 2005, from: <http://www.treaty7.org/ICTFN/Agenda.asp>
- University College of the North. (2007). *2006-2007 annual academic report*. Retrieved June 21, 2008, from: <https://www.ucn.ca>
- Urien, C. (1991). Changing academic discourse about Native education: Using two pairs of eyes. *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 18, 1-9.
- Watt-Cloutier, S. (2000). Honouring our past, creating our future: Education in northern and remote communities. In M.B. Castellano, L. Davis, & L. Lahache (Eds.), *Aboriginal education: Fulfilling the promise*. Vancouver, BC: UBC Press.
- Wheeler, W. (2002, September 25). *Indigenous knowledge in the academy*. Paper presented at the Indigenous education program seminar, Athabasca University.
- Williams, W., & Richter, C. (2002). Developing and supporting European tour operator distribution channels for Canadian aboriginal tourism development. *Journal of Travel Research*, 40(4), 404-415.
- Wingrove, J. (2007, June 10). Traditional sport breathes life into native communities. *Edmonton Journal*. Retrieved June 20, 2007, from: <http://www.canada.com/edmontonjournal/news/story.html?id=c24bb0a8-d900-4b8d-b6da-047beb62a95c&k=80501>
- Woolcock, M. (2001). The place of social capital in understanding social and economic outcomes. *Isuma: Canadian Journal of Policy Research*, 2(1), 11-17.
- Zeilinski, S. (2004, November 4). Students jump at online learning. *Red Deer Advocate*, p. 12.

Appendix A. Program Design

- Two-year core program leading to certificate or diploma (UT);
- Transition Year Program model: supplemental foundational courses

- Diploma: two-year, 60-credit equivalent plus up to nine additional credits; (Options for additional upgrading and skills courses)
- Certificate: 1 year, 30 credit (plus)
- Balance of credits between:
 - (a) in-class (contact) 30 credits
Format: On-campus meetings, workshops
RDC, Rocky Mountain House, other venue(s)
 - (b) on-line/distance 15 credits
Format: On-line delivery and tutoring
Homestudy materials
Visit by coordinator/tutor
 - (c) applied work credits 15 credits
Fieldwork or internship positions
Home community or other
- Module structure: year-round and flexible access
- Projects and practicum courses developed in consultation with student and communities
- Incorporates traditional perspectives, values and knowledge with the participation of mentors and elders as well as college resources.

Appendix B. Proposed Course Modules and Curriculum Structure for One-Year Certificate

Core Courses: Academic and Workplace Excellence

Unit I: Foundations of Student Success

Workshop-style and on-line courses, based on successful postsecondary Transition Year Programs, developing student skills and confidence with the acquisition of specific skills and orientation to academic culture; incorporates traditional Aboriginal perspectives on life transitions and community roles with the participation of mentors and elders as well as college resources. These courses will earn the student credit toward qualification for entry into Units II, III and IV to complete the program.

Unit II: Workplace and Leadership Skills

Foundational transferable skills for workplace success, emphasizing leadership approaches and applied knowledge in three (interacting) dimensions of self, community and society. As in Unit I, instruction and study may take the form of workshop, online and homestudy components. In addition, Unit II courses incorporate opportunities for applied focus on the fields of recreation, community wellness and tourism.

Career Studies: Recreation, Tourism, and Community Development

Unit III: Recreation, Tourism, and Aboriginal Communities

The basics of recreation, tourism and community development principles and practices, in the context of and informed by Aboriginal cultural contexts and histories; or with specific applications to Aboriginal communities. Balance of principles, goals and theory with a knowledge of contemporary careers and options in the field.

Unit IV: Focus Areas and Applications

Courses offer a foundation of key concepts and practices in selected special areas. An emphasis on career experience and qualifications balances this foundation (providing further credits through associated fieldwork/projects.) All courses require an activity lab and a fieldwork assignment (the nature of which will depend on available opportunities and program partnerships.) A combination of instructors, community members and mentors are involved.