

Report on Indigenous Professional and Graduate Students: A perspective on the future of Aboriginal students at Queen's University

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Queen's University is situated on traditional Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee territory.

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Executive Summary:

In order to continue to evolve and develop as an institution on the forefront of academic excellence, Queen's University, specifically its graduate and professional faculties, must place increased emphasis on recruiting, admitting and supporting Indigenous students. By reviewing the statistics and theories of educational attainment and its relationship with socio-economic development, as well as researching achievements from other institutions, and interviewing leaders on our campus this report highlights some of the key ways that Queen's could invest in its Indigenous students, thereby increasing its ability to support and retain these individuals. Without this innovation, Queen's University risks falling behind other institutions who are developing programs which give their students - both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal - a competitive advantage in a country quickly moving towards reconciliation.

Appendix 1:

Why Indigenous Support Systems Are Important

“Improving the social and economic well-being of the Aboriginal population is not only a moral imperative; it is a sound investment that will pay substantial dividends in the coming decades.”¹

It need not be said how important reconciliation efforts are between the First Nations and Canada. This has been extensively discussed, legislated and understood broadly amongst most of Canada’s lead educators, institutions and the current government. Thus, I will not extensively discuss the history of residential schools, the cultural genocide committed against this area’s first inhabitants, or the contemporary reality of over-incarceration, racism, high suicide rates, the astonishing number of vanished Aboriginal women, or the manipulation and disregard of treaties. I will focus instead on the educational system, and the reasons why we need to place serious emphasis on developing and increasing the offering of support across all of Canada’s post-secondary educational institutions. In this appendix, I will present some basic statistics and I will then briefly write on the extensive research and theories which support that closing the educational gap between Canadians and the First Nations is not just an act of reconciliation, but also makes long term financial sense. Finally, I will conclude on how these statistics and concepts impact our efforts at Queen’s.

¹ Investing in Aboriginal Education: An Economic Perspective, Centre of the Study of Living Standards, study on the economic impacts of improving levels of Aboriginal educational attainment

Statistics

Secondary

- A. The high school dropout rate for Aboriginal people is four times the national average (41%)²
- B. On reserves, nearly 6/10 don't finish high school
- C. Funding for schools on reserve lags that of other schools by roughly 30%³

University

- D. 9.8% of Aboriginal persons have university degrees⁴
- E. 86% of Canadian universities offer targeted services such as academic counseling and peer mentor ship⁵
- F. 30+ indigenous languages are taught at universities⁶
- G. 54% of universities currently offer Indigenous language classes⁷
- H. 71% of universities have links with Indigenous communities⁸
 - a. Partner with local Indigenous communities
 - b. Have outreach programs
 - c. Provide educational support
 - d. Have mentorship opportunities
- I. 69% of universities offer transition programs for Indigenous students⁹
- J. 33% offer targeted programs

² Ibid

³ Widening education gaps leaves Aboriginal Canadians further behind (<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/education/widening-education-gap-leaves-aboriginal-canadians-further-behind/article14738527/>)

⁴ Universities: Facts and Stats (<http://www.univcan.ca/universities/facts-and-stats/>)

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Ibid

- K. Universities offer 233 undergraduate and 62 graduate programs on Indigenous issues or for Indigenous students, all in
- L. Almost half of all Aboriginal people aged 25-64 have a post-secondary qualification¹⁰
 - a. 14.4% trade
 - b. 20.6% college
 - c. 2.5% university certificate/diploma below the bachelor level
- M. 9.8% with a university degree (in comparison with 26.5% of Canadians)

Women

- N. Aboriginal women are twice as likely as Aboriginal men to have a university degree
- O. Aboriginal women are much more likely to obtain new diplomas and degrees through their 30s, rather than their early 20s

Law

- P. 139 students registered in law school in the last 5 years who identified as Aboriginal (1.6 percent of the total enrolled)¹¹

Economic

- Q. Closing the education attainment gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians would generate a cumulative GDP gain of up to \$261 billion between 2011 and 2031 and generate substantial savings for governments¹²

Queens University

Undergraduate

1. 305 applications from self-identified Indigenous students to date – 8% increase (23) from last year, in line with overall application increase
2. 159 offers to date – one more than last year

¹⁰ Statscan (<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-656-x/89-656-x2015001-eng.htm>)

¹¹ “More aboriginal students needed in Ontario law schools” (<http://www.lawtimesnews.com/201605235426/headline-news/more-aboriginal-students-needed-in-ontario-law-schools-academics>)

¹² “Addressing Aboriginal education gap benefits all Canadians” (<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/addressing-aboriginal-education-gap-benefits-all-canadians/article24832375/>)

3. 20 acceptances to date – 1 fewer than last year

SGS

1. Statistics not available until mid-April
2. Med has conducted 12 interviews with self-identified applicants
3. Faculty of Law has 8 self-identified students who have accepted for this coming year

Educational/Economic Theories of Development

As the opening quote of this report suggests, it is a well-established fact that there is a “direct link between a well-educated population and a socially progress, sustainable society.”¹³ In terms of reconciliation efforts, and the mandate of the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions’ Report, “education is the most helpful in improving fairness, equality and quality of life for future generations.”¹⁴ Investing in increasing the numbers of Indigenous students who graduate high school, attend university, and go on to do post-graduate degrees and specialties in their fields will have an irrevocable and concrete impact on the income margins and socio-economic status of Indigenous people in Canada.

However, it is not just wise in the sense of reconciliation and working towards a better country that supports all of the people who live on this land, but it also makes sense in the broader sense of economic development of Canada as a whole.

“Any money and effort that Canada invests to improve the educational outcomes of Aboriginal youth will pay off. Higher GDP growth, lower unemployment, increased tax revenue and reduced demand for health and social services. The potential economic

¹³ Strengthening Aboriginal Success: Summary Report
CMEC Summit on Aboriginal Education (2009)

¹⁴ “Addressing Aboriginal education gap benefits all Canadians”
(<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/addressing-aboriginal-education-gap-benefits-all-canadians/article24832375/>)

gains are significant and quantifiable. There are links between educational attainment and economic and social indicators, and clear effects of education on earnings and non-market outcomes, including a relationship between educational attainment and labour market outcomes in Canada, including the unemployment rate, the labour force participation rate and employment rate, with a strong positive effect on the labour market outcomes of individuals.”¹⁵

Experts in social studies have repeatedly identified this phenomenon.

“People with more education tend to experience lower unemployment, participate at a higher rate in the labour force, enjoy higher employment rates and have higher incomes. There is an obvious relationship between education, income and productivity in Canada. The strong positive relationship between education and earning is one of the most well-established relationships in social science. The rates of return to investments in education are high and possibly higher than has generally been believed on the basis of previous studies of the impact of education on earnings.”¹⁶

Education provides the following social returns:

4. Dynamic externalities associated with economic growth
5. Static knowledge spillovers
6. Non-market external benefits such as reduced criminal activity
7. Social benefits associated with taxation
8. Personal returns including individual health
9. Intergenerational effects (child development, health, education) associated with the educational attainment of parents.¹⁷

¹⁵ Investing in Aboriginal Education: An Economic Perspective, Centre of the Study of Living Standards, study on the economic impacts of improving levels of Aboriginal educational attainment

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ Ibid

Regardless of changes to its participation and employment rates, the Aboriginal population will have a disproportionately large contribution to both the Canadian labour force and to total Canadian employment. Education is by far the most important determinant of labour market outcomes and also plays a pre-eminent role in improving social outcomes. Given the demographic structure of the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations, Aboriginal people will undoubtedly play a significant role in shaping the economic future of Canada.¹⁸

Impact on Queen's University

Given these realities, Queen's would be wise to consider investing in Indigenous education and in recruiting Indigenous students into its programs. Not only is this morally imperative – as an educational institution of higher learning, Queen's has, like any university, the responsibility to ensure that uncomfortable history is learned and passed on – it is pragmatically responsible. As Indigenous peoples move increasingly into the forefront of economic development and social progression, it would be an investment in the future of the university to ensure that Indigenous students come here to learn, develop relationships and institutional loyalty, and develop their skill sets in our programs and faculties. In order to make this a reality, Queen's must consider strategic plans to develop better support systems, offer broader and more considerate scholarships and bursaries, and to increase the visibility of our current students and graduates as they go on to contribute to their fields and their communities.

Appendix 2:

Existing Networks at Queen's University

Currently at Queen's, there are a variety of existing support networks¹⁹.

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ Discussion on how to improve and expand these networks can be found in Appendix 3

10. Queen's Supporting Aboriginal Graduate Enhancement (SAGE) Nest

- Interdisciplinary and cross-institutional peer-mentoring program designed to support Aboriginal graduate students with the successful transition into and completion of their graduate programs
- Based on the successful New Zealand program called 'MAI' (Maori and Indigenous Graduate Students Program). The MAI program aimed to develop 500 Maori PhDs in five years. Designed to develop critical mass of Maori intellectual taken and change-makers that would also have a strong commitment and consciousness about being Maori and contributing to Maori development.
- SAGE program originated in BC and is a successful province-wide initiative. A Southern Ontario team was developed by Aboriginal faculty at U of T, and though independent of SAGE BC, shares similar goals.

<http://www.queensu.ca/fdasc/current-students/get-involved/sage>

11. Queen's University Native Student Association

- AMS ratified university club comprised of a diverse group of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students that share an interest in Aboriginal cultures and traditions. Undergraduates, graduates and professional students are all represented in the QNSA
- Forum for students to discuss contemporary and historic issues pertaining to Aboriginal peoples and cultures

<https://qnsaclub.wordpress.com>

12. Kahswentha Indigenous Knowledge Initiative

- Designed to impact both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students. This initiative seeks to remedy the knowledge deficit and misunderstandings of Aboriginal peoples by raising awareness and providing knowledge sharing among non-Aboriginal students, staff and faculty, providing opportunities for experiential learning not offered in the classroom, and fostering alliances and building communities among the local Aboriginal community

External Awards, Bursaries & Scholarships

Award	Application Deadline
Jose Amaujaq Kusugak Memorial Award	July 9
Queen's Aboriginal Awards	October 31
Canada Post Aboriginal Incentive Awards	August 31
Indspire	June 1, November 1, February 1
Helen Bassett Commemorative Student Award	July
KPMG Indigenous Student Awards	June 1, November 1
RBC Scholarship for Aboriginals	December
Rose Nolan Memorial Scholarship Fund	June 30
Kathleen Blinkhorn Aboriginal Student Scholarship	June 24
Hydro One FNMI Scholarship	April 30, December 31
Colin Wasacase Scholarship - ONECA	June 30
Four Directions Scholarship - ONECA	June 30
Ontario Power Generation Student Awards	May 15

Queen's also hosts the Four Directions Aboriginal Student Centre. This is a hub for Indigenous students to gather and maintain their traditions and cultures. Located on campus, their mandate includes a commitment to "enhancing the development and well-being of the [Aboriginal student] community, and to making the Queen's experience a welcoming, positive one for all Indigenous students". As a home away from home for Indigenous students, the house also includes information and support for the broader Queen's community, and welcomes students to learn about Indigenous culture, traditions and issues on campus and more broadly.

On their website alone, students can easily access the Queen's Native Student Association, the Aboriginal Council of Queen's University, Indigenous-focused Programs, the Aboriginal admissions policy, the Aboriginal Student Scholarships, student assistance resources, and an extensive online library.

<http://www.queensu.ca/fdasc/home>

During an interview with Four Directions, other programs and initiatives across campus for Graduate and Professional students were also highlighted. These include an annual writing retreat for Aboriginal graduate students working on their thesis, recruitment efforts like Grad and Professional Days, where Indigenous students who might be interested in studies are invited to spend the day at Queen's, are hosted by various graduate departments, tour the faculties and talk to admissions about how to apply to the program.

Lisa Maracle works in this area specifically, as the Aboriginal Community Outreach Liaison, visiting other universities to do outreach for graduate and professional students. In this process, students are polled as to what areas they might be interested in, and connected directly to the programs. Four Directions also pointed to the efforts of SASS (writing support), and SAGE, which offers a safe place for Indigenous students, where they can discuss issues and get resources.

During another meeting, this time with Ann Deer, the Indigenous Access and Recruitment Coordinator for Queen's Faculty of Law, other key efforts by the faculty and the school generally were highlighted, including the efforts of Melanie Howard in the Engineering department, who Ann says is "leading the pack on campus" in terms of recruitment efforts for post-graduate studies for Indigenous students. She also pointed to Four Directions hosting Feast Nights on the first and third Wednesday of the month, to make sure that students feel connected to their communities.

Example Case: Queen's Faculty of Law

As a law student, I have the closest knowledge and understanding of the goings-on within the Faculty of Law at Queen's. I believe that this department can serve to highlight some of the initiatives that Queen's has taken on and excelled with. One of these ways is through the creation of an Aboriginal Students Scholarship. Funded through a donation from the Law Students Society, voted upon by law students and matched by Faculty, this is the first scholarship of its kind specifically oriented towards Indigenous law students.

The law school also features a broad array of courses oriented towards understanding Indigenous issues in the legal context, including Aboriginal Law and First Nations Negotiations. Having taken both of these courses, I can attest to their ability to engage students and bring about an important understanding of the theoretical and the practical components of Aboriginal law.

Ann Deer, specifically, has been hired as an Indigenous Access and Recruitment Coordinator for the law school, whose mandate is to recruit and support Indigenous students who want to join and do join the Faculty. In her position so far, she has placed extensive emphasis on ensuring that essential changes are made throughout the Faculty to ensure that Indigenous students feel at home and welcomed. She says that "one of the best parts of [her] position is that [she] gets to keep in touch with Aboriginal law students on campus". She explains that this connection helps to understand what

students need, what their challenges are, and how to best support them. One of the ways she has done this is to encourage healthful habits that create connectivity to culture and ensure that students don't feel alienated from community. One of the ways she does this is by making sure that Indigenous students get home cooked meals – she hosts Fry Bread Friday on the last Friday of the month, helps to coordinate the meals that Four Directions has, and she makes sure that every event she plans has food and snacks.

Other Institutions

The Nipissing University RBC Treaty Learning Centre: Launched in 2016, the Nipissing University RBC Treaty Learning Centre opened during the University's Indigenous Week. This centre houses information on the significance and meaning of Treaty Belts. Initiatives like this represent moves by universities to actively participate in reconciliation efforts, which are often argued to start at a recognition of Canada's complex and often upsetting history. The Ontario Human Rights Commissioner spoke at the opening of the centre, saying that "the work should be started and not wait for anybody else. It is up to each of us to do the right thing". Not only is the centre a space to educate and research on the meaning of Treaty belts, which may very well have an impact on the interpretation of these treaties moving forward, it also represents a new cultural hub, which brought together students, singers, educators, speakers, Elders and the community to learn about traditions held by the Indigenous people in the Thunder Bay area. This is an important move towards reconciliation as well – qualifying Indigenous traditions as current, contemporary and significant helps people to move from a perception of their existence in the past to an understanding of their existence in the present.

Links for more information:

<http://anishinabeknews.ca/2016/11/07/treaty-learning-centre-open-for-education-in-treaty-relationships/>

<http://www.nipissingu.ca/about-us/newsroom/Pages/Reconciliation-North-Bay-launches.aspx>

<http://www.nipissingu.ca/about-us/newsroom/Pages/NU-launching-Indigenous-Week-.aspx>

Portage College:

Currently, Portage College in Cold Lake, Alberta, is seeking to integrate hide tanning into its curriculum, to revive the practice and ensure that their students maintain some of the important Indigenous customs of their heritage. The school already offers a 3 week class in the tradition as a part of their Native Arts and Culture Program.

McGill University Faculty of Law:

In an attempt to address Canada's colonial history and work towards reconciliation, first year students at McGill will now participate in a mandatory new course on Indigenous legal traditions. Dean Robert Leckey explains that "this intensive course is part of a large curricular renewal that will substantially bolster the place of Indigenous legal traditions in legal education at McGill". This one week course focuses on teaching Indigenous legal traditions, and then applying these principles in a practical way to case studies on real issues affecting Indigenous communities. It is accepted by McGill that this course is limited in scope – instead of looking to teach everything, it hopes to teach students "how to learn and how to listen, so they can identify Indigenous laws and legal traditions when they are out in practice".

University of Victoria Faculty of Law:

UVic Law is currently considering a joint degree program between Common Law/Indigenous Law, modeled after Quebec's Civil/Common degrees. In a Globe and Mail article on the proposal, a student explains how the current course on Aboriginal Law at the university taught him how to see law differently – for example, a totem pole erected at the Kingcome Inlet in BC, which represents a form of legal agreement between four bands to maintain unity. This program would allow students to study the same subjects as they would for a conventional law degree, but instead of looking solely

at the Canadian legal system, they would also look at principles of law of the First Nations.

University of Winnipeg:

UWinn has also implemented an Indigenous Course Requirement, which makes all of their graduates at all levels of education choose from a number of 3-credit courses, in which a greater part of the content is local Indigenous material, derived from or based on an analysis of the cultures, languages, history, ways of knowing or contemporary reality of Indigenous peoples in North America. Then Associate Dean of Indigenous Affairs, Wab Kinew, says of this program that “education plays a huge role in advancing reconciliation. In every field, from science to business to education, engaging with First Nations, Metis and Inuit peoples is the new reality of this country. I’m very proud to say our students will be better prepared for that environment and that will be a competitive advantage for them.”

Appendix 3:

Recommendations

- Outreach: one of the key efforts that each expert I interviewed made clear was a priority was outreach. Where this historically has been considered something that occurs later in undergraduate, the unique circumstances faced by Indigenous students yields a need for this to happen from a much earlier point.
 - o Pre-University: Both Ann Deer and Four Directions echoed that it is the unfortunate reality that Indigenous students, particularly those from more remote communities, don’t often feel able to consider careers that require university, much less post-graduate, educations. Many face barriers to even finish high school, because this often requires them to leave home and travel far away to areas which offer this level of learning. Because of these obstacles, it is important for Queen’s to recognize that outreach

must start from an early age, if the amount of Indigenous graduate and professional students is to increase.

- **Aboriginal Council of Queen's University Meeting:** Related to this recommendation, there have been developments on this front with the coordination and effort of staff at the University. Lisa Doxdator, of the Four Directions Aboriginal Student Centre, attended the Limestone District School Board (the local school board in Kingston) session and discussions about connecting with local high school students. As an extension of these efforts, she has been building relationships with local guidance counsellors to create a network.
 - o Queen's is also currently going into two north-end high schools twice a week, and to the Katarokwi Aboriginal School. The currently established weekly outreach youth group is also going to meet in the community instead of on campus, and the hope is to involve student ambassadors from various programs to talk about their experiences.
 - Ann Deer pointed to the engineering department at Queen's as a model of one way to do this type of outreach – the faculty has books that are geared towards young children and teenagers, which talk about careers in engineering, in different Indigenous languages. These books help students understand career pathways, and more intangibly, make them feel like these are not impossible goals. One recommendation would be that all the faculties should challenge their students to develop these books and have them translated into indigenous languages.
 - Another suggestion is to involve student ambassadors, particularly Aboriginal students, in the outreach process. Helping these students find the time and funding to return to their communities and to other areas to speak to young students will help generations to build each other up, and for current students to know that their university feels that this is important and that they are supported.

- The Law Times surveyed the situation in relation to law schools, concluding that the “pool of eligible students shrinks at the secondary level – innovations are needed, like online courses and distance education²⁰” to support students in their ability to complete their secondary education. These are things that the University has the ability to innovate – and has in the past.
- Undergraduate:
 - At the undergraduate level, outreach is more accessible, but requires different emphasis. Whereas the pre-university period is about creating pathways and inspiring Aboriginal students to understand that they have the chance to pursue these careers and educational futures, the undergraduate space is more pragmatic, and requires that students feel confident and supported in their endeavours. This means ensuring that students are contacted and told of the various scholarships, admission support and grants that are accessible to them, and of the academic support networks that exist to ensure their success in the post-graduate sphere. A large part of the emphasis during interviews was on the fact that the demographic of post-graduate students is different than typical (usually older, with children, who will have to work as well as study, both part time), and this means a unique set of challenges that will predominate the concerns of students considering going forward with their studies.
 - Grad and Professional Days: expanding this programming is an easy way to ensure that these goals are met. Involving more of the university, student ambassadors from the faculties, creating programming that places emphasis on embracing all types of students from a variety of socio-

²⁰ More Aboriginal students needed in Ontario law schools (<http://www.lawtimesnews.com/201605235426/headline-news/more-aboriginal-students-needed-in-ontario-law-schools-academics>)

economic and non-traditional backgrounds, and ensuring that all potential students are aware of and have access to supports on campus means that students will see Queen's as able to support them in their time of continued learning.

- In relation to the recommendations here, it is suggested by Law Times that “Ontario schools should introduce a preliminary program to help Aboriginal students prepare for law school²¹”
 - Saskatchewan, for example, already has the “Program of Legal Studies for Native People”, which helped over 1300 Aboriginal students prepare for law school.
 - Queen's Faculty of Law is already innovating programming for undergraduate students on a variety of legal subjects – this could be expanded or used to develop a program specific to Indigenous students, and then the model applied across the faculties.
- Financial Support: Scholarships and bursaries are at the heart of facilitating access to graduate and professional degrees for Indigenous students. As mentioned above, both Four Directions and Ann Deer echoed the sentiment of the variant demographic that applies to Indigenous students, who are mostly older, single parents, mostly female, many who work and have to study at the same time. This is particularly problematic because it is extremely difficult to find funding that applies for part time students (OSAP, for example, goes down to far less than half for part time students). This is extremely challenging for an Aboriginal student, because they are not working to be able to afford school, but to be able to feed their families and support themselves.
 - Scholarships: The Faculty of Law opened a student and faculty funded scholarship for Indigenous students in this past year. This is an excellent

²¹ More aboriginal students needed in Ontario law schools (<http://www.lawtimesnews.com/201605235426/headline-news/more-aboriginal-students-needed-in-ontario-law-schools-academics>)

example of a way that faculties and the university as a whole can support and recruit Aboriginal students.

- A blend of the discussion above related to outreach and recruitment, and to the one here, about financial aid, is the potential of Queen's, specifically Queen's alumni, funding scholarships for high-achieving high school students at risk for dropping out of high school. Given the 41% drop-out rate amongst Indigenous students, it is plausible that Queen's, and Canada as a whole, are missing out on the potential that these students would have if given more opportunities. Essay competitions, need based aid, and bursaries, might lead the charge in letting Indigenous youth know that they can aspire to attend university, and post-graduate studies, in the future.
- Indigenous Educators: Part of the challenge of teaching Indigenous students in the Canadian university context is the lack of experts and specialists teaching in these universities. Problematically, this is a vicious circle – the lack of access to post-graduate education for Indigenous students creates a vacuum, where Aboriginal peoples don't rise to the level of being able to teach at the university level, but because of this, another barrier to successful education for Indigenous students continues to exist. It is well-established that not recognizing yourself in those who are successful in the field you want to get involved in makes individuals less likely to feel that they can excel in this space. The significance of this is echoed by the Summary Report from the CMEC Summit on Aboriginal Education in 2009, where Inuit Elder Tapiriit Kanatami asserted that “more Aboriginal teachers are needed in classrooms to help improve language and cultural training”²².
 - One of the very real potential impacts of having more Indigenous educators is that they will design curriculums consistent with their culture and traditions. This was something emphasized by CMEC, who said that “curriculum must remain flexible so that learning remains consistent with

²² Strengthening Aboriginal Success: Summary Report
CMEC Summit on Aboriginal Education (2009)

Aboriginal culture, and addresses the intellectual, spiritual, emotional and physical needs of students through lifelong learning, grounded in First Nations languages, cultures, traditions, values and world views”. As is further emphasized in this report, “it is important for non-Aboriginal learners to appreciate First Nations, Metis and Inuit peoples’ heritage, present-day cultures and contributions to Canada, and that for Aboriginal learners, success in education requires affirmation of their language and cultural identity.” It is inherently unfair for an Indigenous student to arrive on our campus and be taught exclusively by non-Aboriginal professors, in a way that does not look to their traditions. The addition of more Indigenous faculty and staff will help to make Aboriginal students feel welcomed in our community, and to ensure that Queen’s actively participates in reconciliation.

- Queen’s needs to place emphasis on finding, hiring and showcasing Indigenous experts and specialists in as many fields as possible. Recruiting these individuals to teach, guest lecture and present at the university will not only help all students expand their perspectives and understandings of the various disciplines, but also ensure that Indigenous students considering Queen’s and post-graduate educations generally, will recognize themselves in those individuals.
- Retention: Ann Deer also mentioned the value of finding Indigenous guest speakers for our current students. In her role, she has emphasized talking to current Aboriginal students and finding out their interests, and then using the resources of the university to find individuals who are able to speak to working in that field.
- Visibility: Along the same vein, one of the things that Ann Deer emphasized was creating visibility for our current Indigenous students and our graduates. There are various ways in which Queen’s could make sure that Indigenous visibility is enhanced.
 - Visual website development: Ms. Deer described Indigenous students as very visual. One of the changes she highlights as positive is the addition of

a stethoscope with beaded work, which means that when prospective students look at the website, they recognize the visual and see a commitment to their culture and traditions

- Totem: This week, UBC raised a massive totem on their campus that represents the story of the residential schools and the impact that these had on Aboriginal peoples across Canada. This totem will serve as a visual reminder to all who arrive on campus that the school is committed to remembering the history of this country, and in appreciating and respecting their Indigenous community.
- Banners: When considering diversity and achievement at Queen's University, it was suggested to me by Ann Deer, Indigenous Access and Recruitment Coordinator for the Faculty of Law and the Faculty of Medicine, that I should turn my mind to visually representing that diversity of and in achievement. With this in mind, I propose the development of a visual campaign that represents what our alumni have achieved in the last 175 years. This campaign would be executed through mediums such as large scale banners, which feature the faces and stories of success from Queen's alumni, as well as smaller posters for more wide dissemination. The **goal** of this project is to ensure that our current and prospective students see the diversity of our alumni, as well as the unique achievements of a broad swath of these, and to celebrate these accomplishments as a part of 175 years of excellence as a post-secondary institution.
 - As Ann Deer explained, the first of these two goals is incredibly important. It is a well known reality that representation in all forms of media help individuals feel like they belong in a particular society, and this stands true of diverse students at our university. For her, indigenous students often feel that they will not be accepted or find the support systems they need, because they do not "see" this acceptance represented in the school as they walk through it on tours, or engage with it online. As we forge a new path

into the next 175 years of education, it is essential that we turn our minds to ensuring that ALL students feel that Queen's reflects inclusivity, acceptance and support for all their unique needs. By ensuring that these banners and other mediums feature a cross-section of the many different people who have come to Queen's and excelled, we may ensure that students who walk our halls on tours and between classes, see faces that look like theirs, and feel free to aspire to the lofty achievements of these individuals.

- At York University, this was already something which was successfully implemented. In fact, it was a part of a much larger, and very successful, campaign called the "IMPACT" campaign, which "celebrated the talent of students and grads". Partially a fundraising effort, partially an alumni-engagement effort, and partially a marketing tool, this campaign included massive 10-12 foot tall banners in the large main atrium of the university, and small banners and posters throughout campus, depicting short quotes, a picture of the alumni, their grad year and department, and the ever present hashtag, further ensuring online social-media engagement with the efforts of the project. The project even featured its own self-contained website, <http://impact.yorku.ca>, which demonstrates some of the stories featured on campus.
- Though not proposing anything nearly as ambitious, the potential positive ramifications of implementing even one or two pieces from the York University example suggest positive change. It is important, especially now, that our students feel welcomed, safe and included in the collective community of our campus, and it is self-evident that an important way to do that is to celebrate those very individuals who have done so well in representing our school to the world in their fields. With buildings such as Chernoff, the Isabel Bader Centre, the new Gowling Atrium in Macdonald Hall and the Centre for Student Life, there is no shortage of impressive

places to display banners such as these, and to ensure that they are seen by much of our student and faculty.

- Changing the post-graduation market perspective: One of the overarching issues with promoting and increasing Indigenous participation in graduate and professional studies is that the central message related to career development is to seek roles in large cities, such as Toronto. On the one hand, this is problematic because Indigenous students often feel alienated and uncomfortable in these types of settings, if they have grown up in rural backgrounds, and on the other, this results in a brain drain from the communities themselves.
 - o Ann Deer suggests that emphasis, and incentive, should be placed across the faculties for students to pursue opportunities in remote communities and in the North. She proposed two examples: a Family Medicine Program which sends students, particularly Indigenous students, to remote Indigenous communities to practice family medicine. Even if students choose not to stay long term, they will develop sensitivity and understanding to the Indigenous context. In the case of law, more emphasis could be placed by career development on working/articling in Northern communities, and on training and developing the skills needed to practice in the Indigenous context.
- Educational programming: In the same vein as above, developing and implementing mandatory courses related to Indigenous issues may play a key role in reconciliation efforts and in changing the conversation related to Indigenous issues. For all students in every discipline to have to learn about the theory, history and contemporary issues related to their field will ensure that our graduates leave Queen's with a thorough understanding and better education in their fields.
 - o A proposal is being developed at the Faculty of Law related to creating mandatory courses for third year law students, which would give students an opportunity to pick between three broad discipline focuses (criminal, business and family) and to learn from guest lecturers the tangible, practical realities of the intersection of these fields and the Aboriginal legal

tradition. Please email 13nbb1@queensu.ca for a copy of this proposal working paper.

- McGill Faculty of Law has already made the move to implement a mandatory course on Indigenous legal traditions, through a week long intensive program for their first year students. The University of Victoria's Faculty of Law is taking it one step further, proposing a joint degree in Indigenous Law and Canadian Common Law, a program which would be the first of its kind in the world.
- The University of British Columbia, Lakehead University and soon the University of Victoria are also leading the charge of mandatory Indigenous learning and intercultural training

Next Steps for this Project:

One of the missing components in this project as it currently stands is participant level research. The hope was to be able to facilitate two student surveys – one, graduate and professional student wide, into the status of knowledge and understanding of Indigenous culture, traditions, languages and issues amongst all (with the ultimate goal being to demonstrate why more Indigenous visibility and education is so important across campus), and the other, Indigenous student specific, investigating their knowledge and use of our current support services, and to probe any grievances or suggestions they may have. It would be my hope that, based on the recommendations made above, that these surveys would be put to our students, adding the layer of asking for opinions on the recommendations the school might take. It is painfully clear that our students are our greatest asset in developing and improving as an institution, and turning to them for more knowledge is a good idea.