Funding and Best Practices Research

BC First Nations Post-Secondary Institutes

Indian Studies Support Program Research Project

December 2005

Submitted by:
Storytellers' Foundation & Gitxsan Wet'suwet'en Education Society

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Acknowledgements

Executive Summary

The Indian Studies Support Program (ISSP) Committee solicited proposals beginning in June 2005 to conduct funding and best practices research on First Nations controlled post-secondary training institutes in BC.

The ISSP Committee's stated goal for the research project was to investigate and share information related to two critical issues: the funding required to implement effective post-secondary education programming in First Nation institutes and successful practices in First Nation post-secondary institute programming and curriculum development. Investigation of these issues took place using the research tools of a targeted literature review and institutional surveys.

The following 10 organizations participated in the survey. Also indicated for each, is the type of interview that took place and the location of the facility.

- Chemainus Native College (in person), Ladysmith
- Chief Dan George Centre for Advanced Education (in person), Vancouver
- En'owkin Centre – Okanagan Indian Educational Resources Society (in person), Penticton
- Gitxsan Wet'suwet'en Education Society (in person), Hazelton
- Native Education Centre – Urban Native Indian Education Society (in person), Vancouver
- North East Native Advancing Society (by telephone), Fort St. John
- Saanich Adult Education Centre (in person), Brentwood Bay
- Secwepemc Cultural Education Society (in person), Kamloops
- Wilp Wilxo'oskwhl Nisga'a (by fax), New Aiyansh
- Yinka Dene Language Institute (in person), Prince George

For ease of discussion, the data gathered is organized into four themes for presentation in the results section: diversity in institutes, response to community needs, personalized service and instability from lack of reliable funding.

Survey results related to funding are found mainly under Theme 4 (instability) and somewhat under Theme 1 (diversity). The answer to how much funding is required to implement effective post-secondary education programming is as variable as the diversity found in the First Nations controlled institutes as characterized in the data described under Theme 1. What is common amongst the organizations is the effects that chronic under-funding has created. Without an annual source of funding for non-delivery related costs, many of the resource-related activities that public institutes can carry out with the assistance of FTE and other funding are severely limited in the organizations surveyed. These kinds of activities came to the surface when those interviewed were asked what they could do if they had core funding. Some discussed the stability the funding could bring that would allow execution of plans, time to develop markets and relationships. Others talked of infrastructure expansion and development such as resource centers,

libraries, labs and building maintenance. There was also discussion of how stable funding would contribute to the ability to pay market wages to staff, thereby stabilizing staff turnover. This point is especially pertinent when considering that having dedicated and 'the right' instructors are high on the list of effective student support practices.

How much core funding is required by the organizations was not directly ascertainable from the results. But with overall budgets ranging from $300,000-$4 million and student enrolment ranging from 17 to 225, it would be safe to say that the amount of core funding needed per institute would vary. One respondent replied that $35,000 per month for two years would bring some stability. Other organizations would find $75-100,000 annually for a multi-year period as a stabilizing influence. This calculation is based on an extrapolation from the data that many organizations required assistance with administrative costs (the average administrative cost was 13% of the post-secondary budget and the median post-secondary budget was $575,000). None of this addresses the increased programming costs being encountered, mostly as a result of skyrocketing tuition by public post-secondary institutes, but as a respondent put it "just give me a core budget for administration and still let me have access to funding sources for programs."

There were mixed responses to the issue of affiliation agreements and how they relate to funding. A common opinion was the federal government funding policy around accreditation didn't leave a lot of options other than partnering with public post-secondary institutes, despite what are seen as unfair resource allocations. As one respondent noted the "system is squeezing out First Nation-controlled post-secondary organizations. We need our own licensing. We want to have our own processes." Likewise, a number of respondents pointed out some of the pitfalls of the ISSP, such as the instability caused by the lack of long-term or multi-year funding. One respondent suggested establishing a task force "of active, independent post-secondary institutions controlled tribally, not public institutions, to look at revamping ISSP."

Generally those interviewed pointed out that not an enormous amount of funding would be required to bring some stability and that it is money well spent by government. "We are a good anomaly in the post-secondary education mix – servicing with a lesser cost," said one respondent.

Survey results related to best practices are found mainly in the Theme 3 (personalized service) and somewhat in the Theme 2 (responsiveness) sections.

Defining best practices first depends upon a definition of student success. For First Nations-controlled post-secondary institutes the definition of student success may be somewhat different than mainstream institutions. It is evident that the programming offered by the organizations is often beyond developing skill sets for individual advancement and is frequently more directed to training individuals within the context of the common good for the community. As one respondent said, "it's about training to keep the community alive."

Respondents in this study reflected many components listed in other studies such as by Jothen (2005). Some of the key practices listed by those surveyed are:

- having small class size and a relaxed but professional atmosphere;
- vetting curriculum through a local committee before delivery to ensure it is culturally relevant;
- ensuring programs have transferability before they are delivered;
- instructors having ample time outside of the classroom for preparation/student/community contact
- experiential components associated with culture and spirituality services such as circles and smudges
- Elder participation in all aspects from language instruction, curriculum development, policy development and spiritual guidance
- encouraging institute staff to sit on boards of community organizations
- providing a safe, friendly, First Nations atmosphere at the organization
- using direct visits to villages/face-to-face individual contact and word-of-mouth as student intake strategies
- recruiting responsive Board members
- extensive intake interviews for assessment and other purposes and follow ups throughout training period
- flexibility to respond quickly to a community need and to also have flexibility within the delivery of a course or program

The personalized and culturally specific practices carried out by First Nations-controlled post-secondary training institutes, in the areas of support services, programming and curriculum development, that are required for an increased chance of student success are labor intensive and costly. The core funding necessary for implementing the best practices in a strategic manner is missing. The data gathered did not give a definitive answer to the amount of funding required by First Nations-controlled institutes to implement effective post-secondary training. However, although the amount of core funding required is variable, for aspects other than program delivery results indicate it could start as low as $100,000 per institution.

Without this type of funding the institutes surveyed will continue to face great instability. At the organizational level, there are institutes surveyed that have a long history of accomplishments but are barely existing today because of a lack of core funding. As one respondent said, "soundness and longevity depend on stability."

Recommendations

Introduction:

First Nations-operated post-secondary institutions have existed successfully for a number of decades, which demonstrates their commitment to education and the effectiveness of their culturally immersed programs and practices. However, the reality for most institutions is that they are forced to do more for less, making their growth and sustainability difficult to achieve. The following recommendations are based on the results of this project.

1. Base Funding:

An immediate and reliable source of funding is required if the surveyed First Nations-operated post-secondary institutions are to continue to offer their current services. Access to an annual funding source would allow each of the institutions to maintain and improve upon their buildings, to purchase the necessary supplies and fixtures, to attract and retain high quality teachers and student support staff, to increase the number and types of courses offered, to alleviate instability, and finally, to compensate for the debt incurred when students are unable to pay tuition.

2. Legislative Support:

The federal and provincial governments must officially acknowledge the degree-granting authority of First Nations-operated post-secondary institutions. The accreditation of the participating institutions would make available the funding sources afforded to public post-secondary institutions, ensure the portability of courses between First Nations institutions and public institutions, and eventually remove the need to establish costly partnerships with public institutions. In addition, until all First Nations-operated institutions are granted accreditation, publicly funded First Nations institutions that have access to Full Time Enrollment (FTE) funding, should not be eligible to apply for alternate sources of First Nations funding, as there exists a number of immensely under-funded private First Nations institutions that are forced to rely on proposal-driven funding as their only financial resource.

3. Curriculum and Research Development:

All of the participating institutions cited the inclusion of their traditional language and culture as their main best practice, which makes curriculum and research development crucial to the continued creation and success of culturally relevant programs. However, curriculum development is very time consuming and expensive, making the task almost impossible for private First Nations-operated institutions. As such, it is important that First Nations-operated institutions be given access to research and program development funding. Without such funding, those attempting to revitalize and teach their First Nations culture, history, and language, will continue to face an unnecessary uphill battle.

4. <u>Information Sharing Network:</u>

The establishment of a First Nations post-secondary education hearth would allow the institutions to communicate with each other regarding past experiences, curriculum and program development, student and school achievements, teacher and staff retention, and best practices. An information network would also alleviate some of the research and program development overlap that occurs when institutions are unable to communicate with each other. Finally, networking would make the achievement of common goals such as, the national recognition of First Nations knowledge and practices, the accreditation of First Nations institutions, and the revitalization of First Nations cultures and languages a combined effort, thereby speeding up the overall processes.

Contents

Appendices
    A: Letter of introduction to organizations on research project
    B: ISSP project announcement letter
    C: Survey tool
    D: Consent and confidentiality form
    E: Documents reviewed in literature search
    F: Summary of analysis of surveys

List of Figures

1. Introduction

The Indian Studies Support Program (ISSP) Committee solicited proposals beginning in June 2005 to conduct funding and best practices research on First Nations-controlled post-secondary training institutes in BC.

In the request for proposal, the challenges facing First Nations-controlled post-secondary training were outlined, including a lack of core funding, mounting costs associated with partnering with public post-secondary institutes for the delivery of programming in local communities, and the need for greater cooperation and information sharing amongst the organizations.

The ISSP Committee's stated goal for the research project was to investigate and share information related to two critical issues: the funding required to implement effective post-secondary education programming in First Nation institutes and successful practices in First Nation post-secondary institute programming and curriculum development. Investigation of these issues took place using the research tools of a targeted literature review and institutional surveys.

Although it is neither within the scope of this research report to thoroughly explore, nor no longer necessary to justify, why First Nations-controlled post-secondary training institutes are an important component for cultural survival, it is important to put the work undertaken in this project in a larger context.

There remains a 15% gap between First Nations people and the remainder of Canada's population with post-secondary degrees, diplomas and certificates according to a 2003 Indian and Northern Affairs Canada report and Jothen (2005) described the statistics as equating to four out of 10 Aboriginal people completing post-secondary education compared to six out of 10 non-Aboriginals.

Although it has been demonstrated that "whenever Aboriginal students are given control of their own programs or institutions, there have been higher rates of success in Aboriginal enrolment and graduation" (Malatest, 2004), First Nations-controlled post-secondary training institutes still largely operate in a funding, policy and legislative vacuum. Instability/inadequacy of funding for Native Canadian programs at institutions was identified by Native Canadian professionals as hindering Native Canadian education (James, 2001) and the Minister's National Working Group on Education (2002) said it would be almost impossible to narrow the gap in academic results between First Nations and other Canadian students until the same level of educational support mechanisms is achieved.

In a study of Aboriginal institutions of higher education and an examination of government policy, the Aboriginal Institutes' Consortium (2005) wrote that "the amount of funding for Aboriginal education at all levels has not kept pace with enrolment levels, systems changes, and needs." They summarized by stating:

> The extent of the need for post-secondary education by Aboriginal peoples coupled with the success achieved by Aboriginal post-secondary institutions cannot be disputed or denied, yet these institutions continue to operate without government policy or legislative support.

It is within this context, developed over the past 33 years since the federal government adopted the National Indian Brotherhood's paper Indian Control of Indian Education (1972) which called for a shift to local Aboriginal control of an education system, that this research inquiry takes place.

2. Methodology

An environmental scan using an institutional survey was conducted of First Nation-controlled post-secondary training institutes in BC to gather information regarding organizational, financial and best practices aspects.

A letter of introduction (Appendix A) to the project was mailed to 14 First Nations-controlled institutes in BC explaining the intent of the research and asking if they would participate in the survey.   In addition, a project announcement letter from ISSP (Appendix B) was e-mailed to each of the identified institutes. The letters and e-mail were followed up by telephone calls. As a result, a total of 10 institutes responded and agreed to participate (71% response rate).

The following 10 organizations participated in the survey. Also indicated for each, is the type of interview that took place and the location of the facility.

- Chemainus Native College (in person), Ladysmith
- Chief Dan George Centre for Advanced Education (in person), Vancouver
- En'owkin Centre – Okanagan Indian Educational Resources Society (in person), Penticton
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A survey tool (Appendix C) was created for gathering the research information. It was e-mailed to each of the participating organizations and a hard copy was brought to the in person interviews. As well, each participant signed a research confidentiality/consent form (Appendix D) before the interview. A copy of the completed confidentiality/consent form was left with participants following the interviews.

All those interviewed at participating institutes were very generous with their time and those interviewed in person spent well beyond the 45 minutes requested for completing the survey.

A targeted literature search focusing on funding and best practices topics related to First Nations post-secondary training was also conducted. A list of the material reviewed can be found in Appendix E. Results of the literature search informed the institute survey process and assisted in the discussion of the results of the surveys.

3. Results

Complete results in response to the institutional survey, compiled under each of the questions used, can be found in Appendix F. For ease of discussion, the data gathered has been organized into four themes for presentation in this section: diversity in institutes, response to community needs, personalized service and instability from lack of reliable funding. As far as the stated goals of this research project are concerned, themes 4 and 1 (instability, diversity) contain data related to the funding question while themes 3 and 2 (personalized service, responsiveness) contain data related to best practices.

Theme 1: Diversity in Institutes

Even though there is the common factor that they exist as First Nations-controlled post-secondary training organizations, there is an incredible variety in the history, size and scope of the institutes surveyed.

Although 70% of the organizations have been in existence for more than 15 years, and have offered post-secondary training for more than 10 years, the range in both categories is very broad starting at 2 years and stretching to 33 (fig. 1).

Fig. 1
BC First Nations-controlled post-secondary institutes surveyed

Avg. 18.9 yrs

Range of years in existence
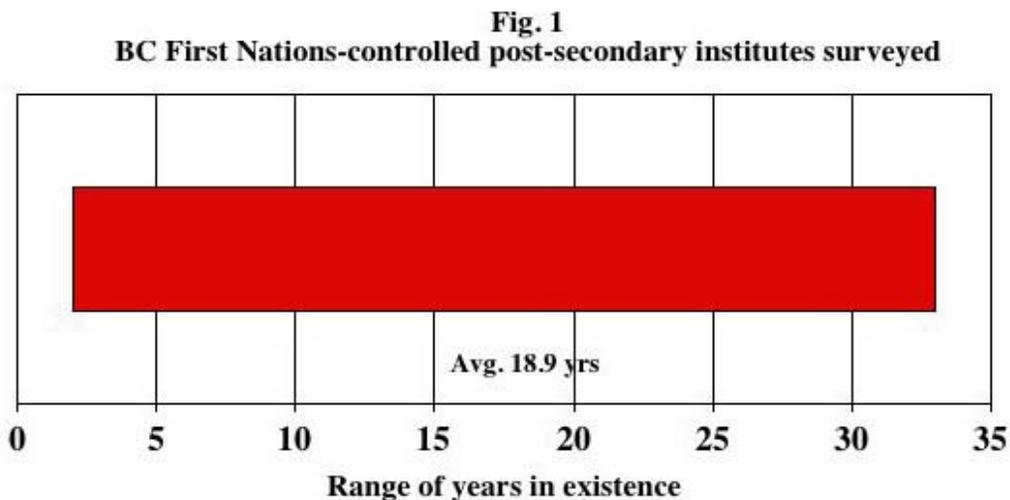
Likewise, there is a wide spectrum in the size of catchments both geographically and demographically. The range in population served is from 2,800 to 80,000 with an average of 18,500 and a median of 5,000 (fig. 2). 80% of the institutes provide services within a rural setting, while the other 20% service urban areas.

Fig. 2
BC First Nations-controlled post-secondary institutes surveyed

Median: 5,000

| 0 | 20,000 | 40,000 | 60,000 | 80,000 | 100,000 |

Range in population served
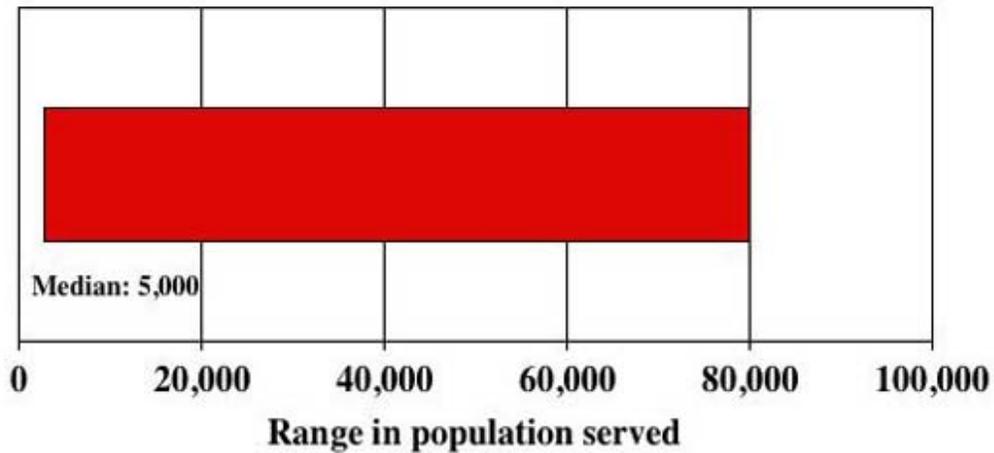
The variety in the size of population served is also reflected in the number of students enrolled at the organizations which ranged from 17 to 225 (fig. 3). The vast majority of organizations, 71%, are similar in that they did have 50 or fewer students registered for post-secondary training. However there was a demand listed by each organization for more post-secondary training from their community as is described in theme 2, indicating the potential for increased enrolment exists.

Fig. 3
BC First Nations-controlled post-secondary institutes surveyed

Median 42

| 0 | 50 | 100 | 150 | 200 | 250 | 300 |

Number of students enrolled
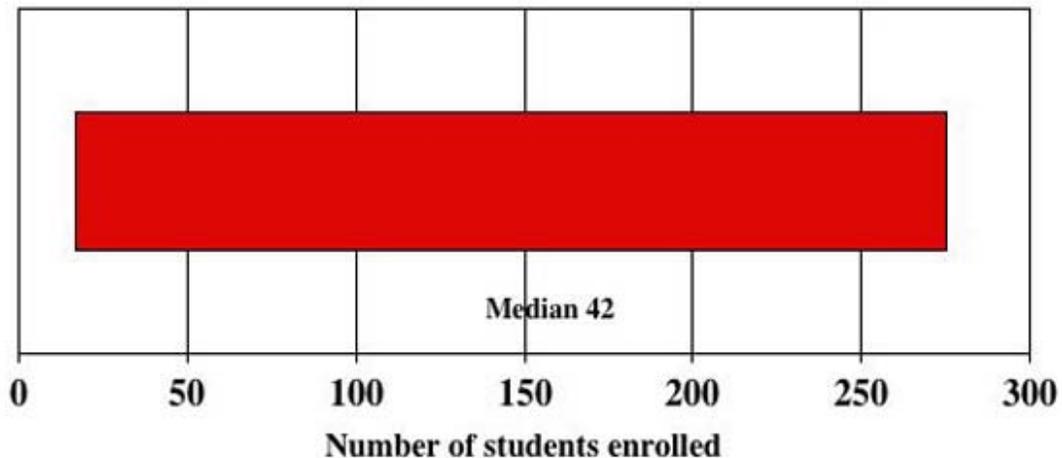
Post-secondary programming follows on the diversity trend with some organizations offering a single program of study while others offer six or more programs plus numerous courses. From the responses, five categories of post-secondary training emerged (fig. 4):

Teaching/language/culture-related lead with 13 offerings cited followed by social services-related (11), UCEP/ABE (8), business/tourism (6), and trades (4). Examples of courses and programs included language teacher programs, First Nation studies, justice studies, fine arts, home support attendant, public administration, tourism management, carpentry, building maintenance, journalism, and territorial management.

Fig. 4: Frequency of types of post secondary training offered by category
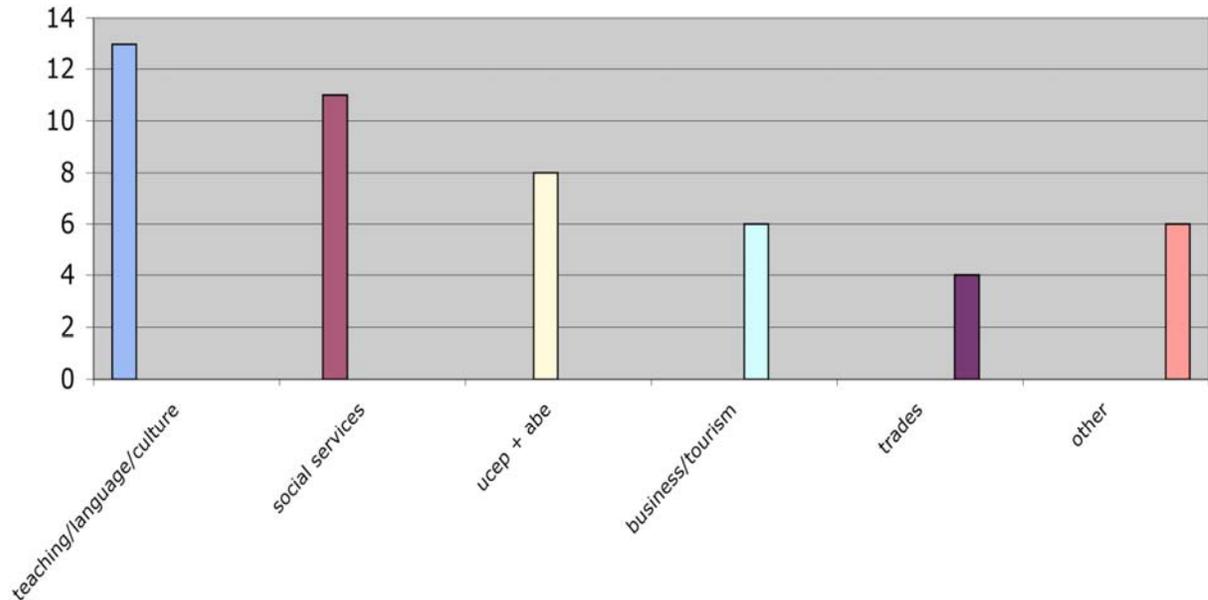
The diversity amongst the organizations is also found in their budgets. The overall operating budgets for the organizations range from $300,000 to $4 million dollars per year (fig. 5) while the annual operating budgets for post-secondary training range from $300,000 to $2 million (fig. 6), with 50% of those responding in the $300-400,000 area.

Fig. 5
BC First Nations-controlled post-secondary institutes surveyed

Avg. $1.2 million

0   1,000,000   2,000,000   3,000,000   4,000,000   5,000,000

Overall annual operating budget in dollars

Fig. 6
BC First Nations-controlled post-secondary institutes surveyed

Median $575,000

0   500,000   1,000,000   1,500,000   2,000,000   2,500,000

Post-secondary training annual operating budget in dollars
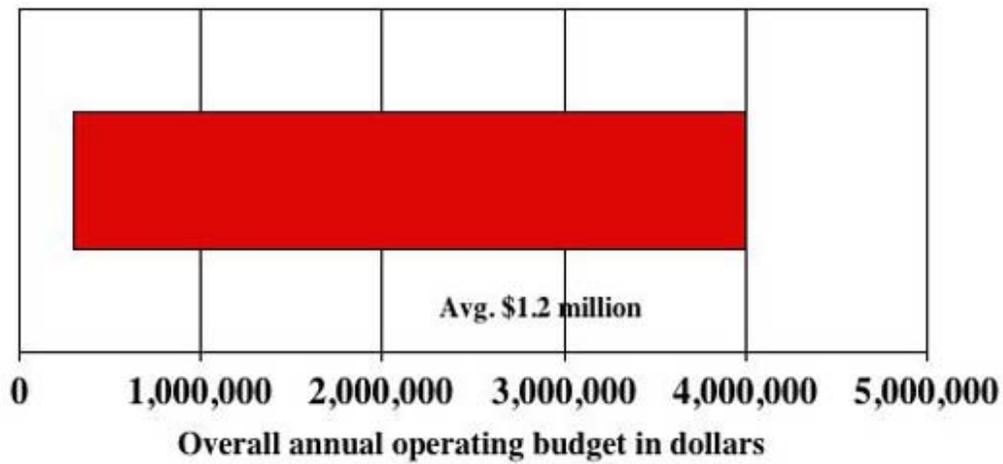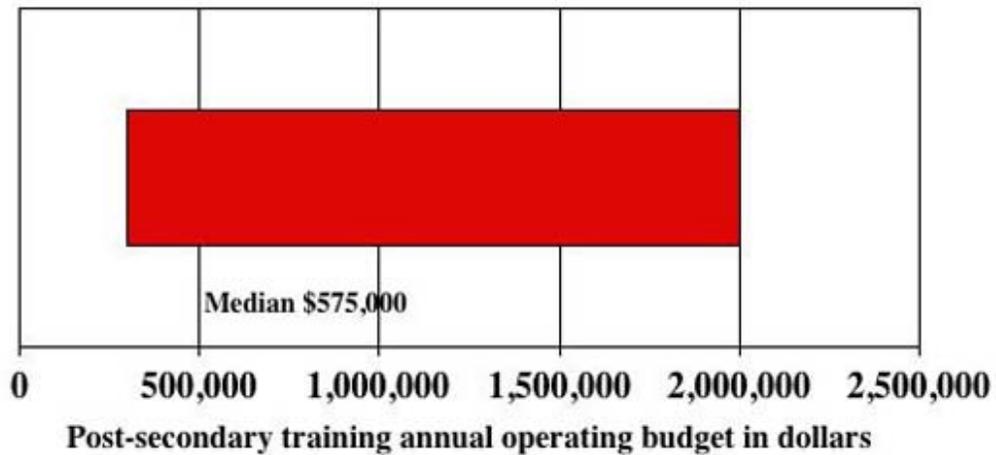
Theme 2: Response to community needs

Despite the wide variety in the history, size and scope of the institutes surveyed, commonalities are evident from the data regarding purpose and identified strengths of the organizations which, in turn, reflect responsiveness to community needs.

The manner in which the organizations govern themselves is similar. 90% of those surveyed are non-profit societies and two of the 10 are registered charities under the Canadian Customs and Revenue Agency. Likewise, all organizations surveyed are governed by boards and responded that the "First Nations-controlled" element is determined by board composition. Board composition is mostly variations of appointments with appointed members representing a wide variety of groups including First Nation villages, Bands (often Band councilors), First Nation community organizations, hereditary chiefs, and individual First Nation community residents.

All organizations surveyed partner with public institutes in the delivery of post-secondary training and all have partnered with a local university or college at some point in their post-secondary training history. 90% of those surveyed have partnered with more than one public institute over the years they have offered post-secondary training. Public institutes most often cited as partners in order of frequency (fig. 7) are: Simon Fraser University (4 times), Malaspina University-College (3 times), and Nicola Valley Institute of Technology, Royal Roads University, University of British Columbia and University of Northern British Columbia (2 times each). Although 50% of the organizations responded that they are provincially accredited, the Private Career Training Institutions Agency Website lists only one of the organizations surveyed as accredited as of January 2006. This discrepancy may relate to the new registration requirements implemented by the BC government with the introduction of the Private Career Training Institutions Act in 2004.

Fig. 7: Public post-secondary institutes most often cited as partners by First Nation-controlled organizations surveyed
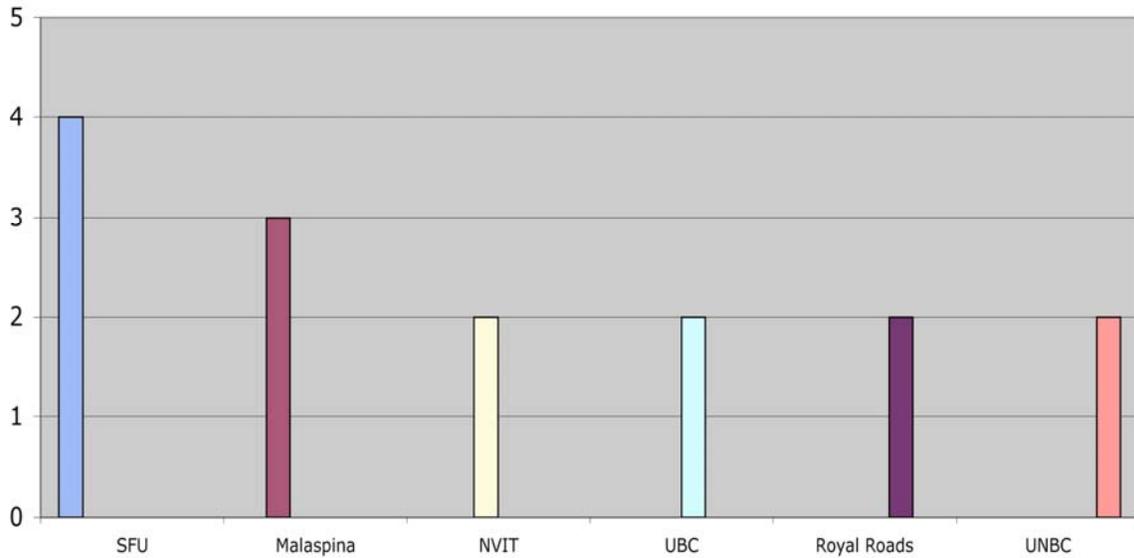
All organizations responded that there is a demand for more post-secondary training than they are currently offering. Lack of funding to the organizations was cited (11 times) most often as the reason why more training is not being offered, followed by capacity or skill level of prospective students (5), and lack of student numbers (3) as depicted in Figure 8.

Fig. 8: Reasons cited by organizations surveyed for not responding to demand for more post-secondary training
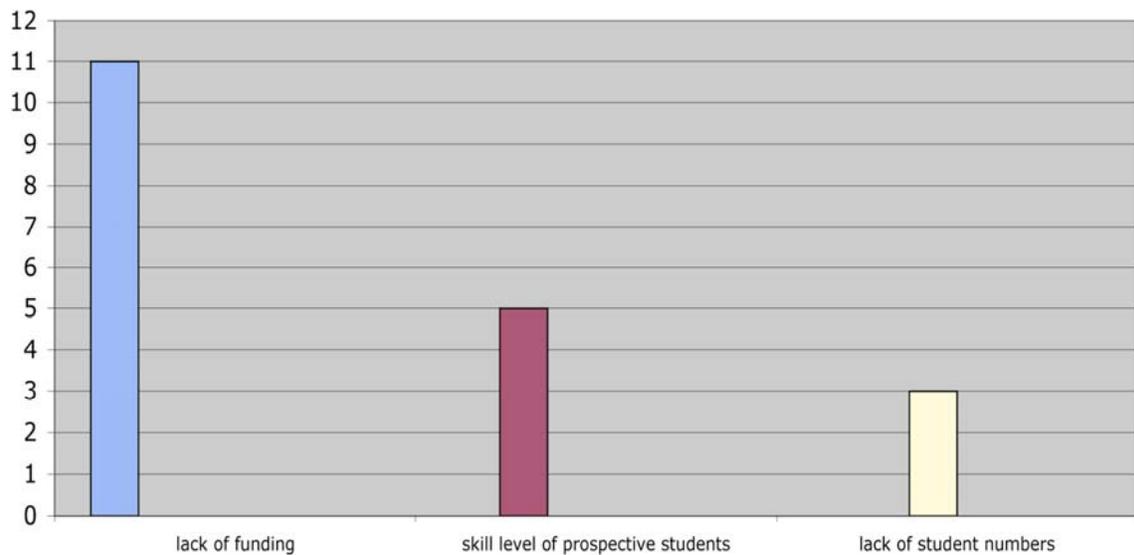
<u>Theme 3: Personalized service</u>

Responses presented in this section highlight best practices described by respondents rather than routine techniques that they also discussed that are used by most post-secondary training institutes.

Most of the best practices emerging from the data relate to the personalized service the institutes deliver. These are typified by what one respondent identified as a "fostering, nurturing environment." Examples of this personalized serviced theme were found in the answers to the programming, services and curriculum development of Part C of the survey.

Programming

The responses to describing effective practices in transition programs listed the personalized service within those programs, characterized by a respondent as "one person at a time", as an effective practice. Also noted as effective practice was to ensure high standards were applied within the program so that students were well prepared for what college and university courses expected of them. As well, the ability of the organizations to deliver transition programs while understanding the learner's socioeconomic environment was a theme noted as an effective practice.

As far as describing successful post-secondary programs, four common best practices emerged:

- having small class size and a relaxed but professional atmosphere;
- vetting curriculum through a local committee before delivery to ensure it is culturally relevant;
- ensuring programs have transferability before they are delivered;
- instructors having ample time outside of classroom for preparation/student/community contact.

Services

Responses corresponded to intake practices, student assessment/placement procedures and support services.

The most effective student intake practices beyond the routine marketing techniques used by most of the organizations included direct visits to villages/face-to-face individual contact (listed 5 times), word-of-mouth (4), and targeting an audience using Band infrastructure (4). These responses are depicted in Figure 9.

Fig. 9: Most effective student intake practices by frequency of response from the organizations surveyed
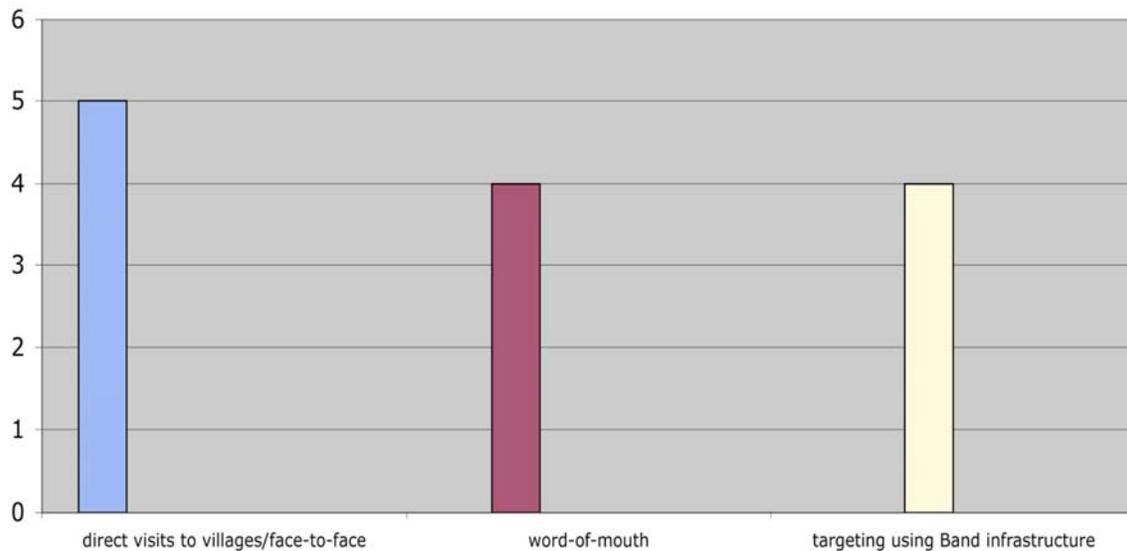
Regarding effective assessment procedures, some organizations have found the Canadian Adult Achievement Test (CAAT) useful while others have developed their own assessment tool. 50% of those surveyed found individual interviews with students of up to an hour in length as the best practice regarding assessment and intake.

A variety of effective student support practices were listed. The most often cited (fig. 10) included having an elder on site and/or a spiritual support person (6 times), having dedicated/'the right' instructors (5 times) and providing a safe, friendly, First Nations atmosphere at the organization (4 times).

Fig. 10: Most effective student support practices by frequency of response from the organizations surveyed
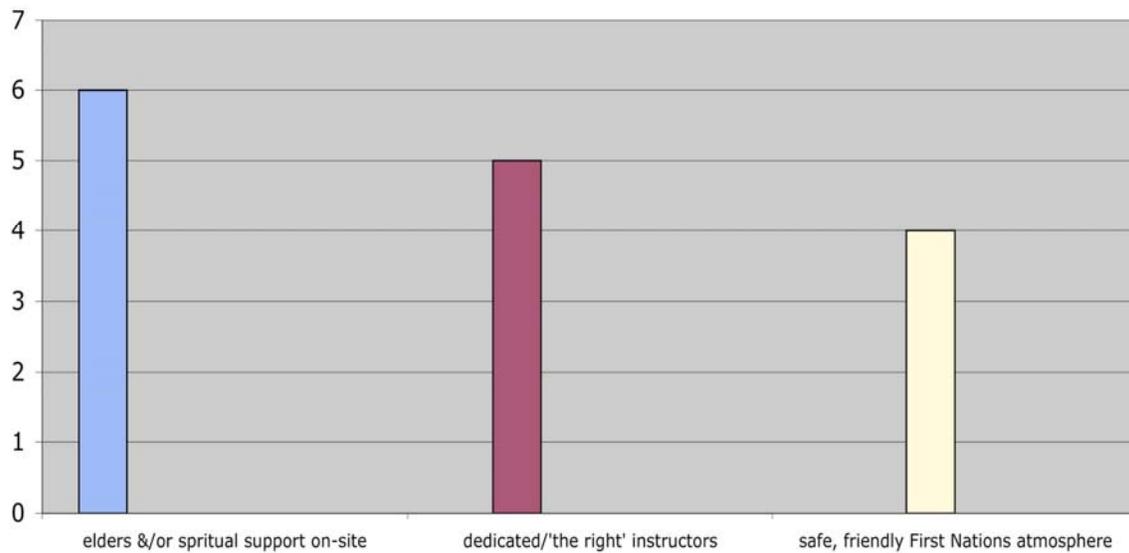
Curriculum Development

Most responses to successful curriculum development experiences involved adaptation of already developed course material to make them more relevant to the local First Nation community. One organization highlighted the use of the DACUM workshop process as a successful tool.

Responses related to effective practices regarding the integration of language and culture into the curriculum were that these classes are part of each program. Also, the experiential components, whether on the land or in the facility, such as sharing circles and smudges, are incorporated. Elder participation was noted as essential and creating policy from the board level through to the classroom regarding integrating language and culture into the institute was seen as an effective practice. All organizations surveyed employed these practices to one degree or another.

In response to how to strengthen community relations, a number of effective practices were noted including:

- holding student-lead symposiums at the facility and inviting the community;
- establishing work-school based committees where members of the community's business sector have regular interaction with school administrators;
- enlisting the support of high-profile community members who attended programs at the institute;
- encouraging institute staff to sit on boards of community organizations

<u>Theme 4: Instability from lack of reliable funding</u>

The data under the financial sections of the survey consistently points to the instability created in the organizations due to a lack of reliable, multi-year funding.

Multiple sources of funding were reported by every organization and many discussed their programming from the funding aspect in terms of being proposal driven. The two most commonly reported sources (both five times – fig. 11) were the Indian Studies Support Program (5 times) and the combination of student tuition (INAC) and FTE funding (Ministry of Advanced Education). Although the ISSP was cited often, organizations also reported consistency of funding from that source as a problem, especially from the aspect of trying to maintain and build programming when no multi-year funding was available.

Fig. 11: Most commonly reported sources of funding for post-secondary training from the organizations surveyed
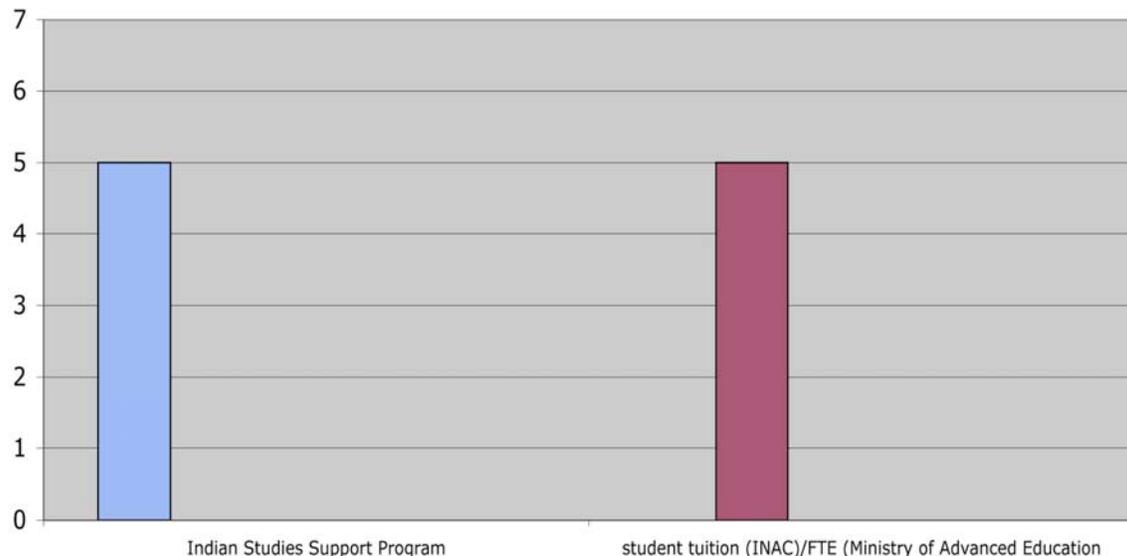
On average, organizations reported 70-80% of the post-secondary training budget is spent on wages and instruction. The average portion of the budget from those reporting on administrative costs was 13% (fig. 12). Many of the costs associated with running post-secondary training are not reflected in the budget as they are covered off in other areas of the organization's budget or within the larger organization to which the training institute belongs. For instance, there was no, or very little, resources in the budgets for student support services. These services are covered in a variety of ways – making them part of already funded staff positions such as instructors, covering costs by allocating portions of other budgets to these services, using the services in the institute of staff paid by closely associated organizations such as social Band social workers. Likewise, budgets for items such as supplies, photocopying and telephones are often absent or grossly under-funded. Many of the organizations surveyed make do by depending on the budgets of those they

are sharing facilities with like tribal councils, school authorities, or cultural associations. Another similar example is found in facility costs, both rental and operations and maintenance. Some of those surveyed depend on facilities supplied, at no direct cost in either rent or maintenance, by associated organizations. Others have long-term agreements with non-associated facility owners to pay a nominal fee for rent and there are also examples of organizations that own their facilities outright but still have no direct source for operations and maintenance dollars.

Fig. 12: Average proportion of post-secondary training budget spent on selected line items by organizations surveyed
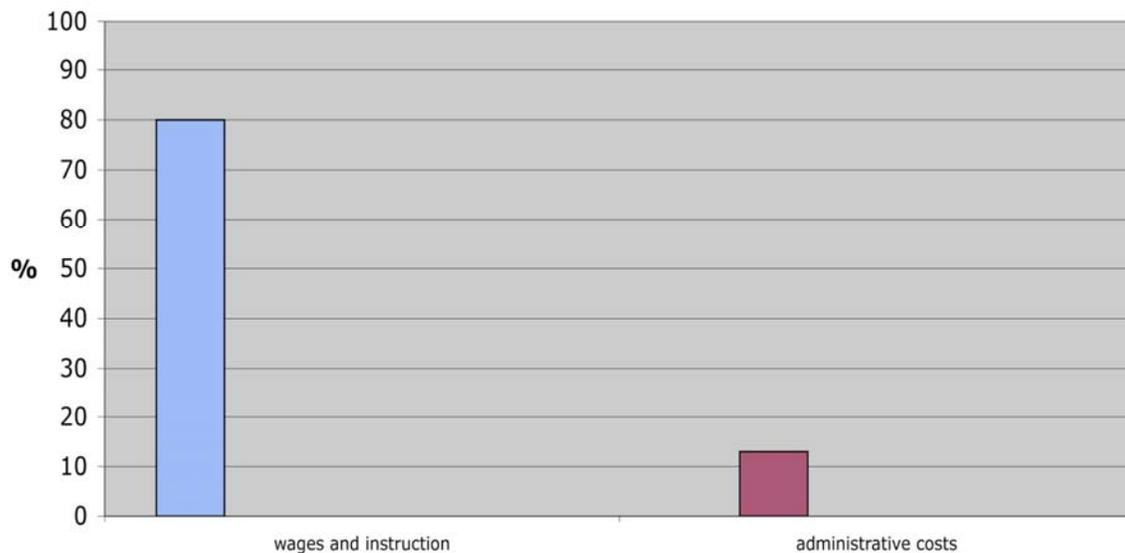
Contribution agreement with various ministries and agencies and/or an affiliation agreement with a public partner institute were the most common responses regarding funding mechanisms. 70% responded that they have affiliation or partnership agreements with public post-secondary institutes. 30% described these agreements as good to excellent. 60% also said they negotiate on a program-by-program basis (fig. 13). Comments included the need to shop around for the best fit, the importance of knowing what you are doing and to not get too wedded to one partner when they might not be the best deal or delivery agent. Some organizations are attempting to negotiate affiliation agreements but are finding the response from public post-secondary institutes very slow. Others say the necessity of partnering with public post-secondary institutes puts them in a tough negotiating position – "it's like goldfish in a pond of sharks, they want to swallow you up."

Fig. 13: Selected affiliation agreement data reported by First Nations-controlled post-secondary training institutes surveyed
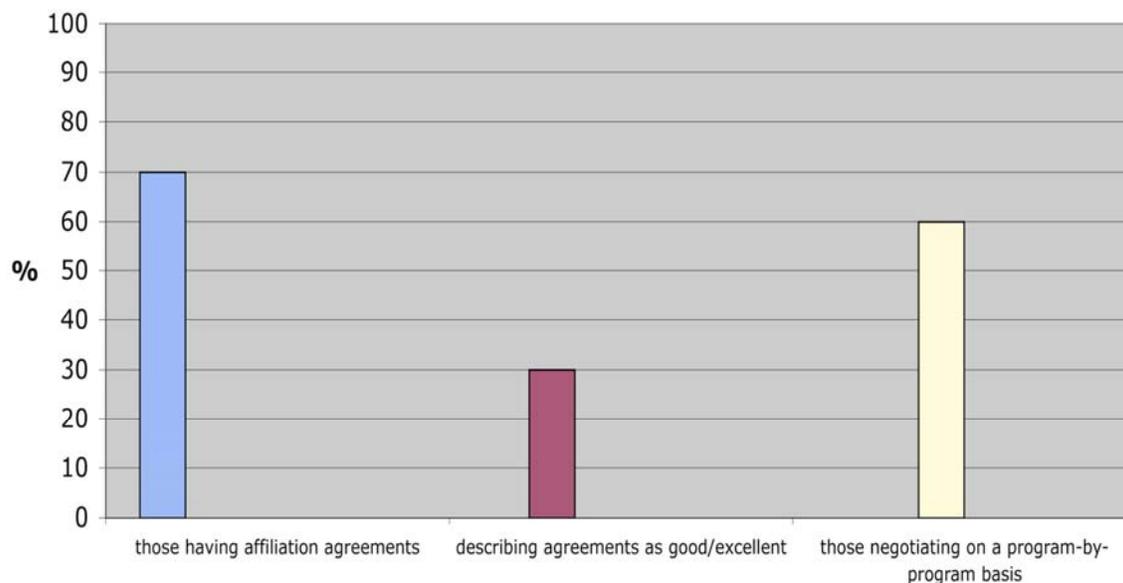
In partnering with public post-secondary training institutes for the delivery of courses/programs, 75% of the organizations surveyed responded they pay all the costs for program instruction and delivery. In other cases, it is the public post-secondary partner institute that pays the First Nation-controlled organization for instruction and delivery with costs worked out in an affiliation or partnership agreement.

When asked about suggestions for developing positive partnerships, a key theme from respondents was that the affiliation agreement must fit the need of the organization. Do some 'shopping around' to ensure this is the case was one response and also the need to be patient, well organized and to conduct 'due diligence' while proceeding to an affiliation agreement was highlighted. Looking for a public partner who "isn't trying to squeeze you for money" was one suggestion noted as well as negotiating into the agreement that staff at the organization be treated in the same manner as unionized staff in the public partner institute. Another suggestion was that by developing relationships with supportive faculty members at the public partner institute, a better final agreement could be created.

A variety of responses were gathered regarding tuition-related questions. There is a wide range in what proportion of training costs are covered by tuition starting with none for those organizations not charging tuition, to 100%. Some organizations noted that if the tuition does not cover the instruction costs charged by the public partner due to the number of students enrolled, or if there is a shortfall in anticipated FTE funding to the partner institute because of low enrolment, then they must make up the difference. The student tuition is generally whatever the set public partner institute's published tuition rates are and can generally range from $1,500 per student per semester or $3,000 per

student per program. Some organizations collect the tuition and turn it over to the partner, while others have students pay their tuition directly to the public partner institute.

Generally, tuition costs have increased (one respondent reports they have doubled) over the last 10 years which has created a major impact on the post-secondary training budget received by Bands for their students. Higher tuition translates into fewer members of the population accessing post-secondary training. Administration fees from public partners have also increased and these costs must somehow be covered by the organizations.

When asked about creating fundraising practices many organizations listed proposal writing and bingos as activities. Fundraising drives were also noted, especially in relation to specific targets such as capitalization of a facility or equipment. Other practices included an in-facility store/cafeteria, a hot lunch program, fun events like hockey pools and a mock trial where community members must pay to get out of a fake jail.

4. Discussion

Funding

Survey results related to funding are found mainly under Theme 4 and somewhat under Theme 1. The answer to how much funding is required to implement effective post-secondary education programming is as variable as the diversity found in the First Nations-controlled institutes as characterized in the data described under Theme 1. What is common amongst the organizations is the effects that chronic under-funding has created. Without an annual source of funding for non-delivery related costs, many of the resource-related activities that public institutes can carry out with the assistance of FTE and other funding are severely limited in the organizations surveyed. These kinds of activities came to the surface when those interviewed were asked what they could do if they had core funding.   Some discussed the stability the funding could bring that would allow execution of plans, time to develop markets and relationships. Others talked of infrastructure expansion and development such as resource centers, libraries, labs and building maintenance. There was also discussion of how stable funding would contribute to the ability to pay market wages to staff, thereby stabilizing staff turnover. This point is especially pertinent when considering that having dedicated and 'the right' instructors are high on the list of effective student support practices.

The frustration of those leading these organizations without adequate resources was palatable. As one respondent explained, "we want to run it [the organization] like a business but it is risky and difficult to make commitments because of lack of core funding – we never know what is coming down the pipe." Another respondent replied that it is "culturally killing us by not providing core funding – [government] should be promoting the development of institutes that are academically sound and stable – we need multi-year funding to stabilize and grow."

The effects of under-funding discussed here and the frustration described by the respondents echoes the findings from the literature review. Kavanagh (1998) points out the lack of resources for libraries and other learning resources in First Nation schools as well as the problem of providing salaries which attract the instructors needed.   Jothen (2005) describes the problematic nature of UCEP funding ABE upgrading for only one year while students accessing this training may be at a skill level that requires multi-year programming. And the Aboriginal Institutes' Consortium (2005) reports that ISSP's year-to-year proposal process "continues to pose challenges for Aboriginal institutions with respect to delivering multi-year programs, securing and maintaining qualified staff, addressing the bureaucracy of proposals and reports, and realizing long-term or future planning."

How much core funding is required by the organizations was not directly ascertainable from the results. But with overall budgets ranging from $300,000-$4 million and student enrolment ranging from 17 to 225, it would be safe to say that the amount of core funding needed per institute would vary. One respondent replied that $35,000 per month for two years would bring some stability. Other organizations would find $75-100,000 annually

for a multi-year period as a stabilizing influence. This calculation is based on an extrapolation from the data that many organizations required assistance with administrative costs (the average administrative cost was 13% of the post-secondary budget and the median post-secondary budget was $575,000). None of this addresses the increased programming costs being encountered, mostly as a result of skyrocketing tuition by public post-secondary institutes, but as a respondent put it "just give me a core budget for administration and still let me have access to funding sources for programs."

Although exploring sources for additional funding was beyond the terms of reference of this research project, some strategies surfaced during the literature review phase. Looking to the ISSP as a potential source for additional funding without any increase to that program's resources from the federal government is not a strategy recommended by the Aboriginal Institutes' Consortium report (2005). They point out that the Post-secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP) was capped in 1989 and any attempt to increase the resources in the ISSP component of this program will mean fewer students having access to funds for tuition, travel, and living accommodations. Two possible sources for potential First Nations-controlled organization funding were discussed in the recommendations section of Jothen's 2005 report "Review of Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education Programs, Services and Strategies/Best Practices & Aboriginal Special Projects Funding (ASPF). One involved increasing the FTE funding to public post-secondary institutes for Aboriginal students (an Aboriginal FTE value) which could also involve how these FTE's could be shared with First Nation-controlled institutes. The other recommendation involved public institutions making ASPF resources available to local Aboriginal community partners and institutions.

There were mixed responses to the issue of affiliation agreements and how they relate to funding. A common opinion was the federal government funding policy around accreditation didn't leave a lot of options other than partnering with public post-secondary institutes, despite what are seen as unfair resource allocations. As one respondent noted the "system is squeezing out First Nation-controlled post-secondary organizations. We need our own licensing. We want to have our own processes." Likewise, a number of respondents pointed out some of the pitfalls of the ISSP, such as the instability caused by the lack of long-term or multi-year funding. One respondent suggested establishing a task force "of active, independent post-secondary institutions controlled tribally, not public institutions, to look at revamping ISSP."

Generally those interviewed pointed out that not an enormous amount of funding would be required to bring some stability and that it is money well spent by government. "We are a good anomaly in the post-secondary education mix – servicing with a lesser cost," said one respondent.

Best Practices

Survey results related to best practices are found mainly in the Theme 3 and somewhat in the Theme 2 sections.

The best practices described by the organizations surveyed under the programming, services and curriculum development headings are similar and are supported in the literature as tools that are working, or have worked, in First Nations-controlled post-secondary institutes in BC, across Canada and around the world.

Defining best practices first depends upon a definition of student success. For First Nations-controlled post-secondary institutes the definition of student success may be somewhat different than mainstream institutions. One student in Jothen's (2005) study said, "Success is not about completing a program. If students experience change and growth while attending post-secondary that later contributes to development in their life and community, then that is success." Kavanagh (1998) further emphasized this communal over individual approach by stating that the goal of First Nation's education "should be students who have the skills to contribute to their society, who are enthusiastic about what they have learned, and who are aware of how learning can be of use to them in the future." Results gathered from the survey demonstrated that the institutes shared this definition. It is evident that the programming offered by the organizations is often beyond developing skill sets for individual advancement and is frequently more directed to training individuals within the context of the common good for the community. As one respondent said, "it's about training to keep the community alive."

In reviewing Aboriginal post-secondary education programs, services and strategies/best practices, Jothen (2005) found the private institutions surveyed "listed many best practices in existence including individualized support to students, a welcoming physical environment, a non-institutional environment, curriculum that reflects Aboriginal culture and values, recognition of prior learning, involvement of Elders, a committed faculty, and student organizations such as student councils." Respondents in this study reflected many components of this list. Some of the key practices listed are:

- having small class size and a relaxed but professional atmosphere;
- vetting curriculum through a local committee before delivery to ensure it is culturally relevant;
- ensuring programs have transferability before they are delivered;
- instructors having ample time outside of the classroom for preparation/student/community contact
- experiential components associated with culture and spirituality services such as circles and smudges
- Elder participation in all aspects from language instruction, curriculum development, policy development and spiritual guidance
- encouraging institute staff to sit on boards of community organizations
- providing a safe, friendly, First Nations atmosphere at the organization

- using direct visits to villages/face-to-face individual contact and word-of-mouth as student intake strategies
- recruiting responsive Board members
- extensive intake interviews for assessment and other purposes and follow ups throughout training period
- flexibility to respond quickly to a community need and to also have flexibility within the delivery of a course or program

The friendly, helpful atmosphere and one-stop shopping aspect was noted by all organizations as a best practice. Typical of the institutes is that many educational and social services are offered on-site, thereby allowing the staff to assist students with any issues or problems that may impact their ability to learn while at the institute. This could be as simple as helping fill out a government form or as troubling as assisting with incidents of sexual and physical abuse. One respondent commented, "The education opportunities and learning environment we offer is just a small component of our students getting past these things [socioeconomic and human conditions]."

A special note in relation to best practices needs to be made regarding staff. Recruiting and retaining dedicated and flexible instructors was repeatedly emphasized in the survey. Because of a lack of funding, most staff in the organizations responding had to perform multiple roles that their education didn't necessarily prepare them for. Add to this that their work often occurs within a community facing grave socioeconomic conditions – yet they are attempting to create a friendly, safe and fun atmosphere within the institution – and the need to find "the right" instructors becomes a critical best practice. As Kavanagh (1998) notes, "While teacher education programs must ensure that the professional and personal qualifications of new entrants to the teacher force are adequate, it may be useful to broaden the concept of a 'good' teacher beyond a focus on students with the highest grades."

Much of the data gathered also points towards the institutes responding to their community's needs in language and culture training. This is a role that is seen as best undertaken by the First Nations-controlled, local institutes. A respondent summed this up as "We need leaders, philosophers, thinkers, medicine people, all sorts of training that doesn't need to be in any college or university and never will be. Other public institutions do no have the right or the tools to do our language – they are not pedagogically about us."

5. Conclusion

First Nations-controlled post-secondary training organizations in BC have been doing more for less compared to their public counterparts since their inception. It has been determined by other research that the best practices described by the organizations in this study lead to greater student success. The best practices reported by the organizations surveyed have been detailed in the Results section and elaborated upon in the Discussion section.

The personalized and culturally specific practices carried out by First Nations-controlled post-secondary training institutes, in the areas of support services, programming and curriculum development that are required for an increased chance of student success are labor intensive and costly. The core funding necessary for implementing the best practices in a strategic manner is missing. Although the data gathered did not give a definitive answer to the amount of funding required, core funding must be provided if First Nations-controlled institutions are to continue to implement effective post-secondary training.

Without core funding the institutes surveyed will continue to face great instability. At the organizational level, there are institutes surveyed that have a long history of accomplishments but are barely existing today because of a lack of core funding. As one respondent said, "soundness and longevity depend on stability."

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Appendix A

Letter of Introduction

Gitksan Wet'suwet'en Education Society
Research Department
Box 418, Hazelton, BC, V0J-1Y0
Phone: 250-842-0216 Fax: 250-842-5230

Sept. 20, 2005

Dear:

Recently, the Gitxsan Wet'suwet'en Education Society's research proposal on funding and best practices in First Nations post-secondary institutes in BC was chosen by the Indian Studies Support Program committee following a RFP process. I am writing to introduce the work and initiate discussions concerning your organization's participation in this important project for First Nations controlled post-secondary institutes in the province.

Two areas of research comprise the project: the funding required to implement effective post-secondary education programming in First Nation institutes; and, successful practices in First Nations post-secondary institute programming and curriculum development. The products of the research will include a document containing a provincial summary of information provided by participating institutes, including structure of budgets and costs of partnering with public institutes, and a report on best practices in curriculum development, successful programs and services. The intent of the research products is twofold: to use the financial information as a tool to demonstrate the critical need for increased funding for First Nations post-secondary institutes; and, to compile a 'best practices' document so that First Nation and public institutes can learn from one another's successful practices in order to maximize use of available resources and enhance student success.

The key component of the research work involves interviews with personnel at First Nation post-secondary training institutes in the province to obtain financial and best practices data. A survey tool is being developed for this use and also a confidentiality agreement to ensure that the information shared will only be used in connection to this research project, with the raw data safeguarded, and with the information generated in the summary report not being able to be linked with any one institute. The final report generated by the data collection is to be delivered to the ISSP committee in December.

The Gitxsan Wet'suwet'en Education Society (GWES) is partnering with Storytellers' Foundation on this project. Storytellers' is a First Nation's controlled non-profit society based in Hazelton on the Gitxsan traditional territories. Storytellers' has conducted

research projects at local, regional, provincial and national levels. Doug Donaldson, from Storytellers' Foundation, will be managing the research project and Kirsten Barnes from GWES will be assisting on the project. As administrator for GWES, I will be coordinating the overall work.

Doug or Kirsten will be in touch with you soon about your potential participation in the project. We intend to undertake a combination of in-person and telephone interviews as part of the data collection process. We anticipate that you will see the great benefits this research work will have for all First Nations post-secondary institutes in BC and we look forward to your positive reply on our upcoming interview request.

If you require further information or have any questions please feel free to contact Doug Donaldson at 250 842-6500, oldtown@uniserve.com.

Yours truly,

Marjorie McRae
Administrator

Appendix B

ISSP project announcement letter

ISSP
I n d i a n
S t u d i e s
S u p p o r t
P r o g r a m

ANNOUNCEMENT   September, 2005

The Indian Studies Support Program (ISSP) Committee would like to announce the First Nations Post-Secondary Institutes –Funding and Best Practices Research currently being undertaken. The ISSP Committee received a number of responses to the June, 2005 call for research proposals. The proposals were reviewed against a criterion, and the research project was awarded to the research team of Gitxsan Wet'suwet'en Education Society and Storytellers Foundation, with key researchers Chief Margery McRae, Doug Donaldson, Anne Docherty.

This research project will investigate and share information related to two critical issues:

1. the funding required to implement effective post-secondary education programming in First Nations institutes; and

2. successful practices in First Nations post-secondary institute programming and curriculum development.

Background

First Nations in British Columbia have shown a consistent commitment to the goal of high quality, meaningful educational opportunities for all First Nations learners at all levels, including students pursuing post-secondary education and training. As First Nations strive to enhance the social, cultural and economic development within their communities, it is critical that First Nations students have access to relevant higher educational opportunities and adequate preparation for various kinds of training and work.

One of the steps First Nations have taken to address the existing situation has been the creation of post-secondary institutes that are operated by First Nations themselves. First Nations controlled post-secondary institutes provide culturally enriched, academically rigorous, nurturing, and substantively supportive educational environments that provide a transition and bridge First Nations students into higher learning settings. They are intended to encourage First Nations students and help them to feel comfortable in a higher learning setting. First Nations post-secondary institutes incorporate First Nations languages and cultures into their educational programming, which has been seen to increase the success of First Nations learners.

Unfortunately, First Nations controlled institutes face a number of challenges, one of the most critical being a lack of core funding. The federal government does not support First

Nations post-secondary institutes in a consistent way. Limited funding is provided by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) each year through the Indian Studies Support Program (ISSP), but in British Columbia that funding is distributed through a competitive proposal process, and the amount of funding requested is consistently greater than the amount of funding available. As a result, First Nations post-secondary institutes cannot rely on the ISSP as a secure, ongoing source of funding.

For the most part, First Nations controlled institutes are forced to operate with no core funding and extremely limited budgets.

Many representatives of First Nations controlled post-secondary institutes have also commented on the difficulty they have experienced in negotiating respectful, reasonably priced affiliation agreements with public post-secondary institutes for the delivery of post-secondary programs in local communities. The tremendous costs being charged by many public institutes prohibit many programs from being offered, thereby limiting access for many potential First Nations post-secondary students.

In addition, there is an overall need for greater cooperation and information sharing amongst First Nations controlled post-secondary institutes and the public post-secondary education system. A greater sharing of information would benefit all institutes and students, as it could help institutes to learn from one another's successful practices and it could help to maximize the use of available resources.

Project Description

Recognizing the issues highlighted above, the ISSP Committee has identified the need to collect detailed information about the work being undertaken by First Nations post-secondary institutes and the resources available to them. Specifically, this project is intended to gather the following information.

1. The project researchers will work with First Nations post-secondary institutes to clearly outline the institutes' operating costs. First Nations post-secondary institutes will be asked to share their budgets to demonstrate their general operating expenses, the proportion of funding spent on various budget items, and their sources of funding. The researchers will also investigate issues associated with the costs of affiliation agreements, including trends in agreement costs over time and the ability of First Nations institutes to pay the costs being charged. The project researchers will treat each institute's information as strictly confidential, and will compile a provincial summary of the information that is provided. The summary will help clarify how institutes are structuring their budgets, the costs of partnering with public institutes, and it will be used to demonstrate the critical need for increased funding for First Nations post-secondary institutes.

- The project researchers will also work with First Nations post-secondary institutes to gather information about best practices in curriculum development, successful programs and services.

Using the information collected, the researchers will prepare a "Best Practices Report" that will be distributed by the ISSP Committee early in 2006 to all First Nations post-secondary institutes to share useful information and ideas.

For further information, please contact the ISSP Committee at 1-877-422-3672 or karenbr@fnesc.ca.

Appendix C

Survey tool

Gitxsan Wet'suwet'en Education Society and Storytellers' Foundation

ISSP Research Project
First Nations Post-Secondary Institutes –
Funding and Best Practices Research

Questionnaire

Interviewee: _____ Date of Interview: _____

Interviewer Initials: _____

Purpose:

The purpose of this survey is to determine the funding required to implement effective post-secondary education programming in First Nation institutes and to document successful practices in First Nations post-secondary institute programming and curriculum development.

This survey consists of three parts. Part A asks questions about your organization and your role in it. Part B asks questions about your institute's operating costs. Part C asks questions about best practices in curriculum development and services.

PART A: General Background

(This section asks general questions about your organization and your role in it)

1. Name: _____

2. Date: _____

3. Employment role/position: _____

4. Organization/Institute: _____

5. Number of year's organization in existence: _____

6. Number of year's organization has offered post-secondary training: _____

7. How large a population does your organization serve: _____

8. What is the geographic catchment area for your organization: _____?
    _____

9a. Structure of organization (i.e. registered non-profit, etc): _____
    _____
    _____

10. Describe how your organization is "First Nations-controlled":   _____
    _____
    _____

11. Is your organization a provincially accredited post-secondary training institute?

    Yes: _____   No: _____

12. If yes, what year was it accredited: _____?

13. Does your organization partner, or has it partnered, with public post-secondary training institutes such as colleges and/or universities?

    Yes: _____   No: _____

14. If yes, what are the public post-secondary training institutes you partner, or have partnered, with:

    i._____

    ii._____

    iii._____

    iv._____

    v._____

15. What type of post-secondary training does your organization currently offer?

    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____

16. What type of post-secondary training has your organization offered in the past?

    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____

16. How many students are enrolled in post-secondary training at your organization?
    _____

17. Is there a demand for more post-secondary training than is being offered by your organization?
        Yes: _____   No: _____

18. If yes, what are some of the reasons why post-secondary training has not being offered: _____?
    _____
    _____

PART B: Financial information
(This section asks questions about your organization's operating costs and sources of funding)

1. What is the overall annual operating budget for your organization:
   _____?

2. What is the annual operating budget for post-secondary training in your organization?

   _____

3. What proportion of the post-secondary training budget is spent on various budget line items (i.e. instructor wages and benefits, curriculum material costs, facility costs, supplies, photocopying, postage/freight, telephone/Internet, administration, etc):
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

4. What are your organization's sources of funding for post-secondary training courses?

   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

5. What are the funding mechanisms between your organization and these funding sources: _____?
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

6. What proportion of the costs for operating post-secondary training programs in your organization is covered by student tuition? _____

7. What are the tuition rates for the various post-secondary training programs offered?
   _____
   _____
   _____

8. If you partner with public post-secondary training institutes in delivering courses/programs, how much does it cost your organization and what line items are you paying for?
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

9. What has been the trend in these costs over the past five years and how has it effected your organization:

   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

10. Do you have an affiliation agreement(s) with public post-secondary institutes for the delivery of programs or does your organization negotiate on a program-by-program basis. Describe the process and your organization's level of satisfaction with it:

   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

PART C: Curriculum best-practices information

(This section asks questions about your organization's best practices in curriculum development, successful programs and services)

<u>Services</u>

1. What have you found to be effective student intake practices in your organization?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

2. What have you found to be effective student assessment and placement procedures in your organization?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

3. Are there examples of effective student support services in your organization such as elder advisors, peer counseling etc? Please describe.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

<u>Programming</u>

4. What have you found to be effective practices in transition programs to promote student preparedness?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

5. Describe successful post-secondary programs at your organization and what practices lead to their success.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

<u>Curriculum development</u>

6. What are effective ways in which language and culture are integrated into academic curricula and overall institute operations?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

7. Describe successful curriculum development experiences at your organization and key factors that lead to their success:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

<u>In general</u>

8. From your experience, what are your suggestions for developing positive partnerships with public post-secondary institutes and in creating successful affiliation agreements?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

9. What are some effective ways your organization promotes strong community relations?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

10. What are some of the creative fundraising practices your organization uses to support its post-secondary training programs and to support the overall activities undertaken?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Appendix D

Consent & Confidentiality form

Storytellers' Foundation and the Gitxsan Wet'suwet'en Education Society

Indian Studies Support Program (ISSP) Research Project

<u>Questionnaire Information and Confidentiality/Consent Form</u>

Title of Project:
First Nations Post-Secondary Institutes – Funding and Best Practices Research

Project Description:
The purpose of this survey is to determine the funding required to implement effective post-secondary education programming in First Nation institutes and to document successful practices in First Nations post-secondary institute programming and curriculum development.

Process:
A project researcher will review the purpose and process of the research with you before your scheduled interview. You will be asked to sign the attached consent form in order for the interview to proceed. Completed questionnaires will be analyzed and findings will be presented in a final report. Upon completion of the report, all raw data will be stored for three months. After three months all raw data will be destroyed. Your participation in this research is voluntary. You can withdraw from the research at any time.

We request approximately 45 minutes of your time, either in your office or at an agreed upon location. Your contribution is valued and will be respected by the researchers.

Privacy:
Your signature/initials on this confidentiality/consent form is required for administration of the questionnaire. This consent form will be stored separately from your questionnaire. Any personal information that you provide will be kept confidential and will not be shared outside of this research project.

Use of information:
The information gathered from this questionnaire will only be used in connection to this research project, with the raw data safeguarded, and with the information generated in the summary report not being able to be linked with any one institute.

Researchers will review the questionnaire findings. The findings will be presented in a final report. ISSP will be responsible for distribution of the final report.

Your signature on this confidentiality/consent form means that you agree to the contents of this form.

If you have any questions or concerns about this confidentiality/consent form, or your rights as a participant, please contact Doug Donaldson, research project manager, Storytellers' Foundation, 250 842-6500.

I have read the information on the research project. I understand that the purpose of this research is to determine the funding required to implement effective post-secondary education programming in First Nation institutes and to document successful practices in First Nations post-secondary institute programming and curriculum development. I understand my role as a participant. I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary, and that I can withdraw from this research at any point. I understand that my identity will remain anonymous. I understand the information gathered from the questionnaire will be used in an aggregate form for a final report.

_____   _____
Signature/initials of participant   Signature of researcher

_____   _____
Position

_____   Date of interview
Organization/Institute

Appendix E

Documents Reviewed in Literature Search

Aboriginal Institutes' Consortium. 2005. *Aboriginal Institutions of Higher Education, A Struggle for the Education of Aboriginal Students, Control of Indigenous Knowledge, and Recognition of Aboriginal Institutions. An examination of government policy.* Published by Canadian Race Relations Foundation

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Appendix F

Summary of Analysis of Surveys

Summary of Analysis of Survey Interview

Part A – General Background

4. Organization/Institute

The following 10 organizations participated in the survey. Also indicated is the type of interview that took place and the location of the facility.

- Chemainus Native College (in person), Ladysmith
- Chief Dan George Centre for Advanced Education (in person), Vancouver
- En'owkin Centre – Okanagan Indian Educational Resources Society (in person), Penticton
- Gitxsan Wet'suwet'en Education Society (in person), Hazelton
- Native Education Centre – Urban Native Indian Education Society (in person), Vancouver
- North East Native Advancing Society (by telephone), Fort St. John
- Saanich Adult Education Centre (in person), Brentwood Bay
- Secwepemc Cultural Education Society (in person), Kamloops
- Wilp Wilxo'oskwhl Nisga'a (by fax), New Aiyansh
- Yinka Dene Language Institute (in person), Prince George

5. Number of years organization in existence (10 reporting)

The range was from two years to 33 years. The average length of time these institutions were in existence is 18.9 years and the median length of time was 18.5 years. 70% of the institutes have been in existence for more than 15 years.

6. Number of years post-secondary training offered (10 reporting)

The range was from two years to 33 years with the average and median length of time post-secondary training has been offered being 13.5 years. 70% of the institutes have offered post-secondary training for more than 10 years.

7 & 8. Population served (8 reporting) and catchment area (10 reporting)

The range in population served is from 2,800 to 80,000 with an average of 18,500 and a median of 5,000. 80% of the institutes have primarily rural catchments, while 20% have mainly urban catchments.

9. Structure of organization (10 reporting)

90% of those surveyed are non-profit societies and two of the 10 are registered charities under the Canadian Customs and Revenue Agency.

10. Describe how your organization is "First Nations-controlled" (10 responding)

All organizations surveyed are governed by boards and responded that the "First Nations-controlled" element is determined by board composition. Board composition is mostly variations of appointments with appointed members representing a wide variety of groups including First Nation villages, Bands (often Band councilors), First Nation community organizations, hereditary chiefs, and individual First Nation community residents.

11 & 12. Is your organization a provincially accredited post-secondary training institute? If yes, in what year? (10 responded)

50% of the organizations responded that they are provincially accredited and have been for a range of one to 16 years. Two organizations were accredited but have not renewed their status under the new ….

13 & 14. Does your organization partner, or has it partnered, with public post-secondary training institutes such as colleges or universities? If yes, what are the public post-secondary training institutes you partner, or have partnered with? (10 responded)

All organizations surveyed partner with public institutes in the delivery of post-secondary training and all have partnered with a local university or college at some point in their post-secondary training history. 90% of those surveyed have partnered with more than one public institute over the years they have offered post-secondary training. Public institutes most often cited as partners in order of frequency are: Simon Fraser University (4 times), Malaspina University-College (3 times), and Nicola Valley Institute of Technology, Royal Roads University, University of British Columbia and University of Northern British Columbia (2 times each).

15 & 16. What type of post-secondary training does your organization currently offer; what type post-secondary training has your organization offered in the past? (10 responding)

Five categories emerged from the responses. Teaching/language/culture-related lead with 13 offerings cited followed by social services-related (11), UCEP/ABE (8), business/tourism (6), trades (4) and other (6). Examples of courses and programs included language teacher programs, First Nation studies programs, justice studies, fine arts programs, home support attendant programs, public administration, tourism management, carpentry, building maintenance, journalism and territorial management.

17. How many students are enrolled in post-secondary training at your organization (7 reporting)

Responses included all adult students registered and ranged from 17 to 275. The average is 79 and the median 42 with 71% having 50 or fewer students registered.

18 & 19. Is there a demand for more post-secondary training than is being offered by your organization? If yes, what are some of the reasons why post-secondary training has not being offered (10 responding)

All organizations responded that there is a demand for more post-secondary training than they are currently offering. Lack of funding to the organizations was cited (11 times) most often as the reason why more training is not being offered, followed by capacity or skill level of prospective students (5), and lack of student numbers (3).

Part B – Financial Information (9 of 10 reporting unless otherwise noted)

1. What is the overall annual operating budget of your organization?

The range is from $300,000 to $4 million with an average of $1.2 million and a median of $1 million per year.

2. What is the annual operating budget for post-secondary training in your organization (6 reporting)

The range is from $300,000 to $2,000,000 with an average of $880,000 and a median of $575,000. 50% of those responding were in the $300-400,000 range.

3. What proportion of the post-secondary training budget is spent on various budget line items?

70-80% of the post-secondary training budget is spent on wages and instruction. The average portion of the budget from those reporting on administrative costs was 13%. Many of the costs associated with running post-secondary training are not reflected in the budget as they are covered off in other areas of the organizations budget or within the larger organization to which the training institute belongs. For instance, there was no, or very little, in the budgets for student support services. These services are covered in a variety of ways – making them part of already funded staff positions such as instructors, covering costs by allocating portions of other budgets to these services, using the services in the institute of staff paid by closely associated organizations such as social Band social workers. Likewise, budgets for items such as supplies, photocopying and telephones are often absent or grossly under-funded. Many of the organizations surveyed make do by depending on the budgets of those they are sharing facilities with like tribal councils, school authorities, or cultural associations. Another similar example is found in facility costs, both rental and operations and maintenance. Some of those surveyed depend on facilities supplied, at no direct cost in either rent or maintenance, by associated organizations. Others have long-term agreements with non-associated facility owners to pay a nominal fee for rent and there are also examples of organizations that own there facilities outright but still have no direct source for operations and maintenance dollars.

4. What are your organization's sources of funding for post-secondary training courses?

Multiple sources of funding were reported by every organization and many discussed their programming in terms of the funding aspect as being proposal driven. The two most commonly reported (both five times) were the Indian Studies Support Program (5 times) and the combination of student tuition (INAC) and FTE funding (Ministry of Advanced Education). Although the ISSP was cited often, organizations also reported consistency of funding from that source as a problem, especially from the aspect of trying to maintain and build programming when no multi-year funding was available.

5. What are the funding mechanisms between your organization and these funding sources (6 responding)

Contribution agreement with various ministries and agencies and/or an affiliation agreement with a public partner institute were the most common responses (66%).

6 & 7. What proportion of the costs for operating post-secondary training programs in your organization is covered by student tuition? What are the tuition rates for the various post-secondary training programs offered?

There is a wide range in what proportion of training costs are covered by tuition starting with none for those organizations not charging tuition, to 100%. Some organizations noted that if the tuition does not cover the instruction costs charged by the public partner due to the number of students enrolled, or if there is a shortfall in anticipated FTE funding to the partner institute because of low enrolment, then they must make up the difference. The student tuition is generally whatever the set public partner institute's published tuition rates are and can generally range from $1,500 per student per semester or $3,000 per student per program. Some organizations collect the tuition and turn it over to the partner, while others have students pay their tuition directly to the public partner institute.

8. If you partner with public post-secondary training institutes in delivering courses/programs, how much does it cost your organization and what line items are you paying for?

75% responded that they pay 100% of the costs for program instruction and delivery to their public partner. In other cases the public partner pays the surveyed organization for instruction and delivery of the training with costs worked out in an affiliation or partnership agreement.

9. What has been the trend in these costs over the past five years and how has it effected your organization (6 responding)

Generally tuition costs have increased (one respondent reports they have doubled) over the last 10 years which has created a major impact on the post-secondary training budget received by Bands for their students. Higher tuition translates into fewer members of the population accessing post-secondary training. Administration fees from public partners have also increased and these costs must somehow be covered by the organizations.

10. Do you have an affiliation agreement(s) with public post-secondary institutes for the delivery of programs or does your organization negotiate on a program-by-program basis. Describe the process and your organization's level of satisfaction with it (10 responding)
70% responded that they have affiliation or partnership agreements with public post-secondary institutes. 30% described these agreements as good to excellent. 60% also said they negotiate on a program-by-program basis. Comments included the need to shop

around for the best fit, the importance of knowing what you are doing and to not get too wedded to one partner when they might not be the best deal or delivery agent. Some organizations are attempting to negotiate affiliation agreements but are finding the response from public post-secondary institutes very slow. Others say the necessity of partnering with public post-secondary institutes puts them in a tough negotiating position – "it's like goldfish in a pond of sharks, they want to swallow you up."

General comments associated with the financial section and in response to "what could you do if you had core funding?"

"We have to have the stability to execute our plans and core funding can do that; a year or two in scope at $35,000 month"
"It would allow to find the market, define it and give us time to develop relationships with banks which is the most important relationship we have from an organizational standpoint"
"As we execute plans there has to be a failure factor built in and core funding has to be part of that"
"Core funding would assist in supporting a resource centre so it is a full pedagogical tool like those at every other university"
"Culturally killing us by not providing core funding – should be promoting the development of institutes that are academically sound and stable – need multi-year funding to stabilize and grow"
"Want to run it like a business but risky and difficult to make commitments because of lack of core funding -- never know what is coming down the pipe"
"Soundness and longevity depend on stability so without it then can't have those two things"
"Core funding would allow flexibility to adapt to marketplace -- can't compete directly with [public post-secondary institutes] on what they do best but there is a niche there for sporadically delivered courses/programs for students unable to get in to [public post-secondary institutes] because of numbers"
"Forced into manipulating and moving money around because no core funding -- deficit financing until $$ come in Jan.-April"
"need core funding for admin and overhead like building maintenance, upkeep, labs -- just give me a core budget for admin and still let me have access to funding sources"
"[Our] funding is about 100% programming so with core funding administrative services could improve"
"Also could improve staff wages to pay market wages -- taking advantage of dedicated people but it is a sacrifice in wages"
"Student support services"

Part C – Curriculum best-practices information (10 of 10 responming unless noted)

Responses highlight best practices rather than routine techniques used by most post-secondary training institutes.

<u>Services</u>

1. What have you found to be effective student intake practices in your organization?

The most effective practices listed included direct visits to villages/face-to-face individual contact (5 times), word-of-mouth (4), and targeting an audience using Band infrastructure (4).

2. What have you found to be effective student assessment and placement procedures in your organization (9 responding)

Some organizations have found the Canadian Adult Achievement Test (CAAT) useful while others have developed their own assessment tool. 50% of those surveyed found individual interviews with students of up to an hour in length as the best practice regarding assessment.

3. Are there examples of effective student support services in your organization such as elder advisors, peer counseling etc. Please describe.

Having an elder on site and/or a spiritual support person was noted (6 times) as one of the most effective student supports. Also listed most frequently regarding effective student support services were having the dedicated/'the right' instructors (5 times) and providing a safe, friendly, First Nations atmosphere at the organization (4 times).

<u>Programming</u>

4. What have you found to be effective practices in transition programs to promote student preparedness (9 responding)

The personalized service within the transition programs that the organizations strive to give, typified by one respondent as "one person at a time", was noted as an effective practice. Also noted as effective practice was to ensure high standards were applied within the program so that students were well prepared for what college and university courses expected of them. As well, the ability of the organizations to deliver transition programs while understanding the learner's socioeconomic environment was a theme noted as an effective practice.

5. Describe successful post-secondary programs at your organization and what practices lead to their success (7 responding)

Four best practices emerged: having small class size and a relaxed but professional atmosphere; ensuring the curriculum is vetted before delivery to ensure it is culturally relevant; ensuring programs have transferability before they are delivered; instructors having ample time outside of classroom for preparation/student contact.

Curriculum development

6. What are effective ways in which language and culture are integrated into academic curricula and overall institute operations?

Effective practice is that language/culture classes are part of each program, and the experiential components, whether on the land or in the facility with components like circles and smudges, are incorporated. Elder's participation was noted as essential and creating policy from the board level through to the classroom regarding integrating language and culture into the institute was seen as an effective practice.

7. Describe successful curriculum development experiences at your organization and key factors that lead to their success (6 responding)

Most involved adaptation of already developed course material to make them more relevant to the local First Nation community. One organization highlighted the use of the DACUM workshop process as a successful tool.

In general

8. From your experience, what are your suggestions for developing positive partnerships with public post-secondary institutes and in creating successful affiliation agreements (9 responding)

The affiliation agreement must fit the need of the organization was a key theme. Do some 'shopping around' to ensure this is the case and there is a need to be patient, well organized and to conduct 'due diligence' while proceeding to an affiliation agreement. Looking for a public partner who "isn't trying to squeeze you for money" was one suggestion noted as well as negotiating into the agreement that staff at the organization be treated in the same manner as unionized staff in the public partner institute. Another suggestion was that by developing relationships with supportive faculty members at the public partner institute a better final agreement could be created.

9. What are some effective ways your organization promotes strong community relations (8 responding)

A number of effective practices were noted including: holding student-lead symposiums at the facility and inviting the community; establishing work-school based committees

where members of the community's business sector have regular interaction with school administrators; enlisting the support of high-profile community members who attended programs at the institute; encouraging institute staff to sit on boards of community organizations

10. What are some of the creative fundraising practices your organization uses to support its post-secondary training programs and to support the overall activities undertaken (8 responding)

Many organizations listed proposal writing and bingos activities. Fundraising drives were also noted, especially in relation to specific targets such as capitalization of a facility or equipment. Other practices included an in-facility store/cafeteria, a hot lunch program, fun events like hockey pools and a mock trial on Halloween where community members must pay to get out of jail.

General comments

The one stop shopping aspect of the organizations where students can access a host of social and education related services is highlighted as a best practice.

"students leaving the community for post-sec training is fine if they are ready for it but we need our people trained as nurses, social workers, teachers, police officers etc because we see those professionals coming to our communities then leaving after 2 years -- why not invest in training our own who will stay"

Affiliation agreements: "system is squeezing out FN-controlled post-sec organizations; we need our own licensing; IALA; we want to have our own processes"

"Task force required of active, independent post-sec institutions controlled tribally, not public institutions, to look at revamping ISSP -- only about five of these institutes in BC"