

## ONCAT Final Report 2019

### Lakehead University's culturally and linguistically relevant Teacher Education Programs

#### Executive Summary

Lakehead University's culturally and linguistically relevant Teacher Education Programs pathways projects identified a pathway for students enrolled in Seven Generations Education Institute (SGEI) Early Childhood Education Diploma program and Algoma University's Bachelor of Arts in Anishinaabe Studies and Anishinaabemowin (Ojibwe) programs to transfer seamlessly into Lakehead University's Bachelor of Education programs (focussed on Aboriginal Education and language teachable subjects). A careful and thorough assessment on curriculum was conducted allowing for an agreed upon pathway of transfer credits/course equivalents. The goal of the pathways project is to assist students obtain the education necessary to become qualified and registered teachers in Ontario's school systems; ideally qualified to teach an Algonquian language. Planned implementation date of this project is September 2019.

#### List of Participants and Partner Institutions

##### Algoma University

David Marasco                      Registrar

##### Lakehead University

Brandi Shorthouse	Administrative Assistant, Aboriginal Education
Bryanna Scott	Indigenous Education Programs Coordinator
Catharine O'Conner	Associate Registrar
Dr. Paul Cormier	Faculty, Aboriginal Education
Dr. Leisa Desmoulins	Faculty, Aboriginal Education
Denise Baxter	Vice Provost, Indigenous Initiatives
Dr. John O'Meara	Dean, Faculty of Education
Dr. Nany Luckai	Deputy, Vice Provost Academic

##### Seven Generations Education Institute (SGEI)

Marlis Bruyere	Instructor
William Perrault	Associate Director of Apprenticeship Essential Skills and Post-secondary Education

##### External Evaluator

## Project Goals

1. The partners envision a pathway continuum that will support Indigenous Learners (ILs) to obtain the credentials required to teach in Ontario schools. Specifically, bringing students from certificate/diploma completion at SGEI, through unique undergraduate degrees at Lakehead or Algoma to BEd completion (see Methodology section). By clarifying links between programs and institutions, we hope to address concerns about low student uptake particularly at the University level. Critical to the continuum is the belief that progress can occur in stages with increasing confidence as each level is achieved. Success at the post-secondary education level will lead to support of elementary and secondary students and help to break the cycle of marginalization.
2. Lakehead has offered culturally and linguistically relevant programming for Indigenous Learners since 1972. Algoma maintains a commitment to support the educational aspirations of Anishinaabe students through the Shingwauk Education Trust Covenant; SEGI, founding in 1985, is providing community based and student-centred learning opportunities. Despite this history, all three recognize that more needs to be done to support Indigenous Learners. This project aligns demonstrated strengths in curriculum design and delivery to clarify options for potential students. While students may begin with the goal of attaining teacher certification, the various degree options can lead to many different careers.
3. According to the Aboriginal People's Survey (2012), 60% of off-reserve First Nations people, 35% Metis and 84% Inuit aged 6 and older reported that speaking and understanding an Aboriginal language was important to them. The Aboriginal languages most commonly spoken by First Nations people are Cree, Ojibwe, and Oji-Cree; therefore, programs at Lakehead, Algoma and SGEI are well positioned to support this growing demographic. This project meets the Truth and Reconciliation's Calls to Action on Aboriginal language revitalization and preservation (Section 13) and by educating teachers on integrating Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms (section 62). While we cannot predict numbers at this time, we do know that the Indigenous population is growing and the demand for trained teachers in Indigenous communities continues to increase.
4. Although Lakehead, Algoma and SGEI have unique and specific histories supporting Indigenous Learners, we recognize the role that all members of the post-secondary education sector have to play in supporting Indigenous and marginalized learners. We therefore commit to sharing what we learn with our colleagues as we address reconciliation concerns.
5. Once the project has been completed and students begin to enter the various programs, we would review the pathways regularly and whenever programmatic

changes are made by the Ministry or the Ontario College of Teachers. Once pathways are in place, we anticipate a seamless flow between recruiting, admitting and registering students including joint admission into program/institutions. As these credentials currently exist, and each institution has significant wrap around student support services in place, no new investment is required at this time.

## **Methodology**

1. Our approach was, as much as possible, consultative and collaborative. We recognize contributions from all three institutions are absolutely necessary to our success therefore we have built in several opportunities for face to face and/or video conferenced meetings and telephone conversations between the partners. Gap analysis followed an established and successful “pencil and paper” process that carefully aligns course and program learning outcomes from one credential with those of others. This alignment proceeded with input from all partners. We used simple software such as Google docs to engage and document the discussion. We kept in mind the lessons learned from previous ONCAT funded projects (e.g. ONCAT 2015-01 Best Practices and ONCAT 2016-40 Aboriginal Pathways). In addition to the more conventional gap analysis exercise, we worked with Cathy O’Connor from Lakehead’s Enrollment Services for matching learning outcomes to seek confirmation and/or additional information regarding possible course credit transfers/equivalencies.
2. We saw the role of the evaluator as a partner or consultant rather than a third party that provided a review after most of the work was done. The evaluator was included in the meetings held between partners. The evaluator explored the progress of the project activities against the established timelines and success indicators, and advised on the methodology, value of the pathways for students and the implementation plan. The evaluator help to indicate factors that affect the activities and output, thereby ensuring a high level of professionalism in the management of the project.
3. We did not require approval from a Research Ethics Board to carry out this project.

## **Description of the pathway(s), including how much credit will be granted to students and how it will be applied**

### Seven Generations Education Institute

The Seven Generation Education Institute (SGEI) students who have completed the 2 year Early Childhood Education diploma would receive 5 full course equivalent credits based on the assessment of the courses, their descriptions and the equivalencies at Lakehead University for the Honours Bachelor of Education (HBEd) primary/junior degree program. SGEI students would be required to complete 20 FCES in Lakehead’s HBEd program. Students would be able to complete this program in approximately 4 years. Students are required to have a 70% average to enter into Lakehead’s Education programs. Appendix A shows the audit of the courses and their equivalency with Lakehead courses.

Students would be given 2.5 full course equivalents for the Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Education Indigenous Learning Major intermediate/senior degree program (see Appendix B) if taking an Algonquian language as a teachable subject, or 3.5 FCES if not declaring an Algonquian language as one of their teachable subjects. Students would be required to take 22.5 FCEs if declaring an Algonquian language a teachable subject or 21.5 FCEs if their second teachable subject is not an Algonquian language. Students would be able to complete this program in approximately 5 years. Appendix B shows the audit of the courses and their equivalency with Lakehead courses.

\*The SGEI graduates would be required to take 2 years of credits at Lakehead University to be eligible for qualification and registration with the Ontario College of Teachers. It must be noted that SGEI graduates in the Indigenous BEd programs at Lakehead will only be in Thunder Bay for 9 week blocks before they can return to their home communities for their practical requirements.

SGEI students are offered courses that are part of the curriculum from Canadore College in North Bay. These courses are standard Ontario early childhood education courses that may have limited Indigenous content. These students are able to take some Indigenous specific courses during their diplomas, but as these are electives, it is difficult to determine if the courses would be transferrable.

### Algoma University

Algoma University with Shingwauk Kinoomaage Gamig offer a Bachelor of Arts degree in Anishinaabemowin (single or combined major), Bachelor of Arts degree in Anishinaabe Studies (single or combined major), and Bachelor of Arts degree Combined in Anishinaabe Studies and Anishinaabemowin. Students would apply directly to the professional 2 year program in Lakehead's Faculty of Education, as they would be graduates from Algoma with a Bachelor of Arts degree equivalent to 15 FCEs at Lakehead University and would only require the Teacher Education portion of the BEd degree. Students would be required to complete 10 FCEs in Lakehead's Bachelor of Education professional 2 year program. From degrees at Algoma, students may have acquired enough hours/credit in a second teachable subject and/or enough credit to be eligible to qualify and register with the Ontario College of Teachers for Anishinaabemowin as a second language. Students from Algoma University would also require a 70% average to enter into Lakehead's Education programs. As students from Algoma University may take a number of different electives, it is not possible to assess exactly how much transfer credit they will receive and it would be done on an individual basis. Appendix C shows the possible credits and notes about their transfers to Lakehead University's programs.

Overall, Lakehead's Enrollment Services notes that if students from Algoma University or SGEI have taken additional programs, they may also be granted additional credits. It is recommended that students attending Lakehead's Education programs participate in a transcript audit which is on a student by student basis ensuring that previous education is not overlooked. Students should also be reminded to review the admission requirements for the various Education programs at Lakehead to become familiar with its courses and structure. See Appendix E.

## Supporting Indigenous Students at Lakehead

Lakehead University has developed extensive resources for Indigenous students and offer Indigenous-specific academic, individual and cultural services. These services connect Indigenous students to other Indigenous students, staff and faculty as well as to Elders, Knowledge Keepers and the Thunder Bay Indigenous community. This provides students with a sense of belonging at Lakehead. These services are part of the pathways from SGEI and Algoma as Indigenous students who continue their education at Lakehead University will have the opportunity to connect with much needed services for their success.

### **A detailed curriculum/learning outcomes analysis to determine gaps, including and explanation of the development of any new curriculum that can act as a resource for the system**

Algoma University students would be able to complete Lakehead's Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Education program in 2 years. Seven Generations Education Institute students would be able to complete Lakehead's Honours Bachelor of Education (Indigenous Teacher Education) program in 4 years. The students would still need 5 years to complete the Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Education program (Indigenous Learning major – intermediate/senior) at Lakehead University.

Appendices A, B and C show the credits that can be transferred to Lakehead University. While it is apparent what can transfer from the Seven Generations Education Institute diploma program, it is not clear exactly what credits will transfer for Algoma University students as they have a large number of elective credits that may also be transferred into the Bachelor of Education (Indigenous Learning major) degree program. Based on the assessment of the SGEI and Algoma programs, no new curriculum will be required.

### **Details of expected implementation dates, including a list of completed and pending approvals, as applicable, and the date that the pathway will be posted on ONTransfer.ca**

From Lakehead's perspective, for students planning on utilizing the pathways, because we consulted our Enrollment Services, we can move forward immediately and grant the transfer credits. No further approval is necessary. We can begin in the fall of 2019 accepting students through this pathway project into the relevant streams of Education programs.

Lakehead and Algoma are hopeful in moving forward with a formalized partnership agreement for the pathway implementation. This agreement would be established in the upcoming months and was requested by Algoma University. Lakehead already has an established partnership with Seven Generations Education Institute for other programs and a memorandum of understanding with the Faculty of Education in working together.

## **“Promising practices”**

After having discussions with SGEI and Algoma University staff and faculty members, we have learned that the informal arrangements that are in place right now need to be more formalized with designated times to meet. Formal agreements that outline expectations, who will be responsible for activities, when activities will occur, and a general meeting on helping ladder students from one institution to the other would offer long term planning.

We have heard from Lakehead and SGEI students that having Ontario College of Teacher courses in the community like SGEI offers, has been very beneficial as Indigenous students aren't required to leave their home communities for prolonged time periods. The students appreciate being able to complete courses that can be put toward their Indigenous BEd program at Lakehead with limited time away from community.

## **“Lessons learned”**

- The best promising practice was establishing and nurturing strong relationships between SGEI or Algoma University and Lakehead University.
- Continued regular meetings on a semi-annual basis would strengthen recruitment of students from SGEI and Algoma University.
- Having a visual representation of the pathway(s) for students will help with recruitment, guiding students, and continuing to build the relationship between the institutions.
- Develop recruitment resources that other institutions may use to help students make decisions about attending Lakehead University's Honours Bachelor of Education program.
- To ensure that students have input into the pathways, there will need to be a series of questionnaires for different streams of students (e.g. SGEI ECE, Algoma Anishinaabemowin or Anishinaabe Studies, or Algoma's combined Anishinaabemowin and Anishinaabe Studies).

## **A detailed financial statement**

See attached Appendix F