

Indigenous Language Revitalization Initiative

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POLYTECHNIC

Project Summary

In 2015 the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada published its final report, which contained 94 Calls to Action – recommendations for spurring movement toward healing the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples in Canada. The sixteenth Call to Action was for “post-secondary institutions to create university and college degree and diploma programs in Aboriginal languages.” Although several Ontario universities offer language courses as part of baccalaureate studies, Six Nations Polytechnic (SNP) is the first postsecondary institute to establish an Indigenous language university degree: The Bachelor of Arts in Ogwehoweh Languages (BAOL). The BAOL seeks to further the development of Ogwehoweh cultural understanding within an Ogwehoweh language context. Taught in-person at Six Nations Polytechnic’s campus in Ohsweken, this fully accredited three-year undergraduate degree focuses on Mohawk or Cayuga language and is organized into four streams: language, grammar, lifelong learning, and community engagement.

As other institutions within the province are building their Indigenous Studies and Indigenous Studies-adjacent programs to better integrate Indigenous languages, there is limited capacity to offer advanced-level Hodinohsó:ni languages courses further demonstrating the need to create language speakers. Research shows that when Indigenous language programming is introduced, those courses are regularly highly subscribed, indicating a prevalent student demand.

This project proposes to develop pathways between SNP’s Bachelor of Arts in Ogwehoweh Languages and other Indigenous Studies postsecondary programs for language promotion, student mobility, and building relationships according to the Dish with One Spoon.

The benefits to students go much deeper than simply increased educational mobility – for Indigenous learners, particularly. At the institutional level, this project will help universities across Ontario more meaningfully address the sixteenth Call to Action of the Canadian TRC.

Current Practices

There are no formal pathways in place for students interested in transferring from an Indigenous Studies program at an Ontario university into the Bachelor of Arts in Ogwehoweh Languages at Six Nations Polytechnic. At the moment SNP does have a generalized Letter of Permission policy for visiting students interested in taking languages courses.

Six Nations Polytechnic is interested in moving beyond the simple availability and “generic” nature of the policy to (a) raise awareness of the available language and in-language programming, and how it both complements outside degree programs and supports the academic, professional, and cultural needs of Indigenous learners in those programs; and (b) forge clearer, specific pathway agreements with individual universities involved in the delivery of Indigenous Studies curriculum, and especially those whose programs include Indigenous languages and/or a focus on Hodinohsó:ni’ Peoples.

Key Outcomes

- Established, specific transfer pathways, focused on access to Indigenous language learning, between SNP and participating universities.
- Initiated new relationships and expanded collaborative works between SNP and partner universities, which can provide a foundation for additional pilot projects in support of student mobility into and out of the Indigenous Institutes sector.
- Enhanced understanding of the Indigenous Institutes sector among Ontario universities.
- Formal credit transfer pathways will be updated and posted on the SNP website, and included in its information materials for prospective students.

Student Benefits

Students at SNP as well as at other universities will benefit from established and clearly identified transfer agreements and pathways between the enumerated university-based Indigenous Studies programs (above) and SNP's BAOL programming. Other important benefits include:

- Improved access to immersive Indigenous language and in-language/language-adjacent programming for Indigenous Studies students at identified universities.
- Clearer relationships and pathways between SNP, as an II-sector institute, and mainstream universities, which will aid not only non-II students through their access to BAOL programming at SNP, but also SNP students who may benefit from clearer relationships between the II and university sector moving forward.
- Increased student-body diversity through heightened "visiting" student presence will benefit both the classroom environment/learning experience and the informal and formal connections students forge with their peers
- Increased parity between Indigenous and mainstream institutions in terms of credit transfer pathways, from which Indigenous learners (as well as their non-Indigenous peers) will benefit from added educational mobility and a lowering of barriers to Indigenous student success.

Student Credentials

Students will obtain undergraduate credit toward their degree through specific Letter of Permission arrangements that accept BAOL coursework in lieu of one or more electives at their home university.

Letter of Permission Options

OLG 1CC3: Community I

This course focuses on community-based language revitalization efforts. Students will gain an overview of current language programs, initiatives, and revitalization strategies in various Hodinohsó:ni' communities.

OLC/OLM 1GR6: Grammar I

This course gives students a basic understanding of the structure of Hodinohsó:ni' language. Speaking activities will be utilized to reinforce concepts and promote retention and production. Work will be conducted in the chosen program language (Cayuga/Mohawk).

OLC/OLM 1LG6: Language I

An introduction to the spoken use of language. Emphasis is placed on conversational exchange, and presentations are a required element. This course requires a high level of commitment and patience, including independent study outside the classroom. Work will be conducted in the chosen program language (Cayuga/Mohawk).

OLC/OLM 1LL3: Lifelong Learning I

This course introduces students to the concept of language as a lifelong learning process, to foster personal growth as well as growth in others. Students will review literature on the history of Hodinohsó:ni' languages and Indigenous language revitalization and create a personal learning plan including a personal philosophy of learning.

OLG 2CC3: Community II

This course focuses on the importance of community in language revitalization efforts. Students will conduct research, case studies, and survey activities to ascertain the existing state of community language revitalization, statistics about the speaking population, and the success of various efforts.

Prerequisite: OLG 1CC3 – Community I.

OLC/OLM 2GR6: Grammar II

This course reviews and expands students' understanding of the structure of Hodinohsó:ni' languages. Speaking activities will be utilized to reinforce concepts and promote retention and production. Greater emphasis is placed on precision of grammar in speaking. Work will be conducted in the chosen program language (Cayuga/Mohawk).

Prerequisite: OLC/OLM 1GR6 – Grammar I.

OLC/OLM 2LG6: Language II

Building on Language I, this course focuses on the spoken use of the language. Emphasis is placed on conversational exchange and presentations are a required element. This course requires a high level of commitment and patience including independent study outside the classroom. Work will be conducted in the chosen program language (Cayuga/Mohawk).

Prerequisite: OLC/OLM 1LG6 – Language I.

OLC/OLM 2LL3: Lifelong Learning II

In this course, students continue to develop their personal learning plans and philosophies. Students will review literature and case studies on second language acquisition. Work will be conducted in English as well as in the chosen program language (Cayuga/Mohawk).

Prerequisite: OLC/OLM 1LL3 –Lifelong Learning I.

OLC/OLM 3GR6: Grammar III

This course is an intensive review and further expansion of the grammatical structure of Iroquoian language, roots, prefixes, suffixes, and word order. Speaking activities will be utilized to reinforce concepts and promote retention and production. Emphasis is placed on using grammatical pieces to create new meaning. Work will be conducted in in the chosen program language (Cayuga/Mohawk).

Prerequisite: OLC/OLM 2GR6 – Grammar II.

OLC/OLM 3LG6: Language III

A continuing intermediate immersion experience in Hodinohsó:ni' focusing on the spoken use of the language. Emphasis is placed on extended conversational exchanges and the emergence of creative and complex language use. Presentations are a required element. This course requires a high level of commitment and patience. Work will be conducted in in the chosen program language (Cayuga/Mohawk).

Prerequisites: OLC/OLM 2LG6 – Language II.

OLG 1HH3: Hodinohsó:ni' History I: Cosmology

An in-depth examination of the Hodinohsó:ni' conceptualization and understanding of the universe, from creation to the present day. Discussion revolves around the Creation Story, Thanksgiving Address, and other topics, as decided by the instructor. Materials are pulled from oral history, literature, and historical documents. Work will be conducted in English as well as in the chosen program language (Cayuga/Mohawk).

OLC/OLM 2TR3: Beginner Translation: Theory & Practice

This course introduces students to the theory of translation. Students will focus on expressing simple ideas in Cayuga/Mohawk, and translating to/from English, and examine the best ways to do so in each language. Work will be conducted in the chosen program language (Cayuga/Mohawk).

Prerequisites: OLC/OLM 1GR6 – Grammar I; OLC/OLM 1LG6 – Language I.

OLC/OLM 2SF3: Composition: Short & Long Form

This course introduces students to the composition of texts entirely in the language of their program (Mohawk/Cayuga), in either short- or long-form. Formats include written or spoken storybooks, short stories, poems, plays, anecdotes, essays, and other types as determined by the instructor. Course is conducted in the chosen program language (Mohawk/Cayuga).

Prerequisites: OLC/OLM 2LG6 – Language II; OLC/OLM 2GR6 – Grammar II.

OLG 2EA3: Ethnoastronomy

This course examines Hodinohsó:ni' understandings of the universe, taking a two-row approach. Topics of discussion include stars, constellations, and other astronomical bodies; cartography and navigation; and other topics as decided by the instructor. Work will be conducted in English and in the chosen program language (Cayuga/Mohawk).

OLG 2HL3: Historical Hodinohsó:ni' Languages

This course examines the history of Iroquoian languages, with the aim of broadening students' knowledge of Hodinohsó:ni' languages today. Work will be conducted in English and in the chosen program language (Cayuga/Mohawk). Prerequisites: OLC/OLM 1GR6 – Grammar I; OLC/OLM 1LG6 – Language I.

OLG 2HH3: Hodinohsó:ni' History II: Contact to 1800

This course considers the changes in Hodinohsó:ni' society resulting from contact, through to the major cultural and religious upheavals up to 1800. Content is pulled from historical documentation and oral history. Work will be conducted in English and in the chosen program language (Cayuga/Mohawk).

Prerequisite: OLG 1HH3 – Hodinohsó:ni' History I: Cosmology.

OLG 3TR3: Advanced Translation: Application & Advanced Translation Theory

This course builds on Beginner Translation and will focus on the application of beginner translation theory to practical texts found within the environment. Advanced translation theory and techniques will be discussed.

Prerequisites: OLC/OLM 2TR3 – Beginner Translation - Theory and Practice; OLC/OLM 2GR6/OLM 2GR6 – Grammar II; OLC/OLM 2LG6/OLM 2LG6 – Language II.

OLC/OLM 3GV3: Governance

This course examines the emergence of Hodinohsó:ni' governance with an emphasis on language: titles, terms, roles and responsibilities, and structure of the Confederacy. Work will be conducted in English and in the chosen program language (Cayuga/Mohawk).

Prerequisites: OLC/OLM 1GR6 – Grammar I; OLC/OLM 1LG6 – Language I.

OLG 3HH3: Hodinohsó:ni' History III: 1800 to Today

This course examines Hodinohsó:ni' society after 1800. Content is drawn from historical documentation and oral history. Work will be conducted in English and in the chosen program language (Cayuga/Mohawk)

Prerequisite: OLG 2HH3 – Hodinohsó:ni' History II: Contact to 1800.

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