



# Post-Secondary Education Needs Assessment

The Congress of Aboriginal  
Peoples

April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2022

# Table of Contents

<b>Acknowledgement</b> .....	2
<b>List of Tables</b> .....	3
<b>List of Figures</b> .....	4
<b>Report Summary</b> .....	5
<b>The 8 Dimension Framework</b> .....	6
<b>Key Learnings</b> .....	7
<b>Research-based Suggestions</b> .....	14
<b>Policy Considerations</b> .....	18
<b>Report Body</b> .....	22
<b>Context</b> .....	22
<b>Approach</b> .....	22
<b>Limitations</b> .....	23
<b>Research Findings</b> .....	25
<b>1. CAP Students</b> .....	26
<b>2. Access</b> .....	30
<b>3. Success</b> .....	43
<b>4. Student Needs</b> .....	45
<b>5. Funding Requirements</b> .....	54
<b>6. Funding Distribution and Mechanisms</b> .....	56
<b>7. Existing Programs</b> .....	58
<b>Concluding Recommendations</b> .....	63
<b>References</b> .....	67
<b>Appendix A</b> .....	71
<b>Appendix B</b> .....	75

## Acknowledgement

The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples respectfully acknowledges that the location of its national office is in the traditional, unceded territories of the Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg, the Omàmiwininiwag (Algonquin peoples). We offer our respect and gratitude to the Algonquin nation, who are the rightful caretakers of this place, for their eternal care and knowledge of their homelands.

We acknowledge the historical and contemporary connection the Algonquin Nation has to the capital region, and we recognize that the capital region is home to many diverse First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples. We affirm that all Indigenous peoples and nations across Turtle Island must be acknowledged with honour and respect. May we continue to listen, learn, and strive together to be accountable for building relationships of respect, peace, and friendship with and within this place.

## List of Tables

Table 1. Social Factors Influencing PSE Attendance .....	34
Table 2. Highest Level of Education Attainment by Family Residential School Attendance.....	41
Table 3. Skills Training – Training Taken versus Wanted.....	48
Table 4. Individual Supports for CAP-PSSSP Informed by ISC Eligible Expenses for Non-CAP Students.....	51
Table 5. Community-Based Supports for CAP-PSSSP Informed by ISC Eligible Expenses for Non-CAP Students.....	51
Table 6. 2019 ISC Funding Totals to Support PSE for Distinctions-Based Indigenous Students.....	53
Table 7. Number of Students Attending PSE by Type of Program and Indigenous Identity Group.....	54
Table 8. Federal PSE Programs – Eligibility Criteria & Needs Addressed by Program.....	59-60
Table 9. Federal PSE Programs – Accessibility and Applicability to CAP Students.....	60-61

## List of Figures

Figure 1. Type of PSE Currently Attending.....	27
Figure 2. Highest Level of Education Attainment.....	28
Figure 3. Type of Funding Source – Summarized.....	31
Figure 4. Type of Funding Source Used (Summarized) by Indigenous Identity Groups.....	31
Figure 5. Types of Funding Sources Used for PSE.....	32
Figure 6. Level of Education Interested in Completing.....	37
Figure 7. Reason for PSE Program Choice.....	37
Figure 8. Key Barriers to Furthering Education.....	39
Figure 9. Reasons PSE Not Completed.....	40
Figure 10. Attendance to PSE Activities Intended to Help Indigenous Students Succeed.....	43
Figure 11. Total 2016 Employment Income for Indigenous Population by Education Attainment.....	45
Figure 12. Type of Trade Certificate/Diploma.....	47
Figure 13. Type of University Program Above Bachelor’s Level.....	47
Figure 14. Attendance to Skills Training (courses, workshops, etc.).....	48
Figure 15. Off-Reserve Indigenous Population Distribution Across Canada.....	49
Figure 16. Off-Reserve Indigenous Students Attending PSE Across Provinces and Territories.....	50
Figure 17. Presence of Developmental or Learning Condition While Attending PSE Amongst Indigenous Students.....	53
Figure 18. Average Undergraduate Tuition Fees for Canadian Full-Time Students, by Field of Study, 2020/2021 (CAD).....	55
Figure 19. Average Graduate Tuition Fees for Canadian Full-Time Students, by Field of Study, 2020/2021 (CAD).....	56

## Report Summary

This report has been prepared by the Research Department of the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (CAP) as a foundational research document in order to better understand the post-secondary education (PSE) landscape for the off-reserve Status and Non-Status Indians, NunatuKavut Inuit, and Métis students who CAP represents. The research was commissioned by the Post-Secondary Education Priority Area Working Group (PSE Table) established under the 2018 CAP-CANADA Political Accord. The aims of the PSE Table, which is comprised of representatives from CAP, Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) and Crown-Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC), are to identify opportunities to address barriers and gaps in accessing PSE supports and culturally relevant programming for Indigenous students.

The report findings are organized into eight sections representing each dimension of the needs assessment framework: CAP Students, Access, Success, Student Needs, Funding Requirements, Funding Mechanisms and Distribution, Existing Programs, as well as Additional Supports. Each of these eight dimensions ask a series of questions that shed light on the nature and scope of the supports required to serve off-reserve Status and Non-Status Indians, NunatuKavut Inuit, and Métis students across Canada.

### **Purpose**

The objective of the PSE Table in undertaking this needs assessment research has been to obtain a more fulsome picture as to the nature and scope of the need for PSE supports for off-reserve Status and Non-Status Indians, NunatuKavut Inuit, and Métis students across Canada. It is understood that this report will serve as a core document in the process of developing policy meant to identify opportunities to better leverage and expand access to existing PSE supports and programming for CAP students. Ultimately, the intention is that this needs assessment will serve as the foundation for subsequent policy discussions at the PSE Table and contribute to the establishment of a CAP-CANADA Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP) and/or Education Sub-Accord.

### **Data**

The information contained in this report has been compiled from accessible secondary data resources such as the Aboriginal Peoples Survey 2017 (APS) and Canadian Census of Population 2016. Despite its significant limitations, the APS currently provides the greatest hold of descriptive information pertaining to the purpose and scope of this needs assessment, and as such, it serves as the primary source of statistical information examined. Environment scans were completed through the collection of both grey literature as well as academic sources. These data were used to identify relevant policies, programs, and best practices pertaining to PSE. Ongoing discussions in consultation with CAP staff have helped to inform the questions, shape the search strategy, and give direction on where to locate key information. Collaboration, review, and input from CAP colleagues who have relevant expertise was also sought to contextualize the information gathered and to bring a qualitative dimension to the story that the statistics tell. Figures and Tables are used throughout the report to illustrate research findings. Gaps in the data readily available will be addressed by PSE Table Working Group Members from the Government of Canada in order to support this research and its policy aims. As we are approaching a 2022 Indigenous Peoples

Survey (formerly known as APS) cycle this year, the numbers presented in this report are approximate and are to be understood as such.

In this research, the definition of post-secondary education is guided by Statistics Canada<sup>1</sup> that, in addition to university and college level degrees and diploma's, also recognizes apprenticeships and trades certificate and diplomas. Therefore, the Indigenous skills and employment training (ISET) program will be included in the data and analysis.

## The 8 Dimension Framework

The PSE Table has set out a number of questions to guide the needs assessment research. Together, these questions comprise an 8-dimension framework for conducting this gap analysis of the current landscape of post-secondary education for off-reserve Status and Non-Status Indians, NunatuKavut Inuit, and Métis students across Canada. This report presents findings from the research according to this 8-dimension framework:

### **1. CAP Students**

**1.1** Who are students represented by CAP? What is the evidence-base supporting the estimates of the number of students?

### **2: Access**

**2.1** What financial factors encourage CAP constituents to pursue post-secondary education?

**2.2** What non-financial factors encourage CAP constituents to pursue post-secondary education?

**2.3** What factors provide disincentives/barriers that limit access of students to PSE?

**2.4** What necessary supports/tools are required?

### **3: Success**

**3.1** What does success in post-secondary education look like for CAP constituents, and what are the supporting factors? What factors hinder or prevent success?

### **4: Student Needs**

**4.1** Are CAP student needs restricted to 4-year bachelor's and post-graduate studies, in addition to university preparation programs? Are there other programs where CAP students require support?

**4.2** How do the needs of CAP students differ across the country? Is there more need in, for example, western provinces versus the Atlantic? Is there a need North of 60?

**4.3** Do CAP students have needs beyond funding for things like living expenses, tuition fees, textbooks, and wraparound supports like mentorship and skills building? If so, how many CAP students have these needs, including an evidence-base supporting the number of students, and what are those needs?

- Defining Needs – Eligible Expenses Currently Covered by Federal Programming
- Defining Needs – Secondary School Upgrading & Additional Supports for Students

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/81-004-x/2010001/def/posteducation-educpost-eng.htm#:~:text=Postsecondary%20education%20refers%20to%20those,below%20bachelor%20level%3B%20or%20a>.

- Costs of Additional Needs

### **5: Funding Requirements**

**5.1** How many CAP students require funding and at what levels? What is the evidence base behind the numbers identified?

### **6: Funding Distribution and Mechanisms**

**6.1** How would funding be distributed to CAP students? What mechanisms would be required to establish?

**6.2** Would funding be distributed on a per-capita basis or based on need? If funding would be distributed based on need, how would need be defined?

### **7: Existing Programs**

**7.1** How much of student financial and non-financial need is currently being addressed by federal programs such as ISETs (although there is some flexibility, this program is mandated for up to 2 years geared towards employment), Registered Education Savings Plans (including the Canada Learning Bond and the Canada Education Savings Grant), the Canada Student Financial Assistance Program, Supports for Student Learning Program (which funds organizations such as Pathways and Indspire) and the Youth Employment and Skills Strategy?

**7.2** Are there specific barriers to accessing these programs? If yes, what are they? If there is no overlap, why/how?

**7.3** What about provincial/territorial funding? How much funding do CAP students currently receive through these programs?

### **8: Additional Supports**

**8.1** What are the needs for PSE support beyond direct student support (i.e., for educators, post-secondary institutions)?

**8.2** Are there pre-existing mechanisms or relationships that could be used to establish these supports?

## **Key Learnings**

There are currently no PSE federal programs that address the unique needs of off-reserve Status and Non-Status Indians, NunatuKavut Inuit, and Métis students across Canada. This lack of support means that the Government of Canada has so far not met its fiduciary responsibility towards CAP constituents as reiterated under the Daniels decision. Canada has yet to implement policies and programs designed to administer post-secondary education funding, resources, or supports for constituents of the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples as is their duty. Current federal programs offered to Indigenous students are based on the government's distinctions-based approach, which most often means that only members of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), the Métis National Council (MNC), or the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) are eligible for support. This distinctions-based approach has thus far precluded CAP students who consequently do not qualify for or are unable to access any of the federal PSE support programs aimed at Indigenous peoples.

### **1. CAP Students**

The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples represents and advocates on behalf of status and non-status First Nations living off-reserve, Métis, and NunatuKavut Inuit across Canada. Recent estimates of this



population size can begin to be derived from Canada's 2016 Census of Population, which reported 1.67 million Indigenous people in Canada, 14% of which are non-status Indians; this yields a figure of 233,800. However, determining the true size of the CAP constituency cannot be done using only Census data due to the complexity of Indigenous identity and self-determination, as well as the ongoing impact of cultural genocide and government policies that have disconnected Indigenous people from their original communities. Furthermore, current survey instruments such as the Aboriginal People Survey 2017 (which only counts individuals 15 years and older), and Census 2016 (a point in time count) are as yet inadequate to capture the extent of the population of Indigenous peoples who are non-status and/or living off-reserve in Canada. A longitudinal survey and primary data, therefore, would improve the accuracy of capturing the needs of CAP's constituents. In Section 1.2.2 of this report, CAP presents a number of considerations for determining the numbers.

All current students and those desiring to become students who fall under CAP's constituency are represented in this report. Conservative estimates calculated from post-secondary education school attendance as well as secondary school completion gathered by the 2017 Aboriginal Peoples Survey put the number at approximately 90,000 – 150,000 CAP students who stand to benefit from a CAP PSSSP. However, several factors need to be considered in reading these estimates. For one, the 2017 APS data is outdated; given that Indigenous peoples are the fastest growing population in Canada, growing by 42.5% between 2006 and 2016,<sup>2</sup> this number could easily stand now between 109,350 – 182,250. More specifically, the non-status and off-reserve Indigenous population continues to grow. Furthermore, the APS does not include children under the age of 15. This leaves out a significant portion of the population that was and is now of an age to pursue post-secondary education. As Statistics Canada recently reported, "Indigenous peoples are also the youngest population in Canada: about 44% were under the age of 25 in 2016, compared to 28% of the non-Indigenous population."<sup>3</sup> Finally, the Census does not distinguish members of the Métis Nation from others who self-identify as Métis.<sup>4</sup>

## 2. Access

Dimension 2 focused on the financial and non-financial factors that encourage CAP constituents to pursue PSE, as well as the disincentives or barriers, and necessary supports and tools for CAP students to access post-secondary education, section 7 tables 8 and 9 discuss this point, why current programming is not adequate.

- **Financial Factors**

- This research found that Indigenous PSE students access various funding streams from multiple sources with noticeable disparities between Inuit, First Nation, and Métis. From figure 5 in this report, approximately 51% of Inuit obtain PSE funding from Inuit land claim organizations, 39% of First Nation (likely status which is a requirement to access Band funding) and 12% of Métis source funding from Bands or ISC. While these statistics do not reflect the implementation of the 2019 Inuit and Métis Education Strategies, they do provide a baseline for comparison to the next cycle of IPS 2022.

---

<sup>2</sup> ISC, Annual Report to Parliament (2020). <https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1602010609492/1602010631711#chp6>

<sup>3</sup> Statistics Canada, First Nations People, Métis and Inuit in Canada: Diverse and Growing Populations, (2018).

<sup>4</sup> ISC, Annual Report (2020).

- Inferred from figure 5, federal funding sources are most influential in providing financial support to CAP students. Of all Indigenous students living off-reserve, up to 49% of Inuit, 61% of First Nations, and 88% of Métis students may be eligible for CAP-specific funding, as 51% of Inuit, 39% of First Nations, and 12% of Métis reported receiving PSE funding from Inuit Land Claim Organizations, First Nation Band organizations, and Indigenous Services Canada respectively. These proportions suggest the number of non-recipients may be eligible for CAP specific funding.
- **Non-Financial Factors**
  - Family-oriented, social, and personal factors all encourage CAP students to pursue PSE.
  - Family: Parental PSE completion, parental engagement and involvement in school, and Indigenous language or cultural programming offered in curriculum are all strong encouraging factors.
  - Social: Literature suggests social factors such as social support services and peer-mentorship programs improve Indigenous students' success and encouragement to pursue higher education.<sup>5</sup>
  - Personal: Lastly, reasons underlining personal interest in PSE also influence CAP students' PSE attendance.
- **Disincentives and Barriers**
  - Additionally, from figure 9, 14.4% of Indigenous PSE students were unable to complete their studies due to financial reasons. Furthermore, figure 8 shows 61% of females and 39% of males identified the cost of education and the opportunity cost of not working as a barrier to pursue post-secondary education. This finding mirrors discussions in the literature, as scholars suggest government funding levels to be well below demand and insufficient to support Indigenous students, citing "being financially unprepared" as a significant challenge to encouraging PSE success.<sup>6</sup>
  - Family-oriented barriers such as "too difficult to be away from home" and "personal or family responsibilities" are often cited by off-reserve Indigenous students as preventing PSE completion.
  - Literature also describes anti-Indigenous racism and prejudice in academic institutions as significantly impairing equitable access to PSE.
  - Family attendance at Indian Residential Schools (IRS) has also been shown to negatively impacts a student's PSE attainment.
- **Necessary Supports and Tools**
  - All encouraging factors and barriers described above require careful consideration in the development of supportive resources and tools. Students and their families must be well supported, involved, and empowered to build trusting relationships with schools. Literature also highlights the need to improve student experiences of transition and relocation from home required to attend PSE. This includes supporting suitable and secure housing availability and access.
  - All research points to the need to increase funding and programs to encourage Indigenous students to pursue post-secondary education and to better support them in their PSE

---

<sup>5</sup> ESDC, (2019b); Rawana et al., (2015); Pickrell, (2008).

<sup>6</sup> Nelson et al. (2018); NCCIH, (2017).

achievement. Supports and tools designed to encourage Indigenous students to pursue PSE must target the individual and their family and should take the form of financial and social support services. Government funding mechanisms such as scholarships, bursaries, and grants are well positioned to finance Indigenous student's education attainment, however, research suggests a need to improve funding levels.

- Findings also point to the urgent need for additional support and programming to encourage IRS survivors and their families in their PSE journey. Furthermore, programming to address the needs of both students and their parents/guardians is needed to ensure families are well supported, involved, and in trusting relationships with schools. Parental involvement must be prioritized in the development of CAP-PSSSP in order to accurately and sufficiently address their needs and rebuild generations of distrust of education systems.
- Indigenous-led and informed afterschool, peer mentorship, and in-school cultural and social support programming substantially improves Indigenous students' academic success and achievement.<sup>7</sup> Other support services targeting the broader social determinants of Indigenous health<sup>8</sup> such as physical geographic locations (i.e., living in rural versus urban communities) and housing are also key components to be considered for the development of supports and tools for Indigenous students.

### 3. Success

- **Definition:** Post-secondary education success for CAP constituents exists when all of CAP's constituency, including off-reserve status and non-status First Nations, Métis, NunatuKavut Inuit, and other marginalized Indigenous peoples have equitable access to PSE funding and other supports. While individual PSE success may be defined in various ways, broadly speaking, it looks like every Indigenous person who wishes to pursue PSE is both encouraged and supported to do so.
- **Measures:** Success measurements can be articulated through a variety of means, including enrollment, retention, and graduation rates, as well as labour market participation and income. A CAP-Canada Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP) along with other wrap-around supports must be delivered according to student and family need, addressing both the financial and non-financial factors discussed in Dimension 2.
- **Barriers and Facilitators:** Success in education is dependent on proper housing, food, health, access to tutoring, study skills, mentors, culturally sensitive counselling, life skills, crisis support, childcare et cetera. A summary of the research shows that higher academic achievement, improved labour force participation in one's field of study, and increased income levels are all supporting factors to PSE success for CAP's constituency. Inversely, factors that hinder PSE success mirror the disincentives and barriers discussed in Section 2. Examples include: the accessibility, availability, and acceptability of education systems; family responsibilities or the difficulty of being away from home; job securement; financial reasons; lack of personal interest or motivation; prejudice and anti-Indigenous racism; and family attendance to Indian Residential Schools.

---

<sup>7</sup> EDSC, 2019; Greenfield, 2020; Pickrell, 2008; Rawana et al. 2015; Nelson et al. 2018.

<sup>8</sup> For more detailed information on the social determinants of Indigenous health see: Merrill, M. (2020). *Social Determinants of Indigenous Health*. Congress of Aboriginal Peoples.

#### 4. Student Needs

The needs of CAP students encompass financial, social, and individual elements which CAP-specific PSE funding may be allocated to address.

- **Type of PSE Programs:** CAP students attend PSE at all levels, demonstrating a wide range of areas where student need may exist, including at, below, or above the bachelor's level; college and non-university; trade certificate and diplomas; and skills training. Notably, interest in completing trainings on learning computer skills, engaging in personal interest(s), learning reading/writing/math, second language(s), and starting or running a business had an interest rate double the proportion of those attending. These findings provide insight into areas CAP-administered PSSSP funding and related supports may be best directed towards in efforts to support Indigenous students in their PSE journeys. Moreover, table 3 in this report shows that there is substantial difference in those actually attending skills trainings specific to their personal interest (5.4%) compared to those with only an interest to do so (13.1%). This finding alone emphasizes the need to support Indigenous students in pursuing their personal desire for higher education.
- **Student Need Across Canada:** CAP's constituency represents all NunatuKavut Inuit, Métis, and other status and non-status Indigenous peoples living off-reserve. As such, there is need for PSE support for Indigenous students from coast to coast to coast. Given the population densities concentrated in southern areas of Canada, the proportional need is greatest in these areas, however, as noted in Section 1, Inuit students remain the least represented in PSE attendance, and thus, support must also be concentrated in the NunatuKavut region as well.
  - Aligned with broader Canadian population distributions, a large proportion of CAP's constituency reside in southern parts of Canada. In terms of PSE attendance, most of CAP students attend post-secondary education in Ontario (28.0%), Alberta (15.2%), British Columbia (15.0%), Manitoba (12.0%), Quebec (10.5%), and Saskatchewan (8.7%). Study in the territories makes up (<1.1%), while Atlantic provinces see (<5.0%) of PSE attendance, according to 2017 APS data.
- **Additional Considerations:** CAP student need parallels the needs acknowledged in pre-established federal funding programs such as the Post-Secondary Student Support Program, Métis Nation Post-Secondary Education Strategy, Inuit Post-Secondary Education Strategy. These programs support members of Status First Nations Bands, the Métis National Council, and beneficiaries of Inuit Land Claims Agreements, covering eligible expenses for direct financial support for status First Nations, Métis, and northern Inuit Indigenous students. In addition to tuition and living expenses, these established needs can include funding for transcript and application fees, books and supplies, transportation supports, childcare services, as well as cultural and community-based supports such as student peer mentorship, Elder guidance, and experiential land-based programming including ceremony and language learning. Furthermore, resources for high school upgrading and support for students with learning or developmental exceptionalities are also needed.
- **Costs of Additional Needs:** Current funding allocations and specific distinctions-based PSSSP agreements between ISC and First Nations, Métis, and Inuit groups will serve as the best place to begin estimating costs. It is important therefore that CAP's government partner provide insight into the typical totals provided to Indigenous students, according to a distinctions-based

approach. The Government of Canada has recently allocated \$362 million over 10 years and \$40 million ongoing to support Métis Nation students through MNC member organizations and Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF). This is where discussions of a similar program to support off-reserve Status and Non-Status Indians, NunatuKavut Inuit, and Métis students' post-secondary education can and should begin.

- **Note:** Acquiring more specificity regarding the needs of CAP students as well as more accurate information as to the gaps in available federal PSE support programs will require direct consultation with CAP students at the PTO level and further analysis at the PSE Table.

## 5. Funding Requirements

- **Number of Students:** From table 7, according to the 2017 Aboriginal Peoples Survey data, up to 322,750 off-reserve Indigenous students are attending some level of PSE. While certain status First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students are eligible to receive distinctions-based funding through various distribution mechanisms (ISC, bands, provincial organizations), the number of non-status First Nations students attending PSE do not have access to funding because they are neither First Nation nor Métis. Additionally, figure 5 in this report shows that 61% of First Nation, 75% of Métis, and 41% of Inuit use own savings or working while going to school.
- **Funding Levels:** The funding need for CAP students is estimated at approximately \$210 million for undergraduate students and \$57 million for graduate students. This includes \$10 million to \$34 million for non-status First Nations students specifically. These values stem from 2020/2021 average fees for undergraduate (\$6,580 CAD) and graduate (\$7,304 CAD) programs in Canada, multiplied by the number of off-reserve Indigenous students attending each program.

## 6. Funding Mechanisms and Distribution

**Mechanisms:** In determining how best to deliver needed PSE supports to CAP students, it is recommended that a new CAP Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP) be established. Although much collaboration and discussion will be required to determine the nature of funding mechanisms and distribution, to begin with, CAP's pre-existing Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (ISET) program serves as a model for resource distribution based on need. The National Aboriginal Resource Allocation Model (NARAM) guides the development of funding equations and direct distribution frameworks by calculating where need exists and to what extent in each province and territory using a list of relevant variables. The report acknowledges that this is but one example whereas others exist and should be explored collaboratively at the PSE table.

**Funding Equations:** The Canada-CAP PSSSP may consider similar funding formulas to the CAP ISET program to distribute resources according to principles of supply and demand (need). Supply variables reflect the number of Indigenous students in provinces and territories, while demand (need) will be based on factors influencing and preventing PSE attainment as described in Section 2. Each variable is given an individual weight in the formula, while also considering PTO assets to understand local need. The sovereignty of local governments and communities is respected by empowering CAP PTOs with the ability to independently adjust the funding formula and variable weights in order to align with the needs of their membership.

## 7. Existing Programs

Dimension 7 explores existing federal PSE funding programs and assesses their accessibility and applicability to CAP students. Eight distinct federal programs designed for/accessible to support Indigenous students in their PSE attainment were assessed: Registered Education Savings Plans (RESP); Canada Learning Bond, Canada Education Savings Grant; Canada Student Financial Assistance Program (CFSA) (includes Canada Student Grants, Canada Student Loans, and Canada Apprentice Loans); Youth Employment and Skills Strategy (YESS); Post-Secondary Student Support Program; University College Entrance Preparation Program; Aboriginal Education Incentive Awards; Legal Studies for Aboriginal People Program; Supports for Student Learning Program (SSLP) (See table page 58 and 59 of this report).

**Accessibility and Applicability for CAP Students:** It was found that none of the federal programs are adequate or accessible PSE support for CAP students. Of the eight federal programs that provide financial supports, YESS is the only one that provides both financial and non-financial supports. There are two programs that receive partial funding from the federal government but not a federal program: Indspire, not available to non-Status, provides both financial and non-financial supports. Pathways to Education provides non-financial assistance, Indigenous criteria is not specified. The CFSA applicants do not compete with others, rather they receive funding based on their family size, income, and educational costs. In addition, students who self-identify as Indigenous learners are not expected to contribute to their educational costs by providing a fixed student contribution (up to \$3,000 per year, with the exact amount being calculated based on gross family income and family size).

**Barriers to Federal Programs for CAP Students:** To this day, CAP's constituents continue to face several obstacles to both accessing and completing PSE. For non-status and off-reserve Indigenous peoples, the existing government support remains inadequate, preferential and in most scenarios, completely inaccessible. Accessing the majority of PSE programs continues to rely on Indigenous Status, band council governments or association with distinctions-based organizations. Furthermore, barriers and challenges to attain PSE are not included in cost of education such as moving away from family while still taking on responsibilities of familial needs. This is discussed further in this report.

**Provincial/Territorial (P/T) Funding:** CAP students are under federal provision, due to the Constitution Act, 1867 and Supreme Court Daniels Decision. Thus, P/T funding for CAP students is not investigated. The exception is from a CSFA Program perspective, it would be important to note that Canada Student Grants (CSGs) and Canada Student Loans (CSLs) are designed to work with P/T programs to fulfil a student's assessed financial need between both P/T supports and CSGs/CSLs. Applications are also managed by the P/Ts. Further, CSGs and CSLs are not available to students in Quebec, Northwest Territories or Nunavut as they administer their own student aid programs.

Acquiring more specificity regarding the needs of CAP students as well as more accurate information as to the gaps in available federal PSE support programs will require direct consultation with CAP students at the PTO level and further analysis at the PSE Table.

## **8. Additional Supports**

**Additional Supports:** There is substantial need for supportive resources to develop PSE educators, institutions, and other personnel to better serve non-status and off-reserve Indigenous students. These kinds of additional supports ensure the efficacy and sustainability of all other PSE supports for CAP

students and facilitate their PSE attainment and success. Such additional or indirect PSE supports encompass resources to educate, hire, and train teachers, to transform PSE classroom environments and institutions through the process of indigenization, and to establish internal mechanisms within PSE institutions such as establishing Indigenous Student Centers that ensure CAP students receive culturally relevant support throughout their post-secondary educational journeys.

**Mechanisms:** Supports for PSE institutions to properly support CAP students requires partnership building between CAP and individual universities across Canada. Federal supports are needed to empower CAP PTOs in working with these post-secondary institutions in order to ensure that Indigenous students are able to learn in safer environments. Collaborative work on the indigenization of post-secondary institutions and Indigenous programs must continue and CAP must be included. While CAP has not yet been supported in establishing PSE programming, there remains minimal mechanisms or capacity to forge and sustain these important institutional relationships. Partnership capacity dollars are needed in order to deliver on these additional supports.

### **Research-based Suggestions for a CAP-PSSSP**

Evidence-based recommendations drawn directly from research findings are presented here according to the 8-dimensional framework.

#### **1. Students**

##### **Ensure Adequate, Immediate, and Ongoing PSE Supports for all CAP Students Now and Into the Future through the Creation of a CAP-Post-Secondary Student Support Program Policy**

- Needed financial and non-financial PSE supports must be delivered to all CAP students by creating a CAP-specific PSSSP that will ensure that all non-status and status First Nations, Métis, and NunatuKavut Inuit students living in Canada are able to pursue and obtain a post-secondary education.
- Financial and non-financial support for a minimum of 90,000 CAP students currently attending PSE, as well as the conservatively estimated 150,000 CAP students with eligibility to pursue PSE opportunities must be established. Including completion of secondary education.

#### **2. Access**

##### **Ensure Access to Quality PSE for all Indigenous Students by Designing New Programs and Supports That Address Known Barriers and Facilitators for CAP Students**

- Students and their families must be well supported, involved, and empowered to build trusting relationships with schools. Supports must address CAP-specific financial and non-financial needs, including family factors (parental education and parental engagement in school), social factors (peer-mentorship programs), and personal factors (academic preparedness).
- Increase funding and programs to encourage Indigenous students to pursue post-secondary education and to better support them in their PSE achievement. Supports and tools designed to encourage Indigenous students to pursue PSE must target the individual and their family and should take the form of financial and social support services.
- Improve student experiences of transition and relocation from home required to attend PSE. This includes supporting suitable and secure housing availability and access.

- Support the promotion of Indigenous social and cultural programs and encourage attendance in order to improve enrolment and engagement amongst Indigenous students.
- Increase currently inadequate government funding mechanisms such as scholarships, bursaries, and grants for Indigenous students, which are well positioned to finance PSE attainment.
  - Consider establishing a Daniels Scholarship Fund integrated into the prospective CAP PSSSP. Ensure the Daniels Scholarship Fund is made available exclusively to CAP constituents, with eligibility and application requirements to be determined at the policy level.

### 3. Success

#### **Foster PSE Success for CAP Students by Providing Needed Supports and Eliminating Barriers**

- Align the goals of a CAP-PSSSP with CAP's definition of PSE success: *When all non-status First Nations, Métis, NunatuKavut Inuit, and other marginalized Indigenous peoples have equitable access to PSE funding and other supports that encourage and promote academic achievement and attainment of in-demand careers in the labour market.*
- Design the CAP-PSSSP to include necessary wrap-around supports delivered according to student and family need, addressing both the financial and non-financial factors which requires phase 2 research initiative with CAP's PTO's and their constituents.
- Create success measures collaboratively with CAP and its PTOs that include enrollment, retention, and graduation rates, as well as labour market participation and income for CAP students.

### 4. Needs

#### **Ensure that a CAP-PSSSP Adequately Addresses the Regional-Specific Needs of CAP Students Across Canada and is Aligned with PSE Support Levels for other Indigenous Identity Groups.**

- Provide both financial and wrap-around support for CAP students to pursue their desire for PSE at all levels including at, below, or above the bachelor's level; college and non-university; trade certificate and diplomas; and skills training. Outside of this research focus, supports vary from urban to rural to remote communities. This can be included in phase 2 research in the future.
- PSE funding allocations for CAP students must match those allotted for other Indigenous identity groups currently receiving federal funding. For example, the \$362 million over 10 years and \$40 million ongoing to support Métis Nation students provided to Metis Nation Governing Members and the MMF to support their citizens.
- Improve understanding of CAP-specific student need through direct consultation with students and PTOs across all Canadian provinces and territories in order to better design targeted PSSSP.
- Incorporate resources for high school upgrading and supports for students with learning and developmental conditions or other exceptionalities to pursue PSE.



## 5. Funding

### Ensure Funding Calculations are Equitable and Comprehensive

- Consider all CAP students for CAP PSSSP funding regardless of Indigenous identity distinction or PSE program.
- Calculate funding totals to reflect current average tuition fees for various PSE programs across Canadian institutions and factor in inflation.

## 6. Distribution and Mechanisms

### Design CAP-PSSSP Distribution Mechanisms According to Established Successful Indigenous Models

- Distribute the CAP-PSSSP funding and supportive resources through mechanisms adopted from the CAP ISET program which uses the National Aboriginal Resource Allocation Model (NARAM) to determine and distribute funding based on where need exists and to what extent in each PTO using a list of relevant variables.
- Respect the sovereignty of local governments and communities by empowering CAP PTOs with the ability to independently adjust the funding formula and variable weights in order to align with the student and family needs of their membership.

## 7. Existing Programs

### Recognize that No Federal PSE Programs are Adequate PSE support for CAP students and Rectify this Immediately through the Establishment of a CAP-specific PSSSP

- Ensure CAP students have access to adequate PSE supports, both financial and non-financial by establishing a CAP-specific PSSSP.

## 8. Additional Supports

### Ensure Additional Supports are provided to CAP as part of its PSSSP to Establish and Maintain Partnerships with PSE Institutions

- Support CAP and its PTOs to establish and maintain critical partnerships with PSE institutions across Canada so that the unique needs of status and non-status off-reserve Indigenous peoples are served.
- Factor in supports to PSE institutions to hire, recruit, and retain self-identified Indigenous faculty and staff; provide cultural awareness and safety training for educators; indigenize all aspects of Western-dominated academic spaces; and establish internal Indigenous Student Centers.
- Work with PSE institutions, CAP students, and families to address and eliminate barriers to CAP student PSE access and success. Barriers include, although are not limited to racism, discrimination, and prejudice; distrust in education systems; intergenerational trauma due to family attendance to IRS; and financial unpreparedness.

## 9. Research

### Undertake Systematic and Thorough Review of Federal Data Gathering Instruments and Reporting Methods in Consultation with CAP and its PTOs in order to Improve the Availability of Quality of Information on Status and Non-Status Off-Reserve Indigenous Peoples Across Canada.

- Work collaboratively with CAP’s Research Department, Statistics Canada, and partners at the Political Accord level in order to improve the IPS and other surveys to better capture and include the extent and nature of off-reserve status and non-status, and off-reserve Indigenous peoples across Canada.
- Mobilize on research recommendations presented throughout this report to improve on reporting methods regarding the needs of CAP constituents; and enhance accessibility and functionality of the data:
  - Investigate the relationship between paternal attainment of Indigenous-led education, and the impacts it has on child(ren) PSE attainment.
  - Further explore the reasoning behind PSE program choice amongst off-reserve Indigenous students, by allowing students to elaborate on the contributing factors encouraging their PSE attainment.
  - Investigate PSE institutions *acceptability* (culturally safe/appropriate environments, free of racism) as it pertains to Indigenous peoples and quantify the associated impacts on Indigenous students’ academic achievement.
  - Determine the reasoning behind low attendance to activities provided by PSE institutions intended to support Indigenous students in PSE.
  - Investigate CAP student needs across provinces and territories in Canada and identify any areas of greater or lesser need.

## Policy Considerations

### SUMMARY OF FACTS

In April of 2016, the Supreme Court of Canada gave the decision that Métis and non-status Indians are the responsibility of the federal government and are Indians under *Section 91(24), Constitution Act, 1867*. As the sole organization reflecting the needs of off-reserve and non-status First Nations, Métis, and NunatuKavut Inuit peoples, CAP continues to hold the Government of Canada accountable to its fiduciary responsibilities towards non-status and off-reserve Indigenous peoples. Implementing the Daniels decision, as it has come to be known, includes an imperative for the Government of Canada to support CAP constituents in their pursuit of post-secondary education. As the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) clearly articulates, specifically in Articles 13-15, and Article 21, the right to education is inherent and must be respected.<sup>9</sup>

CAP students are under federal provision according to the *Constitution Act, 1867* and Supreme Court *Daniels Decision*. Sections 35 and 91 of the 1982 and 1867 Constitution Act, respectively, uphold and protect the rights and sovereignty of all status and non-status First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Indigenous peoples, and affirms the fiduciary relationship between all Indigenous peoples and the crown (*Constitution Acts, 1867 to 1982, s 35(1)(2), 91(24)*). As reiterated by the Daniels Decision, Canada has a fiduciary responsibility to ensure all status and non-status Indigenous peoples rights and treaty rights, inclusive of the rights to education. These rights are legally protected in Canadian policies and actions regardless of place of residence, on or off-reserve; it only remains for Canada to honor and uphold its own laws (CAP, n.d.; Daniels v. Canada, 2016). The 2018 Canada-CAP Political Accord reiterates this federal relationship, commitment, and responsibility to CAP constituents in specific regards to education. This Accord identifies post-secondary education as a Canada-CAP joint policy priority and states its shared commitment to create:

---

<sup>9</sup> UNDRIP: *Article 13.1* Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons; *Article 14.1* Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning; *Article 14.2* Indigenous individuals, particularly children, have the right to all levels and forms of education of the State without discrimination; *Article 14.3* States shall, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, take effective measures in order for indigenous individuals, particularly children, including those living outside their communities, to have access, when possible, to an education in their own culture and provided in their own language; *Article 15.1* Indigenous peoples have the right to the dignity and diversity of their cultures, traditions, histories and aspirations which shall be appropriately reflected in education and public information; *Article 21.1* Indigenous peoples have the right, without discrimination, to the improvement of their economic and social conditions, including, inter alia, in the areas of education, employment, vocational training and retraining, housing, sanitation, health and social security.

“Research plans and policies in a post-Daniels context to help determine needs and program and service gaps and **improve access to existing programs and services for non-Status and other off-reserve Indigenous peoples in such areas as housing, education...**”<sup>10</sup>

In their own words, the Government of Canada acknowledges that “providing access to quality education is fundamental to closing socioeconomic gaps and achieving substantive equality.”<sup>11</sup> To demonstrate this commitment, Canada has entered into education-specific agreements with the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), the Métis Nation Council (MNC), and Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK), ensuring immediate and ongoing funding to support post-secondary education enrollment, retention, and success among these three identity groups. As yet, no such agreement or funding allocations have been established that would provide for the hundreds of thousands of Indigenous people who are not eligible for membership or coverage from these three groups.<sup>12</sup>

Current federal programming and budget allocations continue to be distinctions-based, excluding CAP students. CAP’s constituents are denied funding for undergraduate, post-graduate, and university preparation programs. These and other educational programs must be created to ensure non-status and off-reserve Indigenous peoples have access to quality post-secondary education opportunities. This can be achieved through the creation of a CAP-specific PSSSP program. PSE funding for non-status and off-reserve Indigenous students must be guaranteed immediately and over time.

## **POSITION STATEMENT**

The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples maintains that:

- The interests of off-reserve Indigenous students and families must be represented in discussions taking place with governments on the support and reform of education. CAP will participate as a full partner in policy discussions with government and will continue to work to address systemic barriers to PSE facing Indigenous people living off reserve.
- CAP will work to ensure that Indigenous people living off-reserve and in urban centers have full access to supports around post-secondary education. CAP seeks to ensure equitable access to culturally appropriate and where possible, Indigenous-led post-secondary education programs and services for its constituents that are based on sound data and principles of recognition and respect.

To this end, in the area of post-secondary education, CAP is focused on six key areas:

- (i) Increasing the number of Indigenous students who are able to obtain a post-secondary education.
- (ii) Improving the socio-economic status of Indigenous students and families living off-reserve.
- (iii) Addressing issues of systemic racism in the post-secondary education system.

---

<sup>10</sup> Canada-CAP Political Accord (2018) p. 4.

<sup>11</sup> ISC, Report to Parliament (2020).

<sup>12</sup> To view strategies go to <https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1618248549300/1618248598327#a4>; <https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1578855031863/1578855057804>; <https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1578850688146/1578850715764>.

- (iv) Developing mechanisms that will enable the establishment of Indigenous-led post-secondary education programs to serve off-reserve Indigenous people.
- (v) Working with the federal government on the implementation of the *Daniels* decision by developing policies that ensure federal funding of off-reserve non-status and Métis post-secondary student support programs (PSSSP) and initiatives.
- (vi) Working with federal, provincial, and territorial governments on ways to address gaps in data regarding off-reserve non-status, Métis, and Inuit students.

## SUGGESTION

### 1. Establish a CAP-Canada Post-Secondary Education Sub-Accord Policy

It is recommended that the Government of Canada establish an Education Sub-Accord with the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples. Although the exact details of this sub-agreement should be determined in collaboration and consultation through the political accord process, it will broadly follow the stated aims captured in the recent education sub-agreement established between the Government of Canada and the Métis Nation of Canada.<sup>13</sup> The 2018 MNC Education Sub-Accord seeks to close the gap in PSE achievement between Métis citizens and non-Indigenous peoples and recommends that the Government of Canada make an investment of \$362 million over 10 years and \$40 million ongoing. The 2019 Federal Budget proposed supporting over 7,000 Métis Nation post-secondary students. These numbers should be considered in determining the parameters of a CAP-PSSSP. Based on these considerations, the following objectives are recommended for the CAP-Canada Education Sub-Accord:

#### 1.1 Objectives

- Contribute to closing the post-secondary educational gaps between the off-reserve Status and Non-Status Indians, NunatuKavut Inuit, and Métis students who CAP represents and non-Indigenous Canadians through the delivery of effective Post-Secondary Education supports and initiatives.
- Facilitate the negotiation of Post-Secondary Education agreements between Canada and CAP's Provincial and Territorial Organizations (PTOs) that will establish:
  - Predictable, sustainable, and flexible fiscal transfer mechanisms that support nation-to-nation, government-to-government relationships.
  - Administrative flexibility to ensure Agreement holders are fully positioned to respond to the needs of their members.
  - An accountability framework that is consistent with a nation-to-nation, government-to-government relationship; and,
  - A performance measurement framework based on the Logic Model to support post-secondary education for CAP students co-developed by the Government of Canada and the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples.

#### 1.2 Program Development

- Their designated affiliated institutions, shall provide Post-Secondary Education initiatives that address the distinct needs of off-reserve Status and Non-Status Indians, NunatuKavut Inuit, and Métis students.

---

<sup>13</sup> MNC Education Sub-Accord.

### 1.3 Financial Provisions

- The Government of Canada should make an investment of \_\_\$362\_\_ million over 10 years and \_\_\$40\_\_ million ongoing to support off-reserve Status and Non-Status Indians, NunatuKavut Inuit, and Métis students' post-secondary education.

### 1.4 Accountability & Performance Frameworks

- The CAP-Canada Post-Secondary Education Agreements should include a CAP accountability framework.
- The CAP accountability framework should set out performance measures, evaluation processes and reporting mechanisms to support the ongoing assessment of program impacts.

### 1.5 Evaluation of Accord

- The Parties will establish a Joint Evaluation Committee to monitor implementation of this Sub-Accord.
- The Parties will agree to undertake a periodic review of this Sub-Accord.



# Report Body

## Context

This report has been prepared by the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (CAP) as a foundational research document in order to better understand the post-secondary education (PSE) landscape for off-reserve Status and Non-Status Indians, NunatuKavut Inuit, and Métis students. The research was commissioned by the Post-Secondary Education Priority Area Working Group (PSE Table).

In line with the directives established by the 2018 CAP-CANADA Political Accord, the Post-Secondary Education (PSE) Priority Area Working Group was identified mutually between the Government of Canada and the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples. The PSE Working Group, comprised of representatives of CAP, Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) and Crown-Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC), aims to identify opportunities to address barriers and gaps in accessing PSE supports and culturally relevant programming for off-reserve Status and Non-Status Indians, NunatuKavut Inuit and Métis students.

The intention of this research has been to explore and identify opportunities to better leverage and expand access to existing PSE supports and programming for CAP students. Ultimately, the intended outcome of this Needs Assessment is to see the establishment of a CAP-CANADA Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP) and/or an Education Sub-Accord in order to serve the needs of all CAP constituents.

## Approach

To inform each question brief environmental scans are completed through the collection of both grey (policies, government reports/publication/presentations, etc.) and academic literature sources to identify relevant and key policies, programs, and best practices. As well, descriptive statistics are gathered from Statistics Canada national surveys such as the 2016 Census, and 2012/2017 cycles of the Aboriginal Peoples Survey, using data holds such as the Real Time Remote Access Centre, and Public Use Microdata Files. In later stages, advanced forms of bivariate analysis may be included to strengthen and give context to the findings. Discussions with CAP staff have helped to inform the questions, shape the search strategy, and give direction on where to locate key information.

Descriptive statistics were gathered from Statistics Canada national surveys such as the 2016 Census as well as the 2012 and 2017 cycles of the Aboriginal Peoples Survey, using data holds such as the Real Time Remote Access Centre, and Public Use Microdata Files. In later stages, advanced forms of bivariate analysis are included to strengthen and give context to the findings.

The report concludes with a series of evidence-based recommendations directly drawn from the research presented. These recommendations will serve as the basis for discussion at the PSE Table and will be foundational in the creation of a CAP-PSSSP. In addition, several recommendations for future research as well as for improving data gathering instruments are included.

## Limitations

It is important to understand the limitations of this study in order to read the research and draw conclusions that align with the current realities facing status and non-status off-reserve Indigenous peoples in Canada. Overarchingly, the scope and efficacy of this study is limited by a lack of data and access to it. There is a paucity of accurate and available demographic data for Indigenous people living off reserve, particularly those who are non-registered. This is in part due to the fact that such data instruments rely on self-identification and are inconsistently applied, failing most notably to account for the mobility patterns of this diverse population. This fact makes it difficult to clearly articulate the number of people that might need to be served in a particular area and complicates the advocacy process on behalf of CAP's constituency. Furthermore, the continued lack of recognition of CAP's constituency given the federal government's distinctions-based approach to recognizing rights and delivering services means that Indigenous people not registered under Canada's registry system or who do not fall into federally defined buckets of Métis or Inuit people are left out of government considerations during policy and program development. This persistent lack of data and lack of recognition likely results in the CAP constituency being the most underserved and vulnerable population in Canada.

### Data Restrictions

This research is limited to accessible secondary data resources with Indigenous identifiers included such as the Aboriginal Peoples Survey and Canadian Census of Population. These surveys however, pay little attention to PSE student needs beyond financial matters, and there are significant limitations with regards to reporting on specifically CAP's constituents. While the population of the APS is Indigenous peoples off-reserve, there is no distinction on whether respondents are specifically members of CAP, nor eligible to be considered under CAP's consistency. The findings of the APS are also subject to response rates of survey populations. For instance, regarding the 2017 APS, Statistics Canada reported that more than 43,000 individuals were selected to participate, and of those, approximately 32,330 respondents completed the survey for a response rate of 76%.

The Census avoids low response rates due to mandatory participation of Canadian citizens, however, it is at risk of under-reporting the number of Indigenous peoples living off-reserve. Current Census data collection practices fail to accommodate for seasonal or frequent mobility of Indigenous peoples travelling off-reserve for education, work, health-related or other concerns or commitments, resulting in significant under-reporting of much of CAP's constituency, namely, Indigenous populations living in urban centers (Rotondi et al. 2017).

Moreover, other national student and education surveys, such as the National Graduates Survey (NGS) and the Postsecondary Student Information System (PSIS) are not included in this report due their identity restrictions and limited access of available information. For example, the NGS does not include Indigenous identifiers in its publicly available data holds (e.g., Public Use Microdata Files). Rather, information from the NGS disaggregated according to Indigenous identity is only available under restricted access regulated by the federal government, thereby requiring budgeted time that would exceed the timelines of this needs assessment. Indigenous identifiers are available within the Statistics Canada Real Time Remote Access Centers, although the available NGS data is only as recent as 2010.

Similarly, the PSIS collects administrative data from PSE institutions across Canada on programs and courses offered, as well as students and their studies. The PSIS is excluded from this report as its public



access is also restricted. Although information is available from Statistics Canada upon request, the PSIS is administrative and does not provide descriptive information on students PSE experiences, deeming the survey less relevant to the focus of this report. For instance, the PSIS focuses on educational attainment; education, training, and learning; and fields of study; although it does not include encouraging or preventing factors to PSE success, funding sources, or the like.

To this end, as the APS provides the greatest hold of descriptive information pertaining to the purpose and scope of this needs assessment, it serves as the primary source of secondary data to inform this report. However, the various survey limitations and vast underreporting on CAP's constituency is of consistent concern across all national surveys in Canada and points to the need for improved survey development tailored to CAP constituents. This may be developed by or in partnership with Canada and CAP's research team and would be of considerable benefit for the internal functions of CAP's advocacy, policy, and research work.

### **Data Collection**

This report would significantly benefit from primary data collection directly involving CAP students. Such resources do not yet exist thus reducing the external validity and generalizability of the findings to CAP's constituency. This gap again emphasizes the need for improved research capacity within CAP and its associated PTOs to gather, analyze, and disseminate data using survey instruments developed internally, something Phase 2 research seeks to accomplish.

Future work may also strengthen the findings and recommendations through the completion of longitudinal or trend analysis of the many variables explored in the research. To accomplish this, a panel of off-reserve Indigenous students may be established, to better understand their PSE experiences, barriers, encouraging factors, and needs. As data would be collected over time, questions posed to panel participants may be lengthened with topical questions as they occur, allowing for the scope of analysis to evolve over time and remain current. Longitudinal analysis will allow for detection of trends, patterns, and gaps, providing greater insight for PSE program and support service development, more accurately and closely aligned with the needs of CAP students as they arise.

Moreover, as the APS is the primary source for secondary data informing this report, its demographic restrictions based on reporting of sex and gender are of particular concern. Currently, the APS does not collect data according to gender diverse groups, and it is restricted to binary subgroupings of females and males. This limits the relevance of the survey results as it pertains to Indigenous gender diverse, queer, and 2-Spirited peoples. Future survey development to improve inclusivity of all Indigenous peoples is highly recommended.

### **Data Analysis**

Of final consideration is the interpretation of the statistical findings. All Tables and Figures in this report, including bivariate logistic regression analysis, must be interpreted with caution as other impeding factors such as age, sex, mental and physical health, household income, geographic location, and social determinants of health are not controlled for in the statistical analysis. Future research may improve on this area through the completion of advanced multivariate analysis, to identify, strengthen, and understand statistical relationships between variables investigated in this report.

## Research Findings

As it stands today, there is currently no policy or program in Canada designated to administer post-secondary education (PSE) funding, resources, and/or supports specifically for CAP constituents – a glaring omission given that non-status and off-reserve Indigenous people make up approximately 80% of Indigenous peoples living in Canada. Indigenous students represented by CAP often fall between the cracks of federal PSE funding programs and associated distinctions-based eligibility criteria. Research continues to document and emphasize an annual increase in PSE enrollment among Indigenous students in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2017). Accordingly, 15% of Indigenous peoples (n=90,850 total Indigenous peoples)<sup>14</sup> living off-reserve reported attendance to PSE program(s) in 2017, a 1.7% increase from 13.3% (n=56,928) in 2012 (APS, 2017; 2012). As current predictions estimate up 80% of Indigenous peoples currently live off-reserve (CAP, 2019), compared to 62.4% in 2011, CAP’s constituency is also experiencing substantial growth. The increased PSE enrolment coupled with population growth, places further pressure on the need to develop a new Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP) that is CAP-designed and administered to ensure that all CAP students are given equal opportunity to access and succeed in their post-secondary educational endeavors.

The following sections address a series of eight questions and sub-questions crafted by the Canada-CAP Post-Secondary Education Working Group to outline the needs, barriers, and gaps of PSE supports for CAP’s constituency. Taken together, these questions provide a framework for this needs assessment and cover the following eight topics:

1. The number of students represented by CAP.
2. Financial and non-financial factors encouraging CAP constituents to pursue PSE, disincentives and barriers limiting PSE access, and necessary supports/tools required.
3. What PSE success looks like for CAP constituents.
4. A comprehensive overview of the needs of CAP students.
5. The number of CAP students requiring funding and at what levels.
6. Insights on distribution mechanisms and formulas to administer PSE funding to CAP students.
7. Existing federal PSE support programs CAP constituents have access to, their associated barriers, and coverage of financial and non-financial needs of CAP students.
8. The existing need for post-secondary support beyond direct student support (i.e., for post-secondary institutions and educators).

Each of the above topics and the relevant literatures which inform answers to the PSE Working Group’s questions are discussed in the sections that follow. This report concludes with a series of recommendations drawn from key findings from the research presented here. A description of study limitations and considerations for future research are also included. Both point to the persistent paucity of data on non-status and off-reserve Indigenous peoples and the need to establish primary data collection mechanisms for use and administration by CAP and associated PTOs.

---

<sup>14</sup> “n” in this context refers to the total number of the population in question. E.g., “n=90,850” is in reference to 90,850 Indigenous students total.

## 1. CAP Students

### 1.1 Who are students represented by CAP?

The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples represents and advocates on behalf status and non-status First Nations, Métis, and NunatuKavut Inuit living off-reserve across Canada. All students under this constituency are represented by CAP. An estimate of students with eligibility to be represented by CAP can be calculated based on estimates of current PSE school attendance and secondary school completion gathered by the 2017 Aboriginal Peoples Survey. This produces a number between 90,000 to over 150,000 CAP students, however, the actual number of CAP students is most certainly much higher based on the following considerations:

It is important to bear in mind the limitations of the APS in effectively capturing CAP constituents.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, the data analyzed in this section is based on those Indigenous people who reported attending PSE and did not capture those who may wish to attend PSE, but who were prevented from doing so due to financial and non-financial barriers. And finally, the off-reserve Indigenous population as well as enrollment in PSE has grown significantly since 2017. Non-status and off-reserve Indigenous populations continues to grow. It is reasonable therefore to assume that the number of students represented by CAP is significantly higher as well.

---

*Approximately 90,000 – 150,000 students represented by CAP who are currently not being supported in their PSE journeys stand to benefit from a CAP PSSSP*

---

### 1.2 What is the evidence-base supporting the estimates of the number of students?

**Current Students:** In the 2017 APS, 15% (n=90,850) of Indigenous peoples living off-reserve reported attending PSE. Of this population, 33.0% were status First Nation, 17.6% non-status, 46% Métis, and 2.5% Inuit. Figure 1 details the type of post-secondary certificate, diploma, or degree program that off-reserve Indigenous students were enrolled in. It demonstrates that bachelor's degrees are the most common PSE pursued by off-reserve Indigenous students (36%), followed by college and other non-university diploma programs (29%).

---

<sup>15</sup> Refer to the Limitations section of this report.

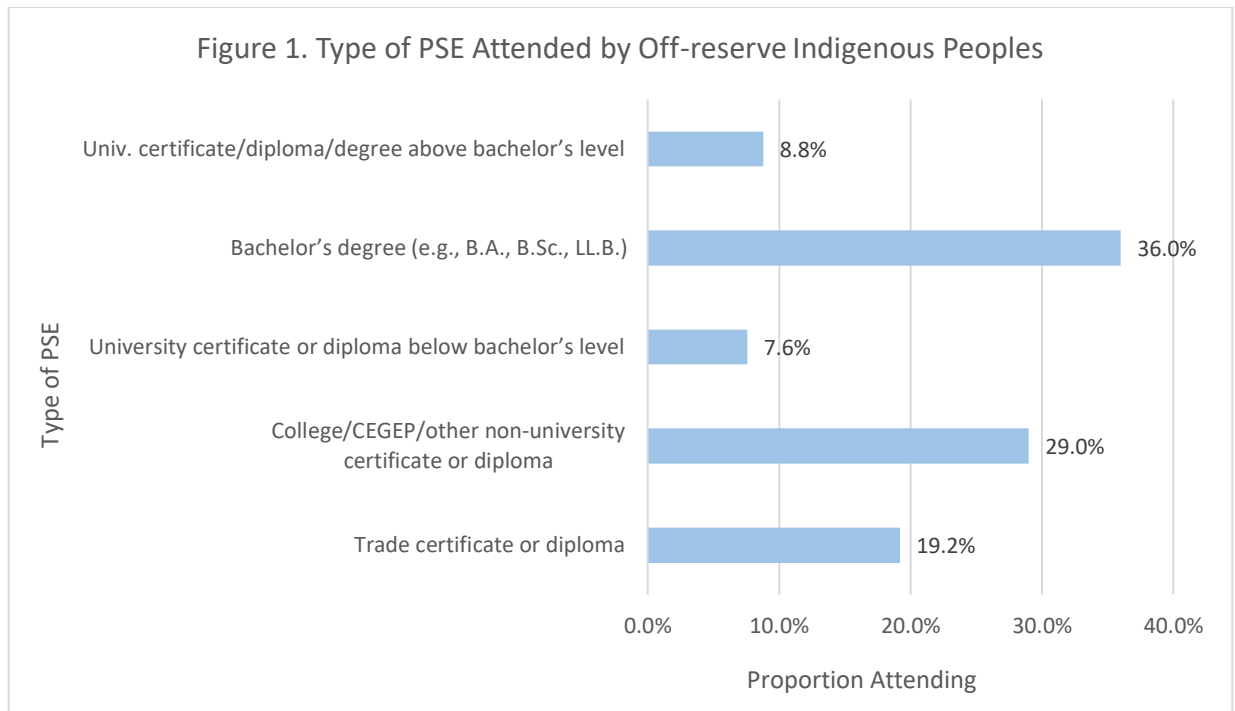


Figure 1 data collected from Aboriginal Peoples Survey 2017

**Past Education Attainment:** In 2017, 16.5% (n=150,650) of Indigenous students living off-reserve completed their high school diploma. From this, it can be extrapolated that in 2017, at least 150,650 students were poised to pursue post-secondary education thus making these students eligible to receive funding support under a CAP PSSSP program.

Understanding past educational attainment at various levels may also help gain a better idea of how many CAP students are pursuing PSE. Based on the data represented in Figure 2, one may expect up to 300,000 off-reserve students to be attending PSE who have eligibility for CAP PSE support.

As shown in Figure 2, 35% (n=323,750) of Indigenous peoples off-reserve completed a post-secondary certificate or diploma below the bachelor level; while 18.4% (n=168,350) completed some PSE; 8.4% (n=76,600) completed a bachelor's certificate, degree, or diploma; and 3.1% (n=28,300) completed a university certificate, diploma, or degree above the bachelor's level. The results show a greater proportion of Métis and status First Nations peoples involved in higher levels of education. Furthermore, attainment at all education levels for Métis and status First Nations students exceeds that of all other Indigenous identity groups. This is interesting to note because Métis and status First Nations groups receive dedicated federal funding in order to support their PSE attainment. The fact that they are leading in PSE attainment demonstrates the importance of this kind of financial support and indicates the need to provide such PSSSP to non-status Indigenous peoples who CAP represents.

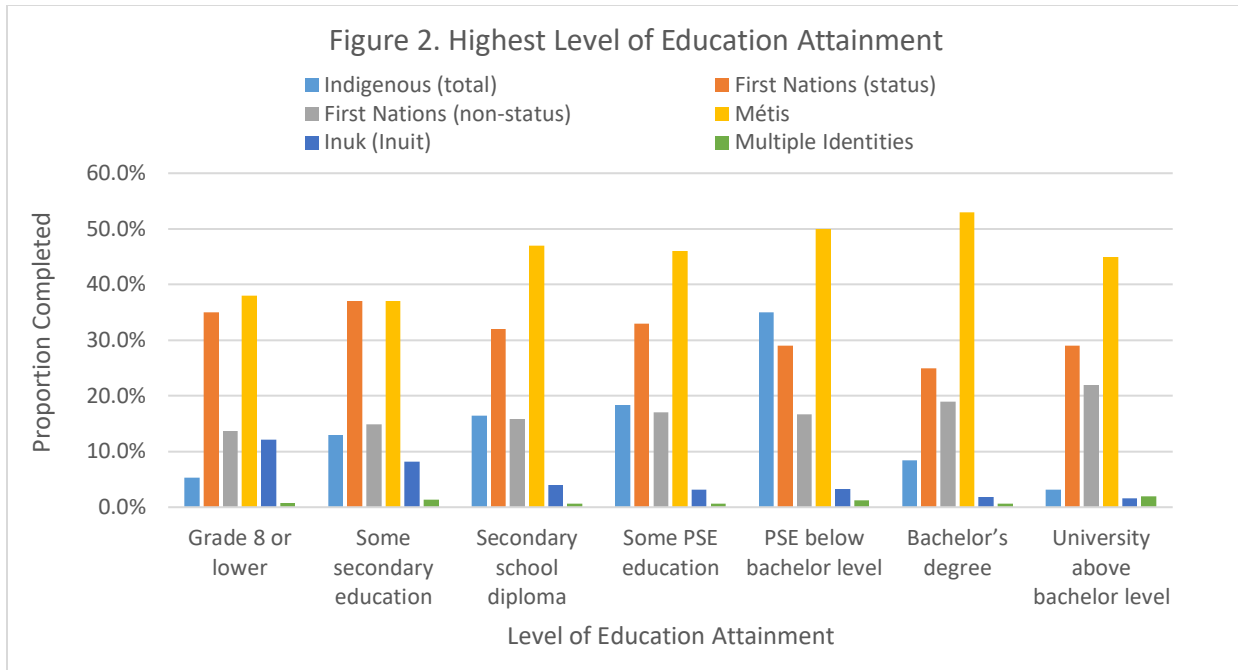


Figure 2 data collected from Aboriginal Peoples Survey 2017

### 1.2.2 Calculating CAP Constituency Numbers

#### Non-status Indians

CAP was originally formed to represent the interests of non-Status Indians and Métis. The population of Non-Status Indians can be calculated nationally and for provinces, territories, regions etc. from Census data. The most recent data available is from the 2016 Census. Indigenous population data for the 2021 Census will be released in September 2022.

#### Métis

Determining the size of the CAP Métis constituency currently cannot be done using only Census data. The CAP Métis constituency includes those who self-identify as Métis, or who are of mixed blood descent, but excludes individuals that are members of MNC provincial affiliates or the Métis Settlements in Alberta. The size of the CAP Métis constituency could be calculated using the total Census Métis population and subtracting the membership of the MNC provincial affiliates, the MMF (no longer affiliated with the MNC) and the Métis Settlements.

#### Indians living off-reserve

Band members that live off-reserve have had great difficulty accessing band programs and services. In the mid 1970's, off-reserve band members lobbied CAP for inclusion, and CAP's mandate was expanded. Many bands have on-reserve residency criteria to access programs and services (i.e., skills training, PSE, economic development funding). Off-reserve band members may also have varying access to programs and services depending on their connection to the reserve, and family or clan ties. Furthermore, despite Corbiere, many non-resident band members cannot vote in band elections. The CAP Corbiere Commission Report states "...in the majority of bands across the country, non-resident band members have no say in

the selection of the band council.” Off-reserve band members have long turned to CAP to represent their issues and concerns, many of which are similar to non-status Indians.

Determining the population of First Nations band members living off-reserve that fall within the CAP constituency cannot be accomplished using Census data. Varying definitions are used to calculate the percentage of non-resident versus resident band members. Of the non-resident population their connection to the band, family/clan ties, and eligibility criteria for band programs and services would need to be determined for each band to calculate the population that would fall under the CAP constituency. Estimates or ranges can still be calculated to determine the potential size of this segment of the CAP constituency.

### Bill C-31 Indians

Over 120,000 people were registered as Indians under the Indian Act as a result of Bill C-31. Bands that adopted a membership code (prior to April 17, 1987) were able to exclude all those persons who had been reinstated since April 17, 1985. This resulted in a large population of status Indians who could not access band programs or services, nor could they vote in band elections. Bands acceptance of Indigenous people gaining or regaining status under Bill C-31 varied widely, as did their ability to access programs and services. In addition, the eligibility rules of Bill C-31 also excluded many people of Indian ancestry from being recognized as Indians under the Indian Act.

### Identity vs. Ancestry

1.7 million people in Canada reported having Aboriginal ancestry. Approximately 1.2 million people in Canada identified as being Aboriginal. The Aboriginal identity questions was first asked in the 1986 census. Since that time government departments have used the identity data almost exclusively for program and policy purposes.

What percentage of the almost half million “ancestry but not identity” population are experiencing the same socio-demographic conditions as the identity population? Even though they may not have “identified” as Indigenous on the Census, they still consider themselves to have Indigenous ancestry, and would be eligible to apply to CAP for support.

### Out of Province

Out of province or Aboriginal people not living in their traditional territory have had great difficulty accessing programs and services. For example, Métis people living in the Western provinces will not be able to access employment programs from Métis, Indian or Tribal organizations. In many cases they must be a member of the Aboriginal organization to access employment programs and services. Most Indigenous organizations do not provide “status blind” services, and most Indigenous people living out of province, or not in their traditional territory, have great difficulty accessing programs and services.

### General Band List

#### Bill C-31

created a new “class” of Indian - those entitled to status, but not membership in a band. Formerly, being a band member and having status were intertwined. Under Bill C-31, with custom membership codes, many individuals entitled to status were denied band membership. This created a new “class” of Indian,

commonly called “General Band List” Indians. These individuals cannot access band programs and services and are not represented through First Nations bands or NIO’s. INAC may be able to provide the number of status Indians on the general band list (i.e., individuals who have status but are not members of a band).

### Bill C-3

Approximately 40,000 individuals are estimated to become eligible for status under Bill C-3.<sup>16</sup> Some individuals will gain band membership with their status and will have varying access to band programs and services, depending on band policy regarding non-resident members. Those not gaining band membership will not have access to band programs and services. Data regarding the number of persons gaining, or not gaining band membership may be held by ISC. The proportion of off-reserve band members who do not have access to band programs and services would be a challenge to determine (i.e., review of band policies regarding off-reserve members).

### Bill S-3

Approximately 60,000 individuals will be entitled to registration under S-3.<sup>17</sup> These individuals will have varying access to band membership, and off-reserve band members will have varying access to band programs and services.

## 2. Access

---

*According to APS data, whereas 79 % of Métis and status First Nations students receive government funding to support their PSE, only 20 % of non-status First Nations and Inuit access such funding.*

---

### *2.1 What financial factors encourage CAP constituents to pursue post-secondary education?*

According to APS data, financial supports such as scholarships, grants, and bursaries are the most common funding source to be used by CAP constituents to support their PSE. As Figure 3 demonstrates, 59% of off-reserve Indigenous students utilize government supports to fund their PSE, while the remaining 41% of students rely on other financial factors such as personal savings, employment, and non-governmental funding sources.

---

<sup>16</sup> Mclvor case - <https://www.scc-csc.ca/case-dossier/info/sum-som-eng.aspx?cas=33201>.

<sup>17</sup> Descheneaux case - <https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1467214955663/1572460311596>.

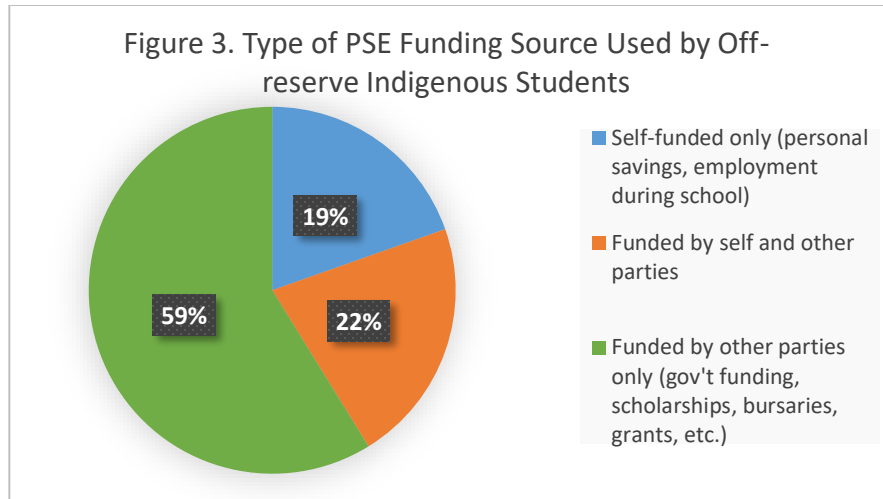


Figure 3 data collected from Aboriginal Peoples Survey 2017

Figure 4 further deconstructs this information by showing which funding source is most often used by each Indigenous identity group. This data reveal that Métis students are most likely to self-fund their PSE, as well as to receive funding from other parties such as government sources. Meanwhile, status First Nations students are most likely to fund their PSE only through the support of other parties. The proportional differences of funding recipients across Indigenous identity groups uncovers inequities in access to and distribution of PSE funding from non-personal sources such as government scholarships and bursaries. Métis and status First Nations make up to 79% of students receiving government funds, while non-status First Nations and Inuit students make up less than 20% of funding recipients. Section 7.1 further investigates such inequities in access to government funding, by reviewing associated program eligibility criteria.

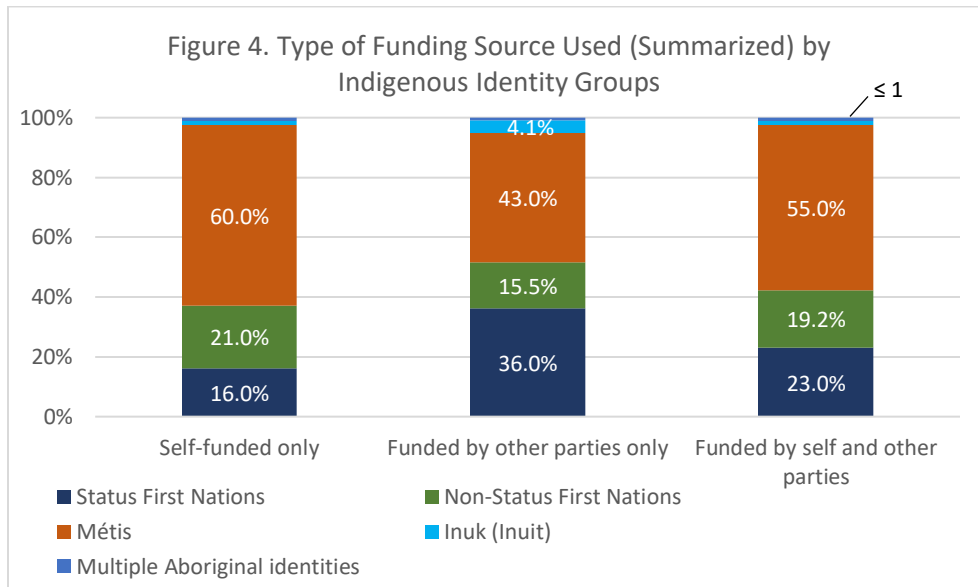


Figure 4 data collected from Aboriginal Peoples Survey 2017

In looking at the specific types of financial sources, evidence suggests that Indigenous students use several different sources to fund their PSE. As Figure 5 illustrates, the most frequently cited funding source for



First Nations and Métis students is their “own savings or working while going to school”; while grants, bursaries, or scholarships are equally popular among all Indigenous students. Government-administered student loans are also found to be a common source of PSE funding, supporting up to 38% of First Nations, 45% of Métis, and 24% of Inuit students.

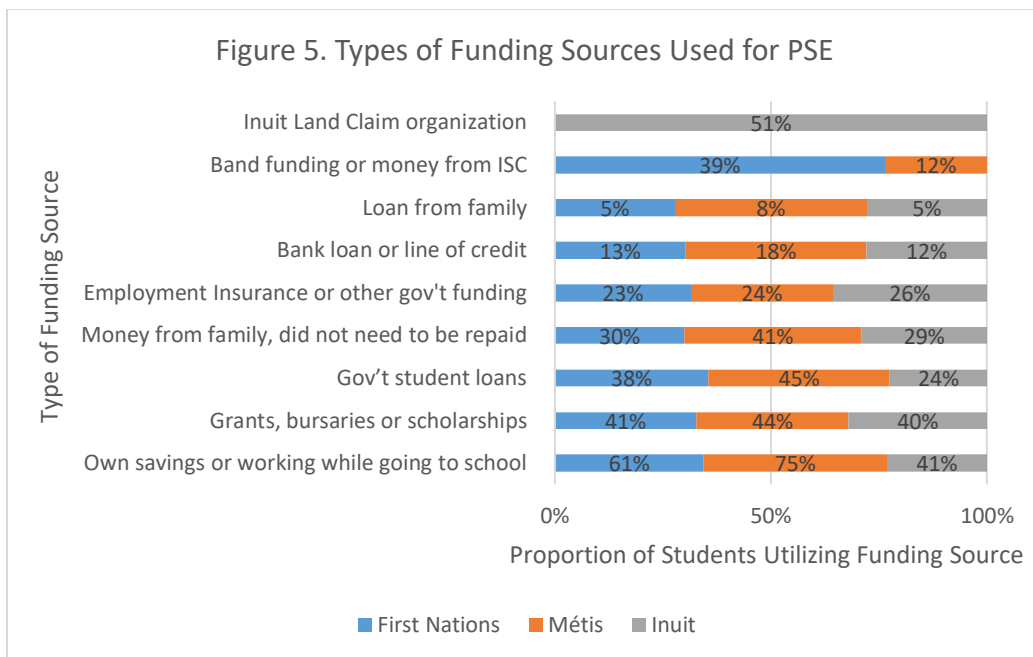


Figure 5 data collected from Aboriginal Peoples Survey 2017

The findings presented in Figure 5 provide further evidence of the proportion of Indigenous students who stand to benefit from a CAP PSSSP. As 51% of Inuit students receive PSE funding from Inuit Land Claim Organizations, while 39% of First Nations and 12% of Métis students receive funding from First Nation Band organizations and/or Indigenous Services Canada, it can be concluded that the remaining proportions are eligible for CAP funding. **Thus, up to 49% of Inuit students, 61% of First Nations, and 88% of Métis students may be eligible for CAP-administered PSSSP funding pools.**<sup>18</sup> This logic stems from the Government of Canada’s current approach to administer PSE funds and supports based on distinctive Indigenous identity groups falling under Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK), Assembly of First Nations (AFN), or Métis National Councils (MNC). Each organization provides services to Inuit living in Inuit Nunangat, status First Nations, and Métis peoples respectively. This federal approach is widely recognized as taking *distinctions-based approach* to administer resources to Indigenous peoples. In accordance to this approach, CAP administered PSSSP would therefore support the 49% of Inuit, 61% of First Nations, and 88% of Métis students currently unsponsored by ITK, ISC, and/or MNC funding sources.

## 2.2 What non-financial factors encourage CAP constituents to pursue post-secondary education?

<sup>18</sup> Calculations determined by the following: 1 - 51% of Inuit students receiving funding from Inuit Land Claim Organizations = 49% of eligible Inuit students for CAP PSSSP funding; 1 - 39% of First Nations students receiving funding from First Nation Band organizations and/or Indigenous Services Canada = 61% of eligible First Nations students; and 1 - 12% of Métis students receiving funding from First Nation Band organizations and/or Indigenous Services Canada = 88% of eligible Métis students.

There are three types of non-financial factors encouraging CAP constituents to pursue PSE: family-oriented factors, social factors, and individual or more personal factors. Each of these factors are defined and described below.

### **Family-Oriented Factors**

Family-oriented factors such as parental influence and involvement in school play a key role in encouraging CAP students to pursue PSE. Table 1 demonstrates the statistical relationship between assorted family-oriented factors (as well as social) and their predictability on Indigenous students' attendance to PSE.<sup>19</sup>

- **Parental Educational Attainment:** As Table 1 indicates, the odds of Indigenous students attending PSE are about 5.16-6.00 times higher if their parents have completed some form of PSE degree, diploma, or certificate (6.00 times higher for Mother; 5.16 for Father).<sup>20</sup> Comparably, the odds of PSE attendance drop to 3.72-4.22 times higher if parents have only completed secondary school (high school). The odds of PSE attendance continue to increase substantially in relation to the level of parent/guardian educational attainment. These findings emphasize the critical role and influence parents play in encouraging academic achievement in Indigenous students.

In reading the information below, it is important to note that while parental education attainment improves the odds of PSE attendance for Indigenous students, the available data on parental education only tells a fraction of the story, as it fails to capture the many avenues Indigenous peoples may attain education. The 2012 APS measures educational attainment above the secondary level using “some post-secondary” and “post-secondary certificate, diploma, or degree” categories, failing to recognize parental attainment of Indigenous-based knowledge and education certificates, degrees, or diplomas. As a result, the 2012 APS survey design is biased in its exclusion of different forms of Indigenous higher education. Such Indigenous education may stem from informal or formal establishments or years of community-based experiences, often not recognized by Western-based academic institutions.<sup>21</sup> These gaps in recognition limit our understanding on the types of parental education to most effectively encourage Indigenous students to pursue PSE. Further research and improved survey design of future data instruments are needed in order to understand whether exposure to Indigenous knowledge as well as culture and language education is a significant factor in PSE attainment for Indigenous students.

---

<sup>19</sup> The *odds ratio* ( $Exp(B)$ ) determined by logistic regression analysis indicates how much the odds of attending PSE will change, depending on a change in or exposure to the predictor variables i.e., family-oriented and social factors (Healey et al. 2019).

<sup>20</sup> Statistical analysis to quantify the relationship between PSE attendance and parental education is restricted to binary analysis of only female and male sexes and therefore does not encompass the gender diversity CAP constituents. The APS measures parental education according to maternal and paternal attainment, excluding gender diverse identities. Despite limitations, the available data confirms the literature which finds that a strong parental influence on PSE attendance is statistically significant. It is for this reason that we have chosen to include this data.

<sup>21</sup> Stagg-Peterson et al. (2019).

Table 1. Social Factors Predicting PSE Attendance<sup>22</sup>

	B	Std. Error	Exp(B)	Sig.
<b>Education Attainment of Parent/Guardian (Mother)</b>				
Less than secondary school completed	1.11	0.02	3.04	0.00
Secondary school completed	1.44	0.02	4.22	0.00
Some PSE	1.59	0.02	4.89	0.00
PSE completed	1.79	0.01	6.00	0.00
<b>Educational Attainment of Parent/Guardian (Father)</b>				
Less than secondary school completed	0.96	0.01	2.60	0.00
Secondary school completed	1.31	0.01	3.72	0.00
Some PSE	1.43	0.02	4.18	0.00
PSE completed	1.64	0.01	5.16	0.00
Parents Engaged in Education	0.62	0.01	1.86	0.00
Parents Involved in School	0.82	0.01	2.26	0.00
Indigenous Language/cultural Programming Offered at School	0.34	0.01	1.40	0.00

- Parental Engagement and Involvement:** Parental engagement in education and involvement in school are also shown to impact their child’s experiences with education. The 2012 APS describes engagement as “speaking to, corresponding with, or visiting student’s teacher (including parent-teacher interviews); visiting student’s class; checking or helping with student’s homework; reading aloud to student and/or listening to student read or attempt to read aloud (Grades 1 to 6 only)”; and describes involvement with schools as “attending a school event in which the student participated; volunteering in student’s class or helping with a class event; helping elsewhere in the school such as in the library or computer room; participating in fundraising for the school; participating in other school activities.” As such, with parental engagement or involvement in their child’s education and school community, students have 1.86- and 2.26-times greater odds of attending PSE.
- Parental Trust with Education Systems:** Important to note is the trust relationship between families, teachers, and academic institutions, as a key determinant of parental involvement in education systems. Past and current colonial policies such as the Indian Residential School system and the *Indian Act* have sought to systemically rid Indigenous children and youth of their cultures, languages, and worldviews.<sup>23</sup> For over a century Indigenous children and youth were sent to IRS to “take the Indian out of the child,”<sup>24</sup> a process to only end in 1996. Scholars suggest the IRS

<sup>22</sup> Sample is derived from the 2012 APS and is restricted to Indigenous peoples (status and non-status First Nations, Métis, Inuit) aged less than 45 who are currently attending elementary or high school or who are high school leavers or completers. The APS 2012 was used as the APS 2017 does not include the variables of interest explored in Table 1.

<sup>23</sup> Mashford-Pringle, (2011).

<sup>24</sup> Fine, (2015).

system was more of labour camp of sorts, compared to source of public education.<sup>25</sup> Education institutions have thus become sites of cultural assimilation, harm, and a reminder of trauma. The impacts of IRS have led many Indigenous families to see little value in PSE, resulting in a fundamental lack of trust in the PSE system as a whole.<sup>26</sup> True and authentic relationships must be established and nurtured to address these challenges and rebuild generations of trust with Indigenous families.<sup>27</sup> To this, scholars advise educational institutions to encourage families to participate in the wider school community, as well as provide social supports to focus on the whole child, inclusive of the needs of their families.<sup>28</sup>

- **A Child's Grit and Perseverance:** A final family-oriented factor, although not captured by the APS, is what academics have described as a child's "grit" and the impact this quality has on encouraging PSE attendance.<sup>29</sup> Young et al. (2017) describe "grit" as a child's upbringing, measured and influenced by the nourishment of their cultural identity. Family and community relationships, bonds, communication, and support systems, will all help to determine their grit, which is also known as their "perseverance of effort and consistency of interest."<sup>30</sup> Perseverance and interest are strong indicators of a child's ability to exercise resilience and overcome challenges as they pursue long-term goals.<sup>31</sup> Both grit and resilience, shaped by the student's upbringing and family/community bonds, lead to greater education outcomes in the form of overall academic achievement and retention of PSE.<sup>32</sup>

## Social Factors

- **Peer Mentorship Programs:** Literature suggests social factors such as social support services and peer-mentorship programs, improve Indigenous student's success and encouragement to pursue higher education.<sup>33</sup> In an evaluation of an afterschool program for secondary school students, researchers found programming tailored to the needs and priorities of Indigenous student, and inclusive of Indigenous cultural teachings to be particularly successful in improving graduation rates and post-secondary enrolment.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, Rawana et al. (2015) evaluated a peer mentorship program for Indigenous students currently attending a Canadian university. Their findings emphasized the importance of supporting the mental and spiritual health of Indigenous students through programming and administration of culturally appropriate social and health services to improve education outcomes. An increased sense of belonging to the school community was shown to foster greater academic achievements and increased PSE attendance.<sup>35</sup> Likewise, Greenfield (2020) investigated the types of social support services PSE staff and faculty recommend in order to encourage the academic success of Indigenous students. The researchers

---

<sup>25</sup> Stonechild, (2006).

<sup>26</sup> Nelson et al. (2018).

<sup>27</sup> Oskineegish, 2015; Murray-Orr & Mitton-Kukner, (2017).

<sup>28</sup> Nelson et al., (2018).

<sup>29</sup> Duckworth, (2013).

<sup>30</sup> Christopoulou et al. (2018), p. 2952.

<sup>31</sup> Young et al. (2017).

<sup>32</sup> Christopoulou et al. (2018); Nelson et al., (2018).

<sup>33</sup> ESDC, (2019b); Rawana et al., (2015); Pickrell, (2008).

<sup>34</sup> ESDC, (2019b).

<sup>35</sup> Rawana et al., (2015); Greenfield, (2020).

found that prioritizing a sense of belonging in the school community for Indigenous students was a salient recommendation.

- **Indigenous Content in School Curriculum:** Research evidence shows that incorporating Indigenous cultural teachings and content into secondary schools and post-secondary preparation programs has influential characteristics to secondary school achievement and PSE preparedness among Indigenous students (Pickrell, 2008). Greenfield (2020) emphasizes this need for Indigenous content to be incorporated into PSE curricula, as their research describes PSE faculty and staff perspectives on the associated positive impact on student success. A shift in the contextual focus of both secondary and post-secondary curricula to infuse and incorporate Indigenous content (cultures, histories, teachings, worldviews) into Eurocentric material improves the accessibility of the content for all students (Korteweg & Fiddler, 2018); thereby also improving opportunities for students to engage with their learning. Referring again to Table 1 above, the inclusion of Indigenous language and cultural programming in secondary schools improves the odds of student PSE attendance by 40%.<sup>36</sup> Nelson et al. (2018) describe such actions as the indigenization of education systems i.e., the process of “adding Indigenous content to course material, enhancing the educational environment, and ensuring that Indigenous people were employed by educational institutions” (p. 73). Indigenization of both secondary and PSE curricula, coupled with securing Indigenous role models and educators in teaching positions, evidently promotes improved academic success and performance for all students (Nelson et al. 2018).
- **Cultural Identity:** Lastly, it has been demonstrated that a strong sense of cultural identity can foster academic achievement in Indigenous students. In their research on barriers and facilitators to PSE success, Nelson et al. (2019) found that “students who identified as having a weak cultural connection and identity faced significant barriers to success...ethnic identity provided a sense of comfort and belonging” (p. 73). Researchers cautioned the best mode to enhance sense of cultural identity and belonging is to do so in a culturally safe environment and one that supports Indigenization of education systems (Nelson et al. 2018).

### Individual Factors

- **Student’s Interest in Furthering Their Education:** Individual factors play a role in encouraging Indigenous students to pursue PSE. In 2017, 32.6% (n=298,607) of Indigenous peoples living off-reserve reported an interest in completing some form of PSE, although have not been able to for a number of reasons (barriers to PSE are discussed in the following section). Figure 6 illustrates the types of PSE respondents were interested in pursuing, according to various age groups ranging from 15-18 years to 55+.

---

<sup>36</sup> An alternative method to expressing odd ratios as a percentage e.g.,  $(1.4-1.0)*100 = 40\%$

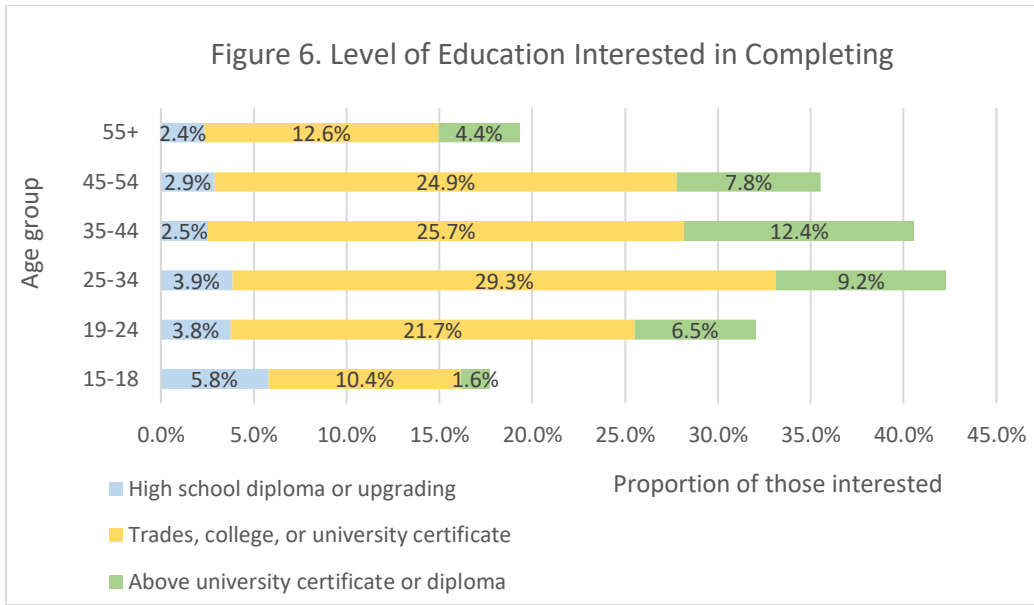


Figure 6 data collected from Aboriginal Peoples Survey 2017

A demonstration of personal interest in PSE according to wide range of age groups, may help to determine appropriate age demographics, as well as the specific type of PSE CAP-PSSSP promotional efforts should target. According to the 2017 APS, across all age groups indicated in Figure 6, pursuing trades, college, or a university certificate was of most interest for Indigenous peoples, especially those aged 25-34. Indigenous peoples aged 35-44 were the most interested in completing education above a university certificate or diploma. Overall, the findings suggest there is great demand among off-reserve Indigenous students to attend post-graduate degree programs (e.g., PhD, MSc, MA, etc.), specifically among the 25-44 age demographic.

Indigenous student's personal reason(s) for enrolling in PSE programs also provide insight into the underlining factors encouraging PSE education. According to the 2017 APS, such personal reasons vary across age groups and touch on program length, desire to help community, reputation of the program, among many others. Figure 7 details this information.

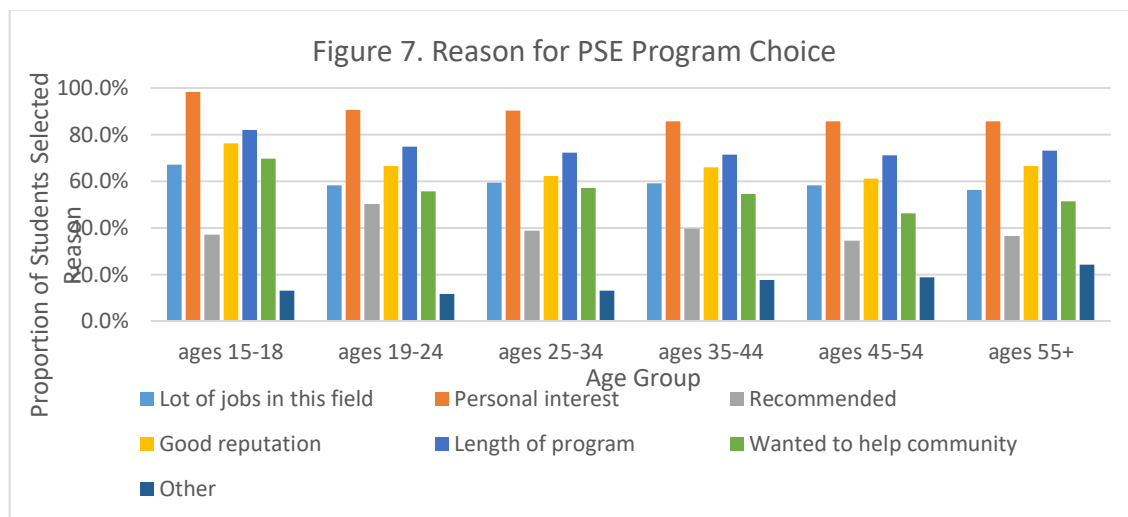


Figure 7 data collected from Aboriginal Peoples Survey 2017

The most popular reason for choosing a specific PSE program for all age groups was personal interest, followed by program length, and good reputation of the PSE program/school. Of those aged 15-18, 69.7% chose 'wanting to help community' and 67.1% chose 'lots of jobs in [the programs] field' as the next most influential reasons to selecting their PSE program. Meanwhile, all other age groups selected 'lots of jobs in [the programs] field' more often than 'wanting to help community'. Of those aged 19-24, 50.3% chose their PSE program because it was recommended, while less than 40% of all other age groups selected this reason. Finally, Indigenous students aged 55+ were the only age group to have over 20% (24.1%) select 'other' as influencing their program choice, indicating a need to further investigate their reasoning, and any other possible contributing factors which may encourage PSE attainment.<sup>37</sup>

### **2.3 What factors provide disincentives/barriers that limit access of students to PSE?**

**Barriers to Furthering Education:** Barriers to accessing PSE as well as disincentives to pursuing PSE vary according to the *type* of access impacted. This report briefly looks at three different types of access<sup>38</sup> to PSE, to foster a comprehensive understanding on where barriers may reside and how CAP-PSSSP supportive efforts may be tailored to address each.

- Accessibility: physical access, geographic location, and local proximity to PSE.
- Availability: adequate physical, financial, and human resources to support sufficient PSE programming and suitability for students.
- Acceptability: cultural safety and appropriateness of PSE institutions as it pertains to Indigenous cultures, perspectives, and worldviews, and ensuring education is delivered free of racism and prejudice.

---

*According to the most recent APS, 32.6% (n=298,607) of Indigenous peoples living off-reserve reported an interest in completing some form of PSE but have not been able to do so due to a number of barriers.*

---

In the 2017 APS, Indigenous peoples living off-reserve were asked to select key barriers which prevented them from furthering their education, whether it was to pursue secondary, post-secondary, graduate, trades, college, or any other type of further education. The findings suggest *accessibility* issues to be key barriers for both female and male Indigenous peoples, as 58% (n=4550) of female and 42% (n=3300) of male Indigenous peoples stated "would have to move/PSE not available" as the main reason preventing their educational journey. Meanwhile, 39% (n=54,800) of males and 61% (n=87,300) of females reported *availability* issues, claiming the unaffordable nature of education as a main barrier to their education

---

<sup>37</sup> Reasons regarding family influences are surprisingly not included in the available options in the APS, which limits research knowledge and understanding of the parental impact to pursue PSE. Further research to capture and quantify parental-based encouraging factors is recommended.

<sup>38</sup> The three types of access (accessibility, availability, acceptability) described in this report, are an adaptation of the types of access described by NCCIH (2019) as impacting equitable access to health services. Refer to the following for more information: National Collaborating Centre for Indigenous Health (2019) *Access to health services as a social determinant of First Nations, Inuit and Métis health*. Prince George, BC: National Collaborating Centre for Indigenous Health.

success. Aspects under *acceptability* (e.g., culturally safe/appropriate, free of racism) were not provided as reasons to select under the APS (2017), and therefore may not be statistically captured. However, 49% (n=11,450) of male and 51% (n=11,850) of female Indigenous peoples selected “other” reasons unspecified as limiting their education attainment. Thus, one may suspect issues surrounding acceptability may fall under the “other category”. Additional investigation is warranted to explore and clarify the *acceptability* element of access and its associated impacts on Indigenous people’s higher education attainment. Other barriers to pursuing higher education are detailed in Figure 8.

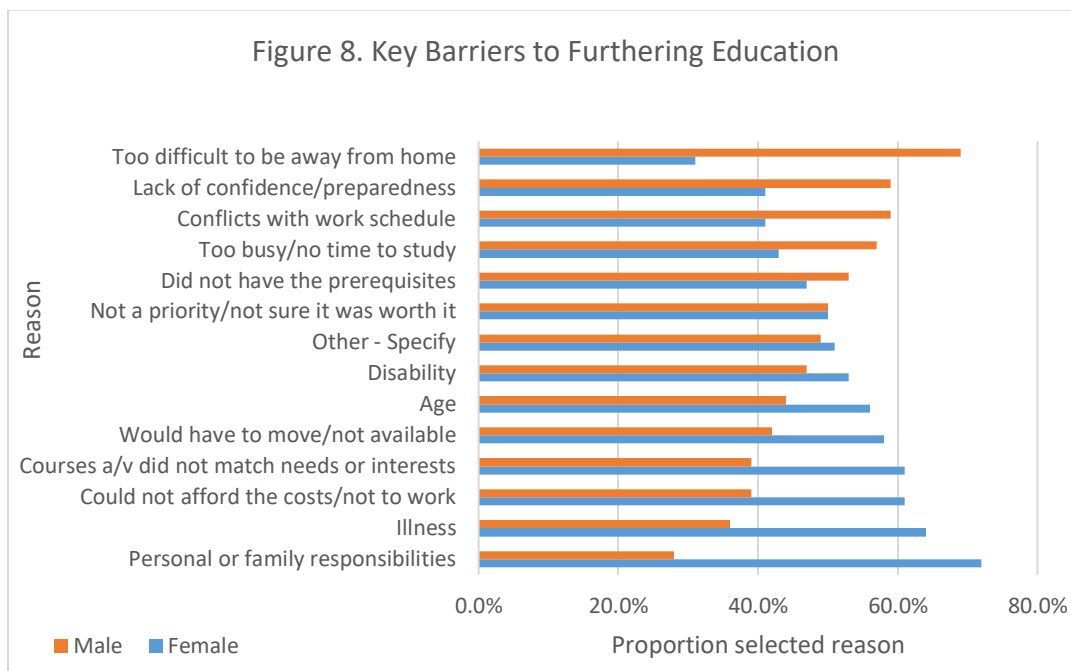


Figure 8 data collected from Aboriginal Peoples Survey 2017.<sup>39</sup>

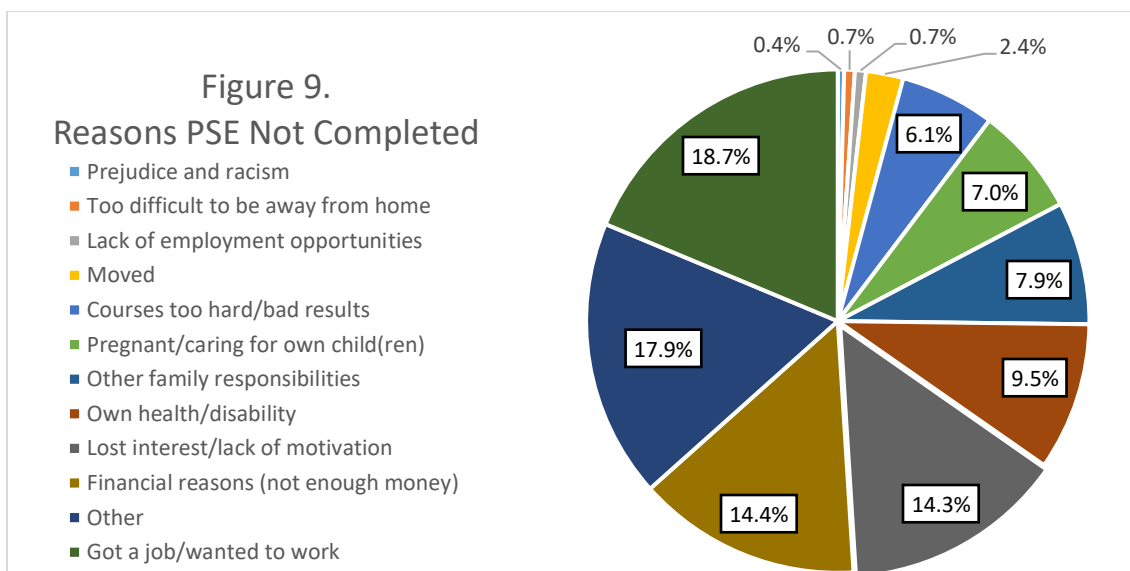
There are significant differences in the reported barriers to furthering education, according to sex. Females were more likely to cite “personal or family responsibilities”, “illness”, “could not afford the costs/not to work”, and “courses available did not match needs or interests” as main barriers preventing their education attainment, compared to their male counterparts. Males more often reported “too difficult to be away from home”, “lack of confidence/preparedness”, “conflicts with work schedule” and “too busy/no time to study” as main barriers. Both 53% of male and 47% of female Indigenous students report not having the prerequisites as a main reason preventing their education attainment. These findings echo that of Nelson et al. (2018), whose qualitative research found academic/educational preparedness to be a common barrier to Indigenous student’s PSE success. Both sexes are equally likely to cite “not a priority/not sure it was worth it” as a main reason, suggesting PSE promotional efforts to target the individual level more directly.

<sup>39</sup> Education in the context of Figure 8 is in reference to any level of education including secondary, post-secondary, graduate, doctorate, trades, or college. It is not limited to PSE opportunities. Data is reported according to sex, so as to provide variety to the findings, however, the gender binary presents limitations that impair interpretations of the results, as the findings are not inclusive of gender diverse groups. Refer to limitations section of this report for more information.



The most frequently selected barriers to furthering education are family-oriented for both sexes, as 69% of males selected “too difficult to be away from home”, and 72% of females chose “personal or family responsibilities”. These findings highlight the importance of family-oriented factors in Indigenous students PSE attainment. Family connections and relationships play a dominant role in the cultures and social fabric of Indigenous peoples and foster improved educational outcomes (National Collaborating Centre for Indigenous Health (NCCIH), 2017). CAP-PSSSP development must target the needs of both the individual and their family.

**Barriers Preventing Post-Secondary Education Completion:** The 2017 APS also explored specific reasons detailing why Indigenous students were unable to complete their desired PSE once they were enrolled. For instance, finding a job and/or the desire to work as opposed to study, followed by “other” reasons, financial reasons, and a loss in interest or lack in motivation to complete studies were most often cited as barriers. Figure 9 outlines all nine reasons provided by the APS in which off-reserve Indigenous students could choose from as describing the primary barrier to their PSE completion.



Note: Figure 9 data collected from Aboriginal Peoples Survey 2017.

Over 16,000 Indigenous students (14.4%) cited the inability to pay as a main barrier to their PSE completion, emphasizing the need for programming designed specifically for off-reserve Indigenous students (Rawana et al. 2015; Greenfield, 2020). This finding mirrors discussions in the literature, as scholars suggest government funding levels to be well below demand and insufficient to support Indigenous students, citing “being financially unprepared” as a significant challenge to encouraging PSE success (Nelson et al. 2018; NCCIH, 2017).

**Prejudice and Racism in Education Systems:** Barriers due to prejudice and racism were least often reported as reasons for PSE incompleteness. However, as Romanow (2020) explains, such actions often go under-reported due to the subtle and ambiguous nature of racism in education systems, paired with the risk of experiencing further stigma and anti-Indigenous discrimination (Romanow, 2020). Anti-Indigenous racism and discrimination in PSE institutions is a systemic issue occurring at an alarming rate (Romanow, 2020; Marom, 2019; Nelson, 2018). Romanow (2020) investigated anti-Indigenous racism, according to student’s perspectives and perceptions. Researchers measured student experiences of racism and

discrimination outside of the PSE environment, on campus, and in classrooms. Their findings uncovered overwhelming reports of mental, physical, and psychological racism and abuse, concluding “both the frequency and unpredictability of these racist experiences are extremely stressful for Indigenous students and have a concrete negative impact on their lives” (Romanow, 2020, p. 22).

To combat these issues, PSE institutions have prioritized plans for reconciliation with Indigenous peoples (Greenfeild, 2020) in order to improve relations between non-Indigenous and Indigenous peoples and address past wrongs imposed on to Indigenous populations (Antoine et al. 2018). This process is a precursor to decolonize education spaces i.e., to dismantle dominant Western-based ideologies in academic institutions and promote Indigenous ways of knowing and doing (Antoine et al. 2018). dismantle dominant Western-based ideologies in academic institutions and uplift and revitalize Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing and doing (Antoine et al. 2018). Despite such plans, many PSE institutions continue to lack clear strategies in the form of policies or policy frameworks to hold PSE staff and faculty accountable and ensure full implementation of plans for reconciliation and decolonization (Greenfeild, 2020). As a result, overt and subconscious forms of racism, harmful stereotypes, and discrimination within education systems continue to pose substantial and significant barriers to Indigenous students’ safe access to academic attainment and success (Romanow, 2020; Marom, 2019; NCCIH, 2017).

**Attendance to Indian Residential Schools (IRS):** The intergenerational impacts of IRS are another key barrier to Indigenous student’s PSE attainment. Safe and trusting relationships between students and school personnel within school environments are precursors to a child’s education success and achievement (NCCIH, 2017; Railsback, 2004). Children of residential school survivors are known to experience poorer educational outcomes compared to their counterparts. This has been shown to be due to the effects of being witness to and the experience of traumatic intergenerational impacts (NCCIH, 2017). Table 2 observes educational achievement among Indigenous students, by level of attainment and according to their parent(s) and family’s attendance to IRS.

Table 2. Highest Level of Educational Attainment by Family Residential School Attendance

	Respondent attended	Only parent(s) or grandparent(s) attended	Only other family members attended	Only parent(s)/ grandparent(s) / other family members attended	Neither respondent nor any family members attended	Total
Grade 8 or lower	12.5%	9.6%	12.2%	18.5%	47.2%	100.0%
Some secondary	8.4%	16.0%	4.5%	28.7%	42.4%	100.0%
Secondary school	4.5%	16.7%	4.7%	23.4%	50.7%	100.0%
Some PSE	5.2%	15.2%	5.9%	24.4%	49.2%	100.0%
PSE below bachelor	6.4%	15.4%	6.0%	21.0%	51.3%	100.0%
PSE above bachelor	3.3%	10.3%	6.5%	18.5%	61.5%	100.0%

Table 2 data collected from Aboriginal Peoples Survey 2017

---

*Research findings point to the urgent need for additional support and programming to encourage IRS survivors and their families in their PSE journey.*

---

As Table 2 demonstrates, those without family members who have attended IRS account for the greatest proportion of educational attainment at all levels and make up over 50% of those who have completed secondary school, as well PSE below and above bachelor levels. To illustrate, 51.3% of those without family attendance to IRS have completed PSE below the bachelor's level, compared to 21.0% of those with family attendance – constituting a near 30% difference between the two population groups. Similarly, 61.5% of those without family attendance to IRS completed PSE above the bachelor's level, compared to 18.5% of those with family attendance – a near 40% difference. Similar differences apply when comparing those who have directly attended IRS, compared to those who did not. The meaning behind these figures is threefold. One, the findings are a validation of the ongoing impacts of IRS attendance on Indigenous people's educational attainment. Two, these statistics may indicate unsupportive environments in education institutions, environments that impair Indigenous students and their ability to achieve academic success. Three, the findings point to the urgent need for additional support and programming to encourage IRS survivors and their families in their PSE journey.

#### *2.4 What necessary supports/tools are required?*

All research points to the need to increase funding and programs to encourage Indigenous students to pursue post-secondary education and to better support them in their PSE achievement. Supports and tools designed to encourage Indigenous students to pursue PSE must target the individual and their family and should take the form of financial and social support services. Government funding mechanisms such as scholarships, bursaries, and grants are well positioned to finance Indigenous student's education attainment, however, research suggest a need to improve funding levels (refer back to Figures 3, 4, 5; Greenfield 2020; Rawana et al. 2015; NCCIH, 2017; Nelson et al. 2018). Furthermore, programming to address the needs of both students and their parents/guardians is needed to ensure families are well supported, involved, and in trusting relationships with schools. Parental involvement must be prioritized in the development of CAP-PSSSP, to accurately and sufficiently address their needs and rebuild generations of distrust of education systems (NCCIH, 2017; Oskineegish, 2015; Murray-Orr & Mitton-Kukner, 2017; Nelson et al. 2018).

**Types of Supports:** Indigenous-led and informed afterschool, peer mentorship, and in-school cultural and social support programming substantially improves Indigenous students' academic success and achievement (EDSC, 2019; Greenfield, 2020; Pickrell, 2008; Rawana et al. 2015; Nelson et al. 2018). Despite this evidence, attendance to such programming within PSE institutions is low. Figure 10 demonstrates attendance to activities provided by PSE institutions intended to support Indigenous students in their education attainment, preparedness, and success. Across all Indigenous identity groups, less than 20% of students enrolled in PSE are attending these programs. The reasoning behind low attendance is not directly surveyed for, which points to again the need for further research. However, it is reasonable to infer that this low attendance may be due to unavailability of programming, low funding, or lack of awareness of such programs. Efforts to promote awareness of Indigenous social and cultural programs and to encourage attendance may be a beneficial element to CAP-PSSSP support as it may prove to help improve enrolment and engagement amongst Indigenous students.

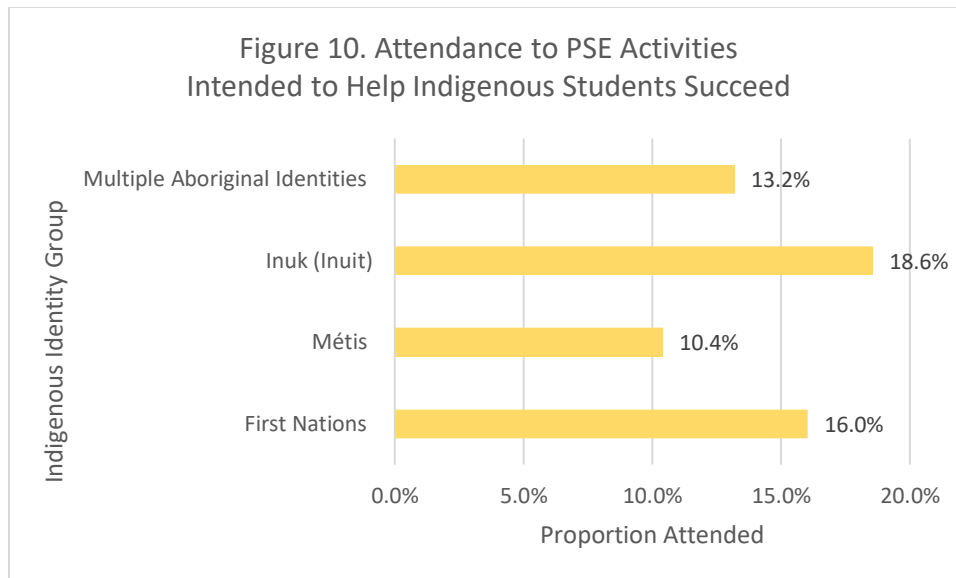


Figure 10 data collected from Aboriginal Peoples Survey 2017

Other support services targeting the broader social determinants of Indigenous health<sup>40</sup> such as physical geographic locations (i.e., living in rural versus urban communities) and housing are also cited in the literature as key components to be considered for the development of supports and tools for Indigenous students. It is often a requirement for Indigenous students to leave their home community to attend PSE, leaving behind family, community, and social support networks (Nelson et al. 2018). This process of geographic and social separation is known to have a profound detrimental impact on their academic success (Nelson et al. 2018).

Additional to this, researchers have also found issues around student housing (e.g., housing type, homelessness, stable homes, affordable housing) while attending PSE play a predominant role in educational experiences and academic achievement (Pickrell, 2008; Greenfield, 2020). Pickrell (2008) argues that the suitability of student housing to be an indicator of academic achievement and preparedness for PSE. CAP’s internal off-reserve Indigenous housing research echoes these findings. In CAP’s investigation on the impacts of housing conditions on socioeconomic outcomes such as education attendance and attainment (in addition to health, labour force participation, and use and knowledge of Indigenous languages), preliminary findings suggest housing characteristics to be highly influential on school attendance at the secondary level. CAP researchers found “housing suitability is influential... the odds of attending school for a teenager living in a suitable household is between 14 and 17% greater relative to a teenager living in an unsuitable household” (CAP, 2021). Thus, PSE tools and support programming must also address the housing needs of CAP constituents.

### 3. Success

When discussing the question of Indigenous student success in PSE, it is important to note that current discourse centers on quantitative studies that specify, “significantly lower rates of educational success among Aboriginal youth than their non-Aboriginal counterparts.” In addition, “narrow, assimilative

<sup>40</sup> For more detailed information on the social determinants of Indigenous health see: Merrill, M. (2020). *Social Determinants of Indigenous Health*. Congress of Aboriginal Peoples.

criteria of Western or Eurocentric education, pedagogies, and perspectives” are used and “focus on some perceived deficiencies and dependencies based on the inequities found as Aboriginal youth journey through the conventional educational systems rather than on the systemic challenges facing Aboriginal students, staff, and faculty navigating a system that has privileged Western knowledge as guarantor of systematic, rational thought and source of progress while actively excluding Indigenous knowledge and sensibilities” (Battiste et al., 2016, p. 1). Additionally, partial completion of a program is not captured.

### ***3.1 What does success in post-secondary education look like for CAP constituents?***

Post-secondary education success for CAP constituents exists when all of CAP’s constituency, including all off-reserve status and non-status First Nations, Métis, NunatuKavut Inuit, and other marginalized Indigenous peoples have equitable access to PSE funding including a range of critical supports crucial to encouraging and promoting academic achievement and attainment of in-demand careers in the labour market. A CAP-Canada Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP) along with other wrap-around supports must be delivered according to student and family need, addressing both financial and non-financial factors. PSSSP must be made available to all eligible members of the CAP consistency regardless of residential location (i.e., inclusive of those living off-reserve and/or living in remote, rural, or urban locations).

From a Western standpoint, PSE success for CAP constituents may also look like a return on investment from government-sponsored CAP PSE funding programming measured by labour force participation and earned annual income; both of which influence PSE graduate student’s contribution back to society through federal tax payments.

---

*While individual PSE success may be defined in various ways, broadly speaking, it exists when every Indigenous person wishing to pursue PSE is both encouraged and supported to do so.*

---

### **3.2 What are the supporting factors? What factors hinder or prevent success?**

Employment and earned annual income improve with education attainment (Frenette, 2015) and may be understood as supporting factors to PSE success. In 2020, over three quarters (77.5%) of Indigenous peoples in Canada aged 25 to 54 were employed and had completed PSE. In comparison, 62.2% were employed and had only high school or some PSE completion, and 42.8% with less than high school education (Statistics Canada, 2021). Earned income levels reflect a similar pattern of improvement with education. As Figure 11 demonstrates, depending on level of education attainment there is stark difference in Indigenous peoples earning over \$70,000 in total annual employment income (APS, 2017). Indigenous peoples who have completed PSE are more likely to earn between \$50,000 to \$69,999 (62.1%) or over \$70,000 (72.4%), compared to those who have not completed PSE (37.9%, 27.6%). Despite PSE completion, both population groups are equally likely to earn \$20,000 to \$49,999, however, those with only secondary school or some PSE completed are more likely to earn less than \$19,999 annually (64.6%), compared to those with PSE achievement (35.4%).

Statistical analysis through simple (bivariate) linear regression validates the relationship between PSE and earned annual employment income for all Canadians, as with PSE attainment, one may expect to earn

about 1.6 times more than those without PSE. In using Census 2016 data, the relationship between the two variables are found to be statistically significant (at  $p < 0.00$ ) and share a moderately strong positive linear relationship. The analysis shows that with a range of earned employment income from \$1.00 to \$200,000, PSE incompleters generates an average annual income level of approximately \$30,000, compared to \$50,000 with PSE completion.

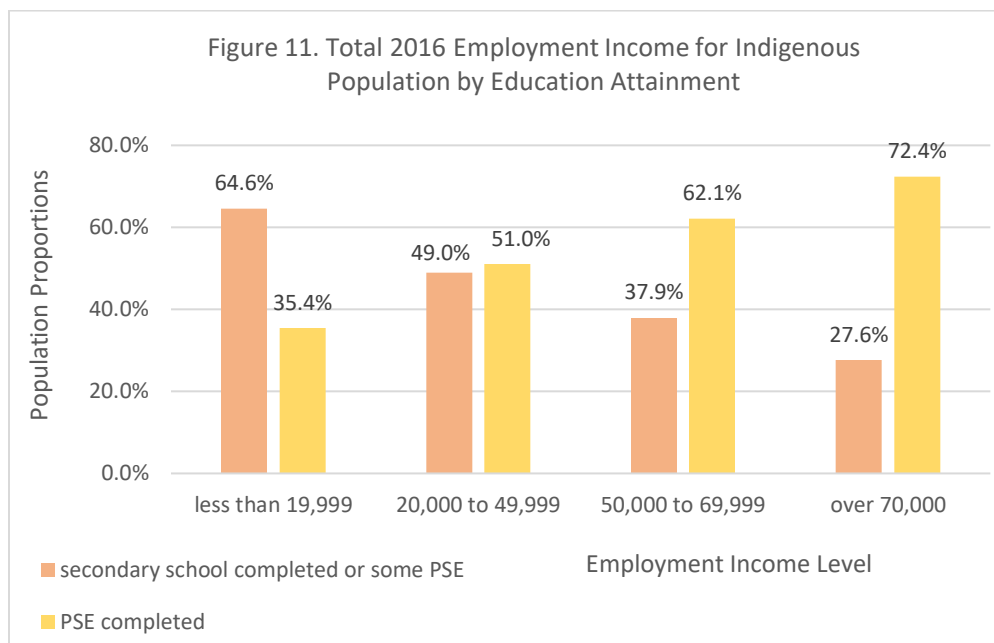


Figure 11 data collected from Aboriginal Peoples Survey 2017

In summary, higher academic achievement, improved labour force participation in one’s field of study, and increased income levels are all supporting factors to CAP’s constituency PSE success. Factors which may hinder or prevent success mirror those discussed in section 2.3 *Disincentives/Key Barriers Limiting Access to PSE*. Examples include: the accessibility, availability, and acceptability of education systems; family-oriented reasons such as personal or family responsibilities, or the difficulty of being away from home; job securement; financial reasons; lack of personal interest or motivation; prejudice and anti-Indigenous racism; and/or family attendance to Indian Residential Schools.

#### 4. Student Needs

The needs of CAP students encompass social, financial, and individual elements which PSE funding may be allocated to address.<sup>41</sup> Research presented in this section is derived from secondary qualitative and quantitative evidence in order to demonstrate where exactly these needs may exist. It is important to note however, that determining the specific needs and wants of non-status and off-reserve Indigenous students would require extensive consultation and community mapping directly involving CAP PTOs and constituents. National Canadian surveys have yet to focus particularly on the needs of non-status Indigenous students or those living off-reserve, thereby limiting the external validity of the findings of this

<sup>41</sup> Refer to *Section 2: Access* for further descriptive details on financial and non-financial factors that support and encourage Indigenous student PSE attainment.

report. While the Aboriginal Peoples Survey and Canadian Census of Population cover topic areas specific to Indigenous populations in Canada, such tools do not distinguish between those responding from CAP's constituency, nor have extended scope on current PSE students in order to track their experiences throughout the duration of their studies. This level of assessment would help to identify the need of additional supports, types of supports to currently exist or be utilized, and more relevant specifics to creating an effective CAP-Canada PSSSP. Such research is strongly recommended in order to improve the accuracy and determinability of reporting on student need of those represented by CAP. Despite these limitations, the following sections begin to address each inquiry posed under question four.

***4.1 Are CAP student needs restricted to 4-year bachelor's and post-graduate studies, in addition to university preparation programs? Or are there other programs where CAP students require support?***

Students represented by CAP are involved in several different post-secondary opportunities and programs. Many students attend university preparation programs, post-secondary bachelors, post-graduate studies, as well as a wide range of trades and skills training and developmental programs. The following sections provide proportions of students attending each type of PSE program, to illustrate where CAP students' needs may exist, beyond 4-year bachelor's and post-graduate studies. The findings of these sections are reported according to female and male students, in order to provide variation to the data and identify any patterns according to sex<sup>42</sup>.

---

*CAP students attend PSE at all levels, demonstrating a wide range of areas where student need may exist, including at, below, or above the bachelor's level; college and non-university; trade certificate and diplomas; and skills training.*

---

**PSE Programs – Registered Apprenticeships and Other Trades Certificates:** As per the APS 2017, 17,200 Indigenous students also attend trades PSE either to complete a registered apprenticeship certificate or other trades certificates/diplomas from trade schools and/or professional training centers<sup>43</sup>. Figure 12 illustrates that both males (n=3200 students) and females (n=3700 students) are equally likely to pursue trade certificates/diplomas. Although, male Indigenous students are much more likely to pursue Registered Apprenticeship Certificate(s). In 2017, 8850 (85.8%) male students compared to 1450 (14.2%) female students were enrolled in a trades program in pursuit of an apprenticeship certificate.

---

<sup>42</sup> Note: data is reported according to binary sexes and excludes gender diverse peoples due to data collections limitations of the APS. Please refer to the Limitations Section for more information.

<sup>43</sup> The difference in 'Registered Apprenticeship Certificate' and 'other trades certificates/diplomas' are defined in the APS (2017) as follows: Registered Apprenticeship Certificate includes a Certificate of Qualification or Journey person's designation; while other trades certificates or diplomas are without Certificate of Qualification or Journey person's designation, and from a trade school or a professional training centre.

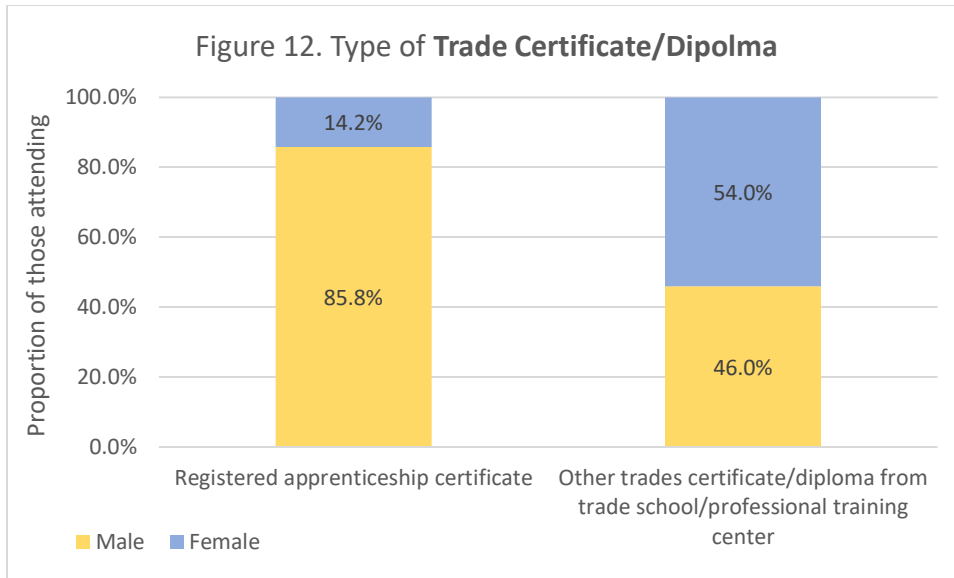


Figure 12 data collected from Aboriginal Peoples Survey 2017

**PSE Programs – Above the Bachelor’s Level:** APS findings suggest up to 7,850 off-reserve Indigenous students are attending PSE programs above the bachelor’s level, indicating yet another avenue PSSSP supports may be resourced. In 2017, 1350 Indigenous students reported attendance to a general university certificate or diploma above the bachelor’s level; 1000 students to a degree in medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, or optometry; 3900 students to a master’s degree; and 1600 students to an earned doctorate (n= 1600) – totaling 7850 off-reserve Indigenous students. Figure 13 demonstrates these findings. Much like attendance to trades programs, variation in attendance exists between the two gender identities (female and male) allowed by the 2017 APS. Female Indigenous students are more likely to pursue all PSE options above the bachelor’s level, accounting for over 70% of students, apart from an earned doctorate where males make up 62% of the student population. Male students make up less than 30% of the students pursuing all other options (Master’s degree, medicine, etc.).

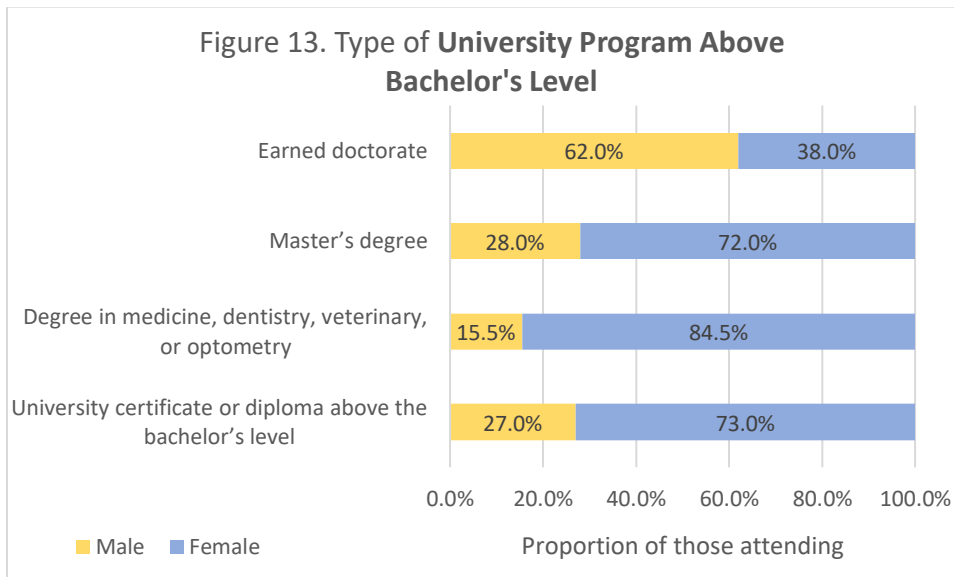
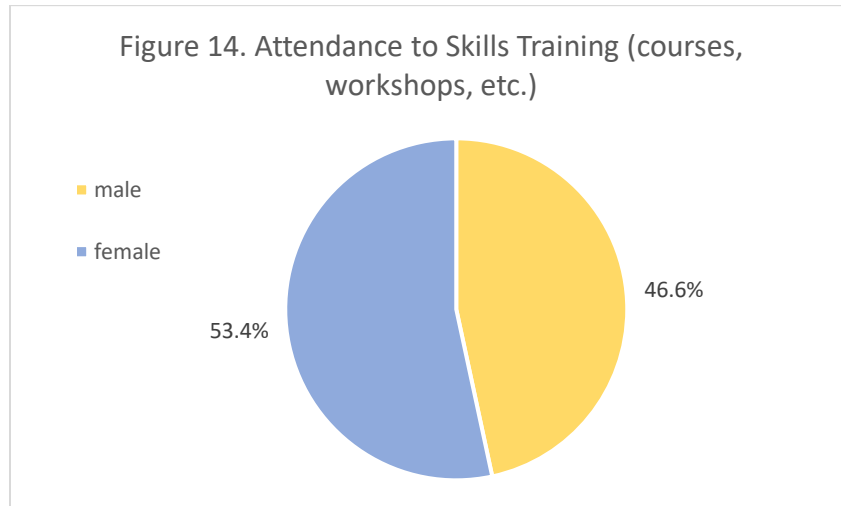


Figure 13 data collected from Aboriginal Peoples Survey 2017



**PSE Programs – Skills Training Programs:** Apart from university, college, and trades PSE opportunities, skills training programs are another popular PSE option for Indigenous students. Skills training according to the APS refers to “courses, workshops, seminars or training to develop job skills”. In 2017, approximately 388,000 Indigenous students living off-reserve attended skills training, and 178,350 reported an interest in attending. Both male and female Indigenous students were relatively equally likely to attend skills training, as illustrated in Figure 14.



Note: Figure 14 data collected from Aboriginal Peoples Survey 2017.

According to the APS, job-specific training was the most popular type of skill trainings Indigenous students attended or were interested in attending, followed by personal development, ‘other’ (unspecified by respondent), computer, personal interest, and job search training. High attendance to job-specific and -search trainings may be to secure job requirements or improve employability. Proportions of student attendance to a variety of skills training, in comparison to those with interest to attend, are listed in Table 3.

	Training Taken	Training Wanted
Job-specific (e.g., professional training, equipment, occupational health, and safety)	80.0%	60.0%
Personal development (e.g., time management, stress management)	11.9%	12.6%
Other	8.5%	13.7%
Computer (e.g., hardware, software)	6.6%	11.6%
Personal Interest	5.4%	13.1%
Job search (e.g., résumé writing, interview skills)	5.0%	5.9%
Reading, writing, and/or math	2.1%	4.5%
Second language	1.4%	4.6%
Start or run own business	1.3%	5.4%

Table 3 data collected from Aboriginal Peoples Survey 2017

---

*There is substantial difference in those attending skills trainings specific to their personal interest (5.4%) compared to those with interest to do so (13.1%). This finding alone emphasizes the need to support Indigenous students in pursuing their personal desire for higher education.*

---

Notably, interest in completing trainings on learning computer skills, engaging in personal interest(s), learning reading/writing/math, second language(s), and starting or running a business had an interest rate double the proportion of those attending. These findings provide insight into areas CAP-administered PSSSP funding and related supports may be best directed towards in efforts to support Indigenous students in their PSE interests and educational journeys. Moreover, is the substantial difference in those attending skills trainings specific to their personal interest (5.4%) compared to those with interest to do so (13.1%). This finding alone emphasizes the need to support Indigenous students in pursuing their personal desire for higher education.<sup>44</sup>

#### *4.2 How do the needs of CAP students differ across the country? Is there more need in, for example, western provinces versus the Atlantic? Is there a need North of 60?*

CAP's constituency represents all NunatuKavut Inuit, Métis, and other status and non-status Indigenous peoples living off-reserve. As such, there is need for PSE support for Indigenous students from coast to coast to coast. Given the population densities concentrated in southern areas of Canada, the proportional need is greatest in these areas, however, as noted in Section 1: *CAP Students*, Inuit students remain the least represented in PSE attendance, and thus, support must also be concentrated in the NunatuKavut as well. Proportions of Indigenous peoples represented by CAP across the country are provided in Figure 15.

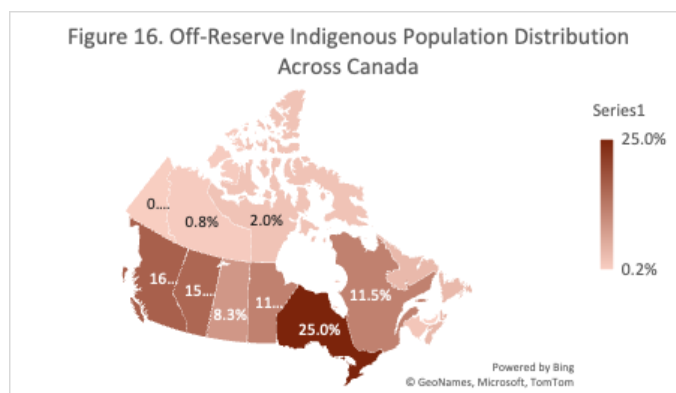


Figure 15 data collected from Aboriginal Peoples Survey 2017

According to APS 2017, every province and territory is home to off-reserve Indigenous people. The greatest proportion of Indigenous peoples living off-reserve reside in Ontario (n=248,700, 25.0%); British

---

<sup>44</sup> These values are proportions, calculated through descriptive statistics. Likelihood and odds ratios would require further bivariate analysis.

Columbia (n=162,100, 16.3%); Alberta (n=152,300, 15.3%); Manitoba (n= 114,650, 11.5%); and Quebec (n=114,050, 11.5%). All other provinces have an off-reserve Indigenous population as follows: 2.0% (n=19,950) reside in Nunavut; 0.8% (n=7,900) in Northwest Territories; and 0.5% (n=4500) in Yukon.

PSE attendance according to province and territory of residence, as expected, shows most students study in Ontario, Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, and Quebec, with little representation in the Northern territories. This is shown in Figure 16.<sup>45</sup> These findings suggest that additional need to support CAP students is warranted in the western provinces in particular. As this conclusion is limited and determined by population statistics, more research is required to investigate such needs directly from the perspective of students to then compare across the country.

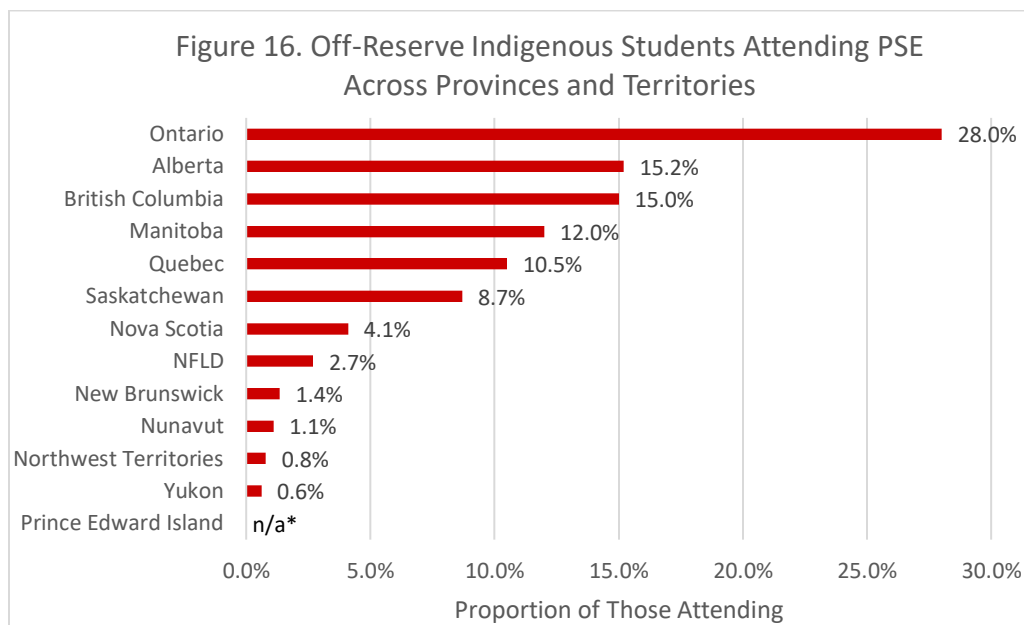


Figure 16 data collected from Aboriginal Peoples Survey 2017

**4.3 Do CAP students have needs beyond funding for things like living expenses, tuition fees, textbooks, and wraparound supports like mentorship and skills building? If so, how many CAP students have these needs, including an evidence-base supporting the number of students, and what are those needs?**

#### Defining Needs: Eligible Expenses Currently Covered by Federal Programming for Non-CAP Students

Identifying additional needs of CAP students to adequately and sufficiently support their PSE journey may be informed by pre-established funding models and programs offered by Canada to the three recognized Indigenous identity groups. Such programs, cover a wide range of individual and community-based support services, all of which a CAP-PSSSP may adopt into its program design.

- Individual Supports:** Federal PSE programs designed to support status First Nations work with Band Councils; those that support Métis Nation students work with the Métis National Councils; and finally, those that support Inuit who are beneficiaries of an Inuit land-claims agreement and who reside in Canada and work with the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami. First Nation PSE funding,

<sup>45</sup> Note: Data on PSE attendance in Prince Edward Island is not available due to small sample sizes. Access to federal RDCs would be required to report such values.

PSSSP/UCEPP eligible recipients include: band councils of recognized First Nations bands, organizations designated by band councils, and self-governing First Nations in Yukon that have not yet assumed responsibility for post-secondary education. Métis Nation PSE Strategy include Metis Nation Governing Members, the Manitoba Metis Federation and the Metis National Council. The Inuit PSE strategy include the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, Nunatsiavut Government, Makivik Corporation, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated and Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami. Each organization has separate programming sponsored by the Government of Canada to address PSE student need, with eligible individual supports that may be equally applicable to students within CAP’s constituency. As such, Table 4 outlines additional factors to be considered in the development of Canada-CAP PSSSP, and is informed by Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) PSE programs (i.e., Post-Secondary Student Support Program, Métis Nation Post-Secondary Education Strategy, Inuit Post-Secondary Education Strategy) and the eligible expenses for direct financial support for status First Nations, Métis, and northern Inuit Indigenous students.<sup>46</sup> Furthermore, literature investigating Indigenous student needs validates the funding considerations listed in Table 4, as research highlights substantial need for specifically childcare services, travel expenses, cultural and social supports, and housing services (Greenfield, 2020; Pickrell 2008; Rawana et al. 2015; Nelson et al. 2018; NCCIH, 2017).

Table 4. Possible Individual Supports for CAP-PSSSP

Transcript and application fees
Tuition and other student’s fees
Initial professional certification and examination fees
Books and supplies
Supplemental tutorial, guidance and counseling services
Living expenses including for dependents, if applicable
Transportation supports when needed
Travel expenses including for dependents, as applicable
Childcare as needed

- Community-Based Supports:** In taking a similar approach, the following factors must also be considered for funding by CAP-PSSSP, based on the eligible local and community-wide expenses covered by federal programming. Notably, these community-based supports may best serve to fully equip PTOs in supporting CAP students at more local and regional levels:<sup>5</sup>

Table 5. Possible Community-Based Supports for CAP-PSSSP

Academic readiness and support
Wraparound services to students and their families such as: student-peer mentorship, career counselling, clinical and mental health services, Elder guidance, Knowledge-keeper, student cultural support
Outreach and navigation services
Cultural education and life-skills development

<sup>46</sup> List directly sourced from ISC programs: [Post-Secondary Student Support Program](#), [Métis Nation Post-Secondary Education Strategy](#), [Inuit Post-Secondary Education Strategy](#).

Information technology and remote locations access to allow students the opportunity to complete distance education or online courses from their home communities

The number of CAP students with the above needs is difficult to predict, due to the limited scope of current national student and population surveys. Future research and survey development is recommended to investigate accurate proportions of CAP student need.

### **Defining Needs: Eligible Expenses Not Currently Covered by Federal Programming for Non-CAP Students**

CAP students also require additional support in areas not currently covered by federal PSE programming designed for on-reserve status First Nations, Métis, and northern Inuit students. These include resources to support secondary upgrading, and support for students with learning or developmental conditions or disabilities.

---

*In 2017, over 35 thousand Indigenous peoples living off-reserve reported a desire to complete high school. Of these students, 27.5% were unable to do so due to the associated financial cost.*

---

- **Secondary School Upgrading:** In 2017, approximately 35,060 (11.9%) Indigenous peoples aged 19 or older, living off-reserve reported the desire to complete or upgrade their high school education. When asked to select the main barrier to completing this education, 27.5% (n=10,123) of Indigenous peoples indicated they were unable due to the associated financial costs (APS, 2017). These findings highlight the need to set aside funds in order to first support secondary school completion, to then improve the feasibility of CAP students pursuing PSE.
- **Learning or Developmental Conditions or Disabilities:** In 2017, 3.1% (n=9,100) off-reserve Indigenous peoples reported having a cognition condition or disability as a barrier to pursuing their desired level of further education (APS, 2017). This signals the need for CAP-PSSSP supports to improve equitable access to PSE attainment and experiences. Additional funding may be allocated to cover costs associated with assisting students with learning or developmental conditions, such as specialized equipment and/or transportation costs.
  - As per the APS, a cognitive condition may include a learning, memory, and/or developmental condition impairing one's ability to learn, remember, or concentrate. Dyslexia, hyperactivity, and attention problems are common examples of learning conditions; while down syndrome, autism, or Asperger syndrome are examples of developmental conditions. In 2017, 16.4% (n=161,520) of Indigenous peoples aged 19 and over and living off-reserve, reported having a cognitive condition; of this, only 8.8% (n=14,246) were also attending PSE (APS, 2017). Figure 17 demonstrates PSE attendance among those with learning or developmental conditions that are either diagnosed, teacher or healthcare professional-reported, or self-reported. The most common condition falls into the learning category, as nearly 20% of Indigenous students with a learning condition – either self or teacher-reported, were attending PSE in 2017.

Meanwhile, only 8.6% of those with a diagnosed developmental disability/disorder reported their attendance to PSE. The low proportions of PSE attendance amongst Indigenous peoples with learning or developmental conditions may again, signify an additional call for specialized supports provided by CAP-PSSSP to improve the equitability of PSE opportunities.

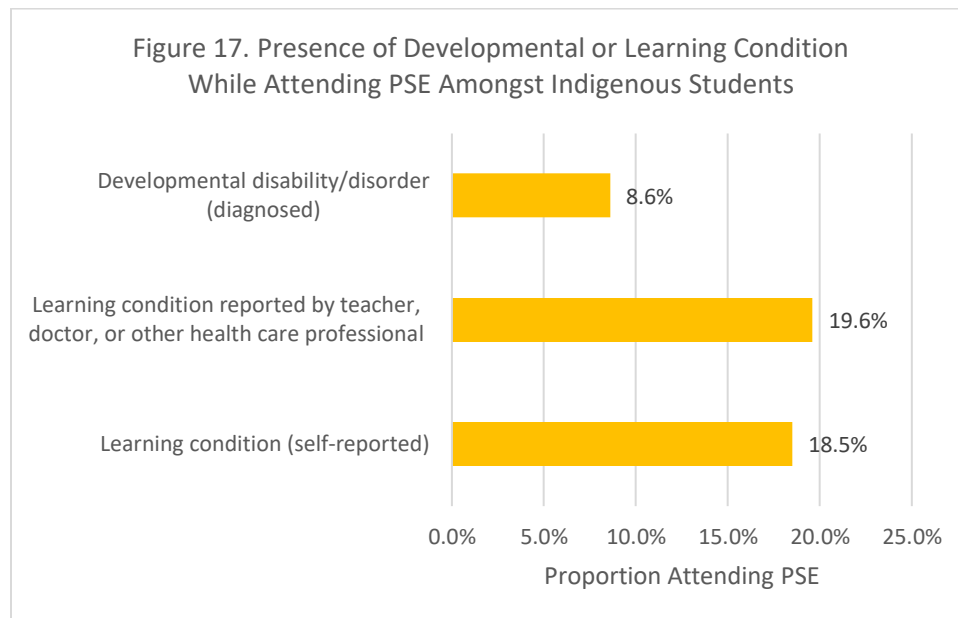


Figure 17 data collected from Aboriginal Peoples Survey 2017

### Costs of Additional Needs

Current funding allocations and specific distinctions based PSSSP agreements between ISC and First Nations, Métis, and Inuit groups will serve as the best place to begin estimating costs. It is important therefore that CAP’s government partner provide insight into the typical totals provided to Indigenous students, according to a distinctions-based approach. For reference, Table 6 outlines recent funding allocations from the 2019 Federal Budget, to support status First Nations, Métis, and northern Inuit ISE PSE programming. Similar funding allocations relative to the population of CAP’s constituents is expected to support a CAP-specific PSSSP.

Table 6. 2019 ISC Funding Totals to Support PSE for Distinctions-Based Indigenous Students

Program	Funding Total
Post-Secondary Student Support Program – for Status First Nations students	\$320 million over 5 years
the Inuit Post-Secondary Education Strategy – for Inuit students who are beneficiaries of an Inuit land-claims agreement and who reside in Canada	\$125.5 million over 10 years; \$21.8 million for ongoing program support
Métis Nation Post-Secondary Education Strategy – for Métis Nation students who reside in Canada	\$362 million over 10 years; \$40 million for ongoing program support

Note: Data in Table 6 provided by Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) (2021a); ISC (2020); and ISC (2021)

## 5. Funding Requirements

### 5.1 How many CAP students require funding and at what levels? What is the evidence base behind the numbers identified?

**How Many CAP Students:** From 2012 to 2017, according to APS data, off-reserve Indigenous student PSE attendance has grown by 7.4%. As attendance grows, all Indigenous students represented by CAP will require some level of PSE funding at the university (below, at, and above the bachelor’s level), college, trade, and skills training levels. Total estimates of the CAP student population may be as little as 6,850 students attending university below the bachelor’s level, to as high as 233,100 students attending skills trainings. Table 7 presents these proportions. Important to note, much of Indigenous students living off-reserve captured by the APS 2017 statistics may receive PSE funding and support if they are members of the Métis National Council, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, or the Assembly of First Nations. Thus, proportions of non-status First Nations students distinctly falling between these program cracks, may provide more accurate baseline predictions of CAP student totals. While ISC’s existing post-secondary education programming is not specific to membership of the 3 NIOs, there is a criteria of who can apply. Additionally, President Chartier<sup>47</sup> of the Métis Nation Council (MNC) and then Minister of Indigenous Services Canada were signatories of the agreement. Indicating MNC has oversight of the program.

Table 7. Number of Students Attending PSE by Type of Program and Indigenous Identity Group

	Trade certificate or diploma	College/non-university	University below the bachelor’s level	Bachelor’s degree	University above the bachelor’s level	Skills training
Status First Nations	5250	8300	2750	10,700	2800	66,650
Non-status First Nations	2700	5500	1000	5300	1450	41,150
Métis	8400	10,950	2850	15,350	3400	116,650
Inuk (Inuit)	650	900	150	450	50	6450
Multiple identities	100	150	100	250	150	2200
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,100</b>	<b>25,800</b>	<b>6,850</b>	<b>32,050</b>	<b>7,850</b>	<b>233,100</b>

Table 7 data collected from Aboriginal Peoples Survey 2017

---

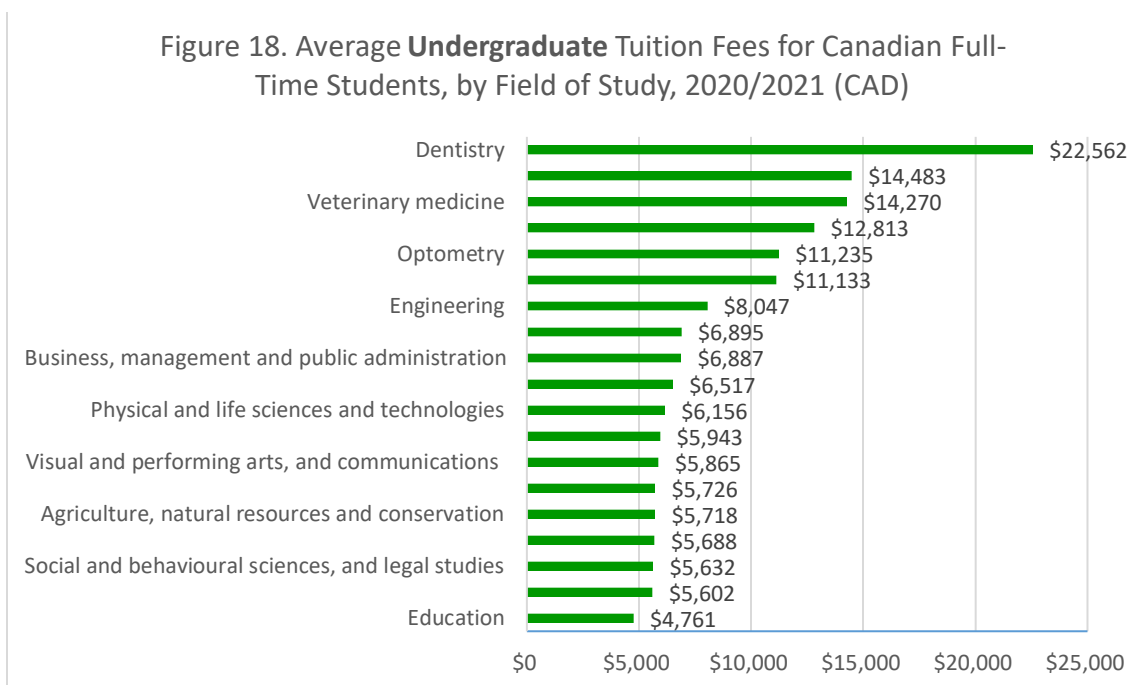
*Approximate tuition costs yield CAP funding estimates of \$210 million for undergraduate and \$57 million for graduate students. These values do not include the cost of other essential PSE supports and services, such as those described in Section 4.3.*

---

<sup>47</sup><https://gdins.org/canada-and-the-metis-nation-sign-post-secondary-education-agreement/#:~:text=Canada%20and%20the%20M%C3%A9tis%20Nation%20Sign%20Post%2DSecondary%20Education%20Agreement,-Oct%202019&text=On%20June%202019%20President,%2DSecondary%20Education%20Sub%2DAccord.>

**Funding Levels:** According to Statistics Canada (2020), full-time undergraduate students in Canada can expect to pay up to \$6,580 in tuition payments per academic year; a 1.7% increase from previous years. Meanwhile, graduate students can expect to pay up to \$7,304; a 1.6% increase. The COVID-19 pandemic has sparked minor changes in tuition fees; however, tuition continues to increase annually. In using student proportions listed in Table 7, these costs suggest a need for approximately \$210 million<sup>48</sup> and \$57 million<sup>49</sup> to fund the tuition payments for undergraduate and graduate CAP students. Of that, approximately \$34 million<sup>50</sup> to \$10 million<sup>51</sup> is needed to support particularly non-status First Nations students in their pursuit of undergraduate (n=5,300 students) and graduate (n=1,450 students) PSE studies respectively. Important to note, these funding values do not accommodate for additional costs required to provide all essential PSE supports and services, such as those described in Section 4.3. Examples include childcare; transportation; wrap-around social supports; cultural education and life-skills development; supplemental tutorial, guidance, and counseling services; books and supplies.

Further evidence to support approximate tuition costs for full-time undergraduate and graduate degree programs in Canada is illustrated in Figures 19 and 20. Figure 18 shows few (six total) undergraduate university programs reach over the \$10,000 in annual tuition fees, with most under the \$9,000. Similarly, only four graduate university programs extend beyond \$10,000 in tuition fees, as many also fall under the \$9,000 mark (Figure 19).



Note: Figure 18 adapted from: Statistics Canada (2020). Tuition fees for degree programs increase in 2020/21. Table 37-10-0003-01. *The Daily*. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/200921/dq200921b-eng.htm>

<sup>48</sup> \$6,580 average tuition fees \* 32,050 students = \$210,889,000

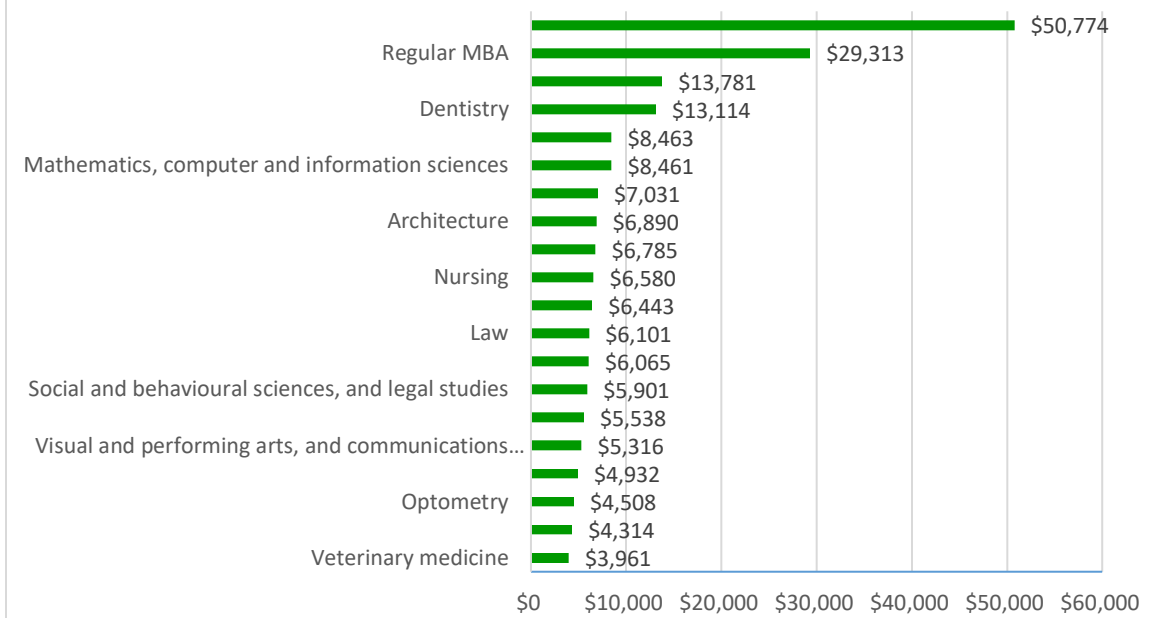
<sup>49</sup> \$7,304 average tuition fees \* 7,850 students = \$57,336,400

<sup>50</sup> \$6,580 average tuition fees \* 5,300 students = \$34,874,000

<sup>51</sup> \$7,304 average tuition fees \* 1,450 students = \$10,590,800



Figure 19. Average **Graduate** Tuition Fees for Canadian Full-Time Students, by Field of Study, 2020/2021 (CAD)



Note: Figure 19 adapted from: Statistics Canada (2020). Tuition fees for degree programs increase in 2020/21. Table 37-10-0004-01. *The Daily*. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/200921/dq200921b-eng.htm>

## 6. Funding Distribution and Mechanisms

### 6.1 How would funding be distributed to CAP students? What mechanisms would be required to establish?

Funding distribution arrangements for a CAP-PSSSP may occur through a variety of methods, which will require discussion and negotiation following further policy development and research at the PSE table. To begin however, establishing a new stand-alone program internal to CAP is the recommended option for effective and efficient delivery of PSE supports for CAP students.

---

*The much-needed PSE support for CAP students is best delivered through the creation of a CAP-specific Post-Secondary Student Support Program which will adapt the National Aboriginal Resource Allocation Model (NARAM) to calculate and distribute funding based on need tailored to the specific requirements of each PTO.*

---

**Distribution through a new CAP-PSSSP program:** The first and recommended option for PSE funding distribution is to create a new internal program within CAP, designed specifically to support PSE opportunities for CAP constituents. The program structure may use CAP's pre-established Indigenous

Skills and Employment Training (ISET) program<sup>52</sup> as a template to employ tried and true mechanisms to allocate funding and other supports. Moreover, the CAP-PSSSP may also work in partnership with PSE institutions across Canada to promote PSE applications among Indigenous students as well as distribute funding upon enrolment. A new CAP-PSSSP may be established within each CAP Provincial/Territorial Affiliated Organization (PTO), to tailor individual programs to specific members and their unique needs. In sum, this option will build CAP's capacity in program development and ensure equitable delivery of post-secondary supports for and by CAP constituents.

### *6.2 Would funding be distributed on a per-capita basis or based on need? If funding would be distributed based on need, how would need be defined?*

A CAP PSSSP must be distributed based on student need as defined in previous sections of this report. CAP student needs include considerations of family circumstance and effective wrap around supports for PSE (see Section 2 and 4.3). As CAP's ISET program has operated for many years and continues to successfully administer job-related and skill-development support to CAP constituents, it stands as a model to inform future funding formulas and calculations. For instance, the ISET program uses the National Aboriginal Resource Allocation Model (NARAM) to guide the development of funding equations and direct distribution. The NARAM is designed to distribute funding to provinces and territories dependent on where greater need exists for Indigenous peoples in terms of both skills' development and training. In this example, need is calculated by considering the falling list of variables to represent the Indigenous labour force:

- the number of those not in the labour force, plus unemployed individuals
- working age population
- number of people without employment
- number of unemployed youth<sup>53</sup>

The NARAM also considers other social and individualistic factors that influence unemployment to demonstrate need. These include:

- education levels (some high school, less than high school, less than grade nine)
- single-parent status (lone parent)
- limited working knowledge of English/French (Aboriginal mother tongue)
- geographic location (remote areas)
- youth incarceration rates (youth in corrections)
- prior experience in the child welfare system (children in care)<sup>11</sup>

**Funding Considerations for PTOs:** Developing an allocation model is beyond the scope or capacity of this research and will require further conversations and review at the PSE Table. However, PTO assets must also be considered prior to developing funding calculations and distributing funds directly to individual PTOs. This process will help to better align funding allocations according to PTO needs at the local level. Additional funding calculations may also be required depending on how funding is to be distributed to

---

<sup>52</sup> For further information on the CAP ISET program, please refer to <http://www.abo-peoples.org/en/iset-indigenous-skills-and-employment-training-program/>

<sup>53</sup> List provided by The National Aboriginal Resource Allocation Model information sheet. Further information may be available upon request.

CAP students at the individual student level once program funds are provided to CAP PTOs. Each PTO may independently adjust the funding formula and variable weights to align with the needs of their membership. PTOs may also add and remove variables to create their own formula and distribute funding to students according to their individual need. Such need-based variables will heavily depend on individual PTOs and requires specified research.

## 7. Existing Programs

Currently, there are no specific PSE funding or support service programs designed specifically for or solely to all non-status and off-reserve Indigenous people living in Canada. All CAP students are currently eligible to apply with all Canadians for access to any available PSE funding and support service programs within limits and parameters. However, there are no programs available to CAP constituents that specifically meet off-reserve Indigenous student's needs. The creation of a CAP-Canada PSSSP agreement is of critical importance to the success of CAP students as it will move towards equitable access to all types of PSE opportunities for non-status and off-reserve Indigenous peoples who comprise up to 80% of all Indigenous Peoples living in Canada.

*7.1 How much of their financial and non-financial need is currently being addressed by federal programs such as ISETs, Supports for Student Learning Program, Registered Education Savings Plans (including the Canada Learning Bond and the Canada Education Savings Grant), the Canada Student Financial Assistance Program, and the Youth Employment and Skills Strategy?*

Current restrictions to access of administration data holds of federal PSE programs, as well as the current scope and information available from national student surveys such as the National Graduates Survey and the Aboriginal Peoples Survey contribute to the gap in understanding accurate levels of financial and non-financial need of CAP students. Acquiring more specificity regarding the needs of CAP students as well as more accurate information as to the gaps in available federal PSE support programs will require direct consultation with CAP students at the PTO level and further analysis at the PSE Table. Despite these limitations, however, insights can be gleaned through an examination of current federal programs and assessing their capacity to meet the financial and non-financial needs of CAP students.

Eight distinct federal programs designed for/available to support Indigenous students in their PSE attainment were assessed: Supports for Student Learning Program; Registered Education Savings Plans (RESP): Canada Learning Bond, Canada Education Savings Grant; Canada Student Financial Assistance Program (includes Canada Student Grants, Canada Student Loans, Canada Apprentice Loans, and Repayment Assistance Plan for borrowers in financial difficulty); Youth Employment and Skills Strategy; Post-Secondary Student Support Program; University College Entrance Preparation Program; Aboriginal Education Incentive Awards; Legal Studies for Aboriginal People Program;<sup>54</sup> Assessment included an investigation of each program's accessibility and applicability to CAP constituents as it relates to eligibility requirements and program objectives. Table 8 lists the information available on each program's eligibility criteria and the kind of financial and non-financial student needs it addresses.

---

<sup>54</sup> Federal ISETs are not included in lists outlined and explored in Tables 8 and 9 due to availability of CAP's internal ISET program.

Table 8. Federal PSE Programs – Eligibility Criteria & Needs Addressed by Program<sup>55</sup>

Government of Canada Program	Eligibility Criteria regarding Indigenous Identity	Program Objective(s)
Registered Education Savings Plans (RESP): Canada Learning Bond, Canada Education Savings Grant <sup>56</sup>	Indigenous identity criteria not specified as a requirement	<b>Financial</b> – Contributes funds to RESPs to support costs of a child’s full- or part-time PSE studies after high school
Canada Student Financial Assistance Program	Indigenous identity criteria not specified as a requirement; self-identification is voluntary depending on province/territory. Indigenous students who are in receipt of PSSSP funding, Métis Nations PSE Strategy funding, and Inuit PSE Strategy funding are not penalized from receiving additional sources of financial assistance. The supports provided by these programs are not considered in the Program’s needs assessment.	<b>Financial</b> – Provides eligible students with non-repayable grants, repayable loans, and repayment assistance for borrowers in financial difficulty to support PSE attainment among all students.
Youth Employment and Skills Strategy	Indigenous organizations e.g., not-for-profit Indigenous controlled organizations, Indian Act bands, tribal councils, and Indigenous self-government entities (and other non-Indigenous organizations)	<b>Financial</b> – Provides funds for youth to build skills and transition to labour market <b>Non-Financial</b> – Allocates funds to provide culturally-specific supports for Indigenous youth
Post-Secondary Student Support Program and, University and College Entrance Preparation Program.	Eligible recipients include band councils of recognized First Nations bands; organizations designated by band councils; and self-governing First Nations in Yukon that have not yet assumed responsibility for post-secondary education through a programs and services transfer agreement or through the terms of their self-government agreement.  Eligible students include Status First Nations	<b>Financial</b> – The PSSSP provides non-repayable financial support for First Nations (Registered Indian) students to advance towards a recognized post-secondary education credential as prioritized and directed by First Nations.

<sup>55</sup> Note: Table 8 informed by ; Employment and Social Development Canada (2019); Employment and Social Development Canada (2019a); Indigenous Services Canada (2018); Employment and Social Development Canada (2020).

<sup>56</sup> Difference between Registered Education Savings Plans (RESP) – Canada Learning Bond (CLB) and Canada Education Savings Grant (CESG): Personal contributions to a RESP are not required to receive the CLB; personal contributions to a RESP are required to receive CESG.

University College Entrance Preparation Program	Eligible recipients include band councils of recognized First Nations bands; organizations designated by band councils; and self-governing First Nations in Yukon that have not yet assumed responsibility for post-secondary education through a programs and services transfer agreement or through the terms of their self-government agreement  Eligible students include Status First Nations	<b>Financial</b> – The program objective is to provide non-repayable financial support for First Nations (Registered Indian) students who are enrolled in accepted university and college entrance preparation programs to enable them to attain the academic level required for entrance into degree and diploma credit programs as prioritized and directed by First Nations.
Aboriginal Education Incentive Awards	Requires membership (with card) from First Nations, Métis, or Inuit community	<b>Financial</b> – Bursary for current PSE students acknowledging academic achievement
Legal Studies for Aboriginal People Program	Métis and non-status First Nation students	<b>Financial</b> – Bursary for those pursuing legal studies

*There are no federal PSE programs designed for Indigenous people that are accessible to CAP constituents or that address both the financial and non-financial needs of non-status, off-reserve Indigenous students.*

As Table 9 demonstrates, there are no federal programs designed for Indigenous students that are accessible to CAP constituents or that addressing both their financial and non-financial PSE needs.

Table 9. Federal PSE Programs – Accessibility and Applicability to CAP Students

<b>Government of Canada Program</b>	<b>Eligibility Criteria regarding Indigenous Identity – inclusive of CAP consistency</b>	<b>Program Objective(s) – applicable to CAP student needs</b>
RESP: Canada Learning Bond, Canada Education Savings Grant	✓	<b>X</b> Does not include funding towards non-financial needs
Canada Student Financial Assistance Program	✓	<b>X</b> Does not include funding towards non-financial needs
Youth Employment and Skills Strategy	✓	✓
Post-Secondary Student Support Program	<b>X</b> Does not include NunatuKavut Inuit, non-status First Nations, nor Métis students	<b>X</b> Does not include funding towards non-financial needs
University College Entrance Preparation Program	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>

	Does not include NunatuKavut Inuit, non-status First Nations, nor Métis students	Does not include funding towards non-financial needs
Aboriginal Education Incentive Awards	X Does not include non-status First Nations without band membership	X Does not include funding towards non-financial needs
Legal Studies for Aboriginal People Program	X Does not include NunatuKavut Inuit students	X Does not include funding towards non-financial needs

Note: Table 9 informed by Indspire, (n.d.); Employment and Social Development Canada (2019); Employment and Social Development Canada (2019a); Indigenous Services Canada (2018); Employment and Social Development Canada (2020).

Two programs that are not Government of Canada but are designed to fill a need is Indspire and Pathways to Education which are operated as a not-for-profit. The former, students must have Indigenous membership from a First Nation, Inuit, and/or Métis organization; First Nations students must be of a status First Nations family. Meaning non-status First Nation population is excluded. The financial objectives are limited to scholarships and bursaries to pursue post-secondary education whereas the non-financial goals are peer mentorship programming for students. The latter is strictly non-financial that provides academic and social supports to address barriers to education and encourage high school attainment and transition to PSE among youth, Indigenous identity criteria not specified as a requirement.

Nearly all programs explored were found to provide financial support aimed to improve PSE attainment amongst Indigenous students. Three of the nine programs provide non-financial support such as peer mentorship and cultural and social support programming. Only two programs, Supports for Student Learning Program and Youth Employment and Skills Strategy, provide both financial and non-financial supports, and yet both programs are limited in their eligibility and delivery criteria. Indspire is the only program to offer financial supports for Indigenous students to pursue PSE, as well as peer mentorship programming to support their educational journey and gain lessons and social support from their peers. The program is restricted to First Nations students who are able to prove and confirm their family’s Indian status under the *Indian Act*<sup>57</sup> or First Nations band membership. Indspire therefore largely excludes all non-status First Nations students and those with status but without access to band membership.

The Youth Employment and Skills Strategy is the only program to with both accessibility and applicability to Indigenous students, although it too has considerable limitations. The Youth Employment and Skills Strategy is designed to address challenges faced by youth which often impose barriers to employment. The strategy targets youth who experience challenges such as living with disabilities, living in low-income households, experiencing homelessness or precarious housing, or living in rural or remote areas, for example. The program aims to meet the needs of Indigenous youth in particular, prioritizing funds to ensure the delivery of “culturally appropriate Indigenous supports such as access and networks to Indigenous social services (e.g., healing centers, counselling, healthcare, shelters, resource centers, restorative justice)” (ESDC, 2020). Although funding proposals are open to not-for-profit Indigenous-led

<sup>57</sup> “Indian” terminology in this context is used to reflect the 1876 Indian Act and associated “Indian Status” (First Nations) under the Act. Refer to the following for more information: Indigenous Services Canada. (2021). *Indian status*. <https://sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1100100032374/1572457769548>

organizations, such as CAP, this program is not exclusive to supporting Indigenous youth. Additionally, the program does not place much focus on financially supporting PSE opportunities. CAP students therefore must compete with all other Canadian not-for-profit organizations in Canada, and their PSE priorities compete with other activities for the same funding. Clearly, the available federal PSE support programs cannot by nature of their design support CAP students. They are simply not accessible or adequate.

**7.2 Are there specific barriers to access these programs? If yes, what are they? If there is no overlap, why/how?**

To this day, CAP's constituents continue to face several obstacles to both accessing and completing PSE. For non-status and off-reserve Indigenous peoples, the existing government support remains inadequate, preferential and in numerous scenarios, completely inaccessible. Accessing the majority of PSE programs continues to rely on Indigenous Status, band council governments and/or association with distinctions-based organizations.

The eligibility criteria of federal programs pose significant barriers for CAP students. As Tables 8 and 9 show, of the nine programs explored, four exclude non-status First Nations, three exclude NunatuKavut Inuit (those living outside of Inuit Nunangat), and two exclude Métis students. Only four programs are inclusive to all students under CAP constituency, however, are then limited in their scope of PSE supports. The four programs with inclusive eligibility are also open to non-Indigenous students, thereby increasing applicant competitions and decreasing likelihood of all CAP students receiving PSE funding.

**7.3 What about provincial/territorial funding? How much funding do CAP students currently receive through these programs?**

CAP students are under federal provision according to the 1982 Canadian Constitution and Supreme Court *Daniels Decision*. Sections 35 and 91 of the 1982 Constitution Act upholds and protects the rights and sovereignty of all status and non-status First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Indigenous peoples, and affirms the fiduciary relationship between all Indigenous peoples and the crown (*Constitution Acts, 1867 to 1982, s 35(1)(2), 91(24)*). In 2016, the Supreme Court *Daniels Decision* affirmed the inclusion of all non-status Indigenous and Métis peoples as recognized under the constitution (status First Nations and Inuit were the only Indigenous peoples previously included). As made clear by the Daniels Decision, Canada has a legislated fiduciary responsibility to ensure all status and non-status Indigenous peoples rights and treaty rights, inclusive of the rights to education. These rights are legally protected in Canadian policies and actions regardless of place of residence, on or off-reserve; it only remains for Canada to honour and uphold its own laws (CAP, n.d.; Daniels v. Canada, 2016).

The 2018 Canada-CAP Political Accord reiterates this federal relationship, commitment, and responsibility to CAP constituents in specific regards to education. This Accord identifies post-secondary education as a Canada-CAP joint policy priority and states its shared commitment to create:

“Research plans and policies in a post-Daniels context to help determine needs and program and service gaps and **improve access to existing programs and services for non-Status and other off-reserve Indigenous peoples in such areas as housing, education...**”  
(Canada-CAP Political Accord, 2018, p. 4).

Matters of CAP's constituency are thus of federal provision and joint responsibility, exclusive of provincial and territorial jurisdictional responsibility and influence.

## Concluding Recommendations

### 1. Student

#### Ensure Adequate, Immediate, and Ongoing PSE Supports for all CAP Students Now and Into the Future through the Creation of a CAP-Post-Secondary Student Support Program Policy

- Needed financial and non-financial PSE supports must be delivered to all CAP students by creating a CAP-specific PSSSP that will ensure that all non-status and status First Nations, Métis, and NunatuKavut Inuit students living in Canada are able to pursue and obtain a post-secondary education.
- Financial and non-financial support for a minimum of 90,000 CAP students currently attending PSE, as well as the conservatively estimated 150,000 CAP students with eligibility to pursue PSE opportunities must be established.

### 2. Access

#### Ensure Access to Quality PSE for all Indigenous Students by Designing New Programs and Supports That Address Known Barriers and Facilitators for CAP Students

- Students and their families must be well supported, involved, and empowered to build trusting relationships with schools. Supports must address CAP-specific financial and non-financial needs, including family factors (parental education and parental engagement in school), social factors (peer-mentorship programs), and personal factors (academic preparedness).
- Increase funding and programs to encourage Indigenous students to pursue post-secondary education and to better support them in their PSE achievement. Supports and tools designed to encourage Indigenous students to pursue PSE must target the individual and their family and should take the form of financial and social support services.
- Improve student experiences of transition and relocation from home required to attend PSE. This includes supporting suitable and secure housing availability and access.
- Support the promotion of Indigenous social and cultural programs and encourage attendance in order to improve enrolment and engagement amongst Indigenous students.
- Increase currently inadequate government funding mechanisms such as scholarships, bursaries, and grants for Indigenous students, which are well positioned to finance PSE attainment.
  - Consider establishing a Daniels Scholarship Fund integrated into the prospective CAP PSSSP. Ensure the Daniels Scholarship Fund is made available exclusively to CAP constituents, with eligibility and application requirements to be determined at the policy level.

### 3. Success

#### Foster PSE Success for CAP Students by Providing Needed Supports and Eliminating Barriers

- Align the goals of a CAP-PSSSP with CAP's definition of PSE success: *When all non-status First Nations, Métis, NunatuKavut Inuit, and other marginalized Indigenous peoples have equitable access to PSE funding and other supports that encourage and promote academic achievement and attainment of in-demand careers in the labour market.*



- Design the CAP-PSSSP to include necessary wrap-around supports delivered according to student and family need, addressing both the financial and non-financial factors.
- Create success measures collaboratively with CAP and its PTOs that include enrollment, retention, and graduation rates, as well as labour market participation and income for CAP students.

#### 4. Needs

##### **Ensure that a CAP-PSSSP Adequately Addresses the Regional-Specific Needs of CAP Students Across Canada and is Aligned with PSE Support Levels for other Indigenous Identity Groups.**

- Provide both financial and wrap-around support for CAP students to pursue their desire for PSE at all levels including at, below, or above the bachelor's level; college and non-university; trade certificate and diplomas; and skills training.
- PSE funding allocations for CAP students must match those allotted for other Indigenous identity groups currently receiving federal funding. For example, the \$362 million over 10 years and \$40 million ongoing to support Métis students through the MNC is a good place to start.
- Improve understanding of CAP-specific student need through direct consultation with students and PTOs across all Canadian provinces and territories in order to better design targeted PSSSP.
- Incorporate resources for high school upgrading and supports for students with learning and developmental conditions or other exceptionalities to pursue PSE.

#### 5. Funding

##### **Ensure Funding Calculations are Equitable and Comprehensive**

- Consider all CAP students for CAP PSSSP funding regardless of Indigenous identity distinction or PSE program.
- Calculate funding totals to reflect current average tuition fees for various PSE programs across Canadian institutions and factor in inflation.

#### 6. Distribution and Mechanisms

##### **Design CAP-PSSSP Distribution Mechanisms According to Established Successful Indigenous Models**

- Distribute the CAP-PSSSP funding and supportive resources through mechanisms adopted from the CAP ISET program which uses the National Aboriginal Resource Allocation Model (NARAM) to determine and distribute funding based on where need exists and to what extent in each PTO using a list of relevant variables.
- Respect the sovereignty of local governments and communities by empowering CAP PTOs with the ability to independently adjust the funding formula and variable weights in order to align with the student and family needs of their membership.

#### 7. Existing Programs

##### **Recognize that None of the Federal PSE Programs are Adequate or Accessible PSE support for CAP students and Rectify this Immediately through the Establishment of a CAP-specific PSSSP**

- Ensure CAP students have access to adequate PSE supports, both financial and non-financial by establishing a CAP-specific PSSSP.
- Must ensure that self-determination is adhered to and that PTO's have access to BOC funding.

## 8. Additional Supports

### Ensure Additional Supports are provided to CAP as part of its PSSSP to Establish and Maintain Partnerships with PSE Institutions

- Support CAP and its PTOs to establish and maintain critical partnerships with PSE institutions across Canada so that the unique needs of status and non-status off-reserve Indigenous peoples are served.
- Work with PSE institutions, CAP students, and families to address and eliminate barriers to CAP student PSE access and success. Barriers include, although are not limited to racism, discrimination, and prejudice; distrust in education systems; high school completion and upgrading; intergenerational trauma due to family attendance to IRS; and financial unpreparedness.

## 9. Research

### Undertake Phase 2, a Systematic and Thorough Review of Federal Data Gathering Instruments and Reporting Methods in Consultation with CAP and its PTOs in order to Improve the Availability of Quality of Information on Status and Non-Status Off-Reserve Indigenous Peoples Across Canada.

- Work collaboratively with CAP's Research Department, Statistics Canada, and at the Political Accord level in order to implement needed changes to the Indigenous Peoples Survey.
- Improve the IPS and other surveys to better capture and include the extent and nature of off-reserve status and non-status off-reserve Indigenous peoples across Canada.
- Mobilize on research recommendations presented throughout this report to improve on reporting methods regarding the needs of CAP constituents; and enhance accessibility and functionality of the data:
  - Investigate the relationship between paternal attainment of Indigenous-led education, and the impacts it has on child(ren) PSE attainment.
  - Further explore the reasoning behind PSE program choice amongst off-reserve Indigenous students, by allowing students to elaborate on the contributing factors encouraging their PSE attainment.
  - Investigate PSE institutions *acceptability* (culturally safe/appropriate environments, free of racism) as it pertains to Indigenous peoples and quantify the associated impacts on Indigenous students' academic achievement.
  - Determine the reasoning behind low attendance to activities provided by PSE institutions intended to support Indigenous students in PSE.
  - Investigate CAP student needs across provinces and territories in Canada and identify any areas of greater or lesser need in collaboration with PTO's.

## Summary

At any time, a minimum of 150,000 Indigenous students living off-reserve may be in need and eligible for a CAP-PSSSP, otherwise unable to secure adequate support to pursue post-secondary education. Based on average tuition rates, required funding to serve this population is estimated at \$210 million for undergraduate and \$57 million for graduate students. Additionally, approximately \$300 million is required to cover other associated costs of attending PSE. This report explores the many facets of student need among CAP constituents for PSE supports, examining the many barriers and facilitators to pursuing higher education in order to inform the development of a CAP-specific Post-Secondary Student Support Program. The complexity of CAP students financial and non-financial needs, coupled with the current and significant gaps in distinctions-based federal PSE funding programs, demonstrates the crucial role a CAP-PSSSP will play in supporting all non-status and status First Nations, Métis, and NunatuKavut Inuit students.

Under the Canadian Constitution and the recent Daniels decision, it has been established that the Government of Canada has a fiduciary responsibility to provide for the educational needs of all non-status and status First Nations, Métis, and NunatuKavut Inuit peoples. The financial and non-financial needs of Indigenous students are currently provided for by the federal government but remain exclusive of CAP's constituency due to the distinctions-based framework. Thus far, the CAP constituency has been neglected. As this report delineates, there is a clear and urgent need for federal program that is CAP-led, developed, managed, and administered to provide equitable access to all PSE opportunities for CAP constituents.

This research provides an opportunity for our next phase. This can be performing scoping reviews including this needs assessment report and conduct validation interviews with PTO's and their PSE constituents. Is there an opportunity for qualitative data from the CAP student perspective to be added describing in more detail examples of PSE experiences and associated needs broken down in themes including location/type of PSE institution they are attending; specific barriers to enable access to and sustained learning etc. What are they and how many need the additional supports beyond funding limitations? We can then extrapolate the findings and bolster access to existing programs but more importantly, CAP can better serve its constituents.

With funding formulas based on principles of supply and student and family need, CAP-specific PSE funding has the potential to close the gap in PSE success among Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in Canada. While CAP constituents face numerous, serious, and ongoing barriers to socio-economic success and wellbeing, supporting their pursuit of higher education has been demonstrated to have positive impacts on ameliorating these circumstances. The evidence-based recommendations in this report provide meaningful steps forward towards this aim.

## References

- Antoine, A., Mason, R., Mason, R., Palahicky, S. & Rodriguez de France, C. (2018). *Pulling Together: A Guide for Curriculum Developers*. Victoria, BC: BCcampus. <https://opentextbc.ca/indigenization>
- Battiste, M., Findlay, I. M., Garcea, J., Chilima, J., & Jimmy, R. (2016). Maximizing the potential of urban Aboriginal students: A study of facilitators and inhibitors within postsecondary learning environments. UAKN Prairie Regional Research Centre. Retrieved from <http://uakn.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/UAKN-PSE-Report-Battiste-et-al-Final.pdf>
- Canada and the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples Political Accord. (2018). *Canada-CAP Political Accord*. <http://www.abo-peoples.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Political-Accord-ENG.pdf>
- Christopoulou, M., Lakioti, A., Pezirkianidis, C., Karakasidou, E., & Stalikas, A. (2018). The role of Grit in education: A systemic review. *Psychology*, 9, 2951-2971.
- Congress of Aboriginal Peoples. (2021). Phase 2 data analysis: Housing needs and challenges for rural and urban (off-reserve) Indigenous peoples. [In progress].
- Congress of Aboriginal Peoples. (2019). *Urban Indigenous peoples: Not just passing through. 2019 Research Report*. <http://www.abo-peoples.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Urban-Indigenous-Report-FINAL.pdf>
- Constitution Acts, 1867 to 1982*. c. 35(1)(2), 91(24).
- Daniels v. Canada (Indian Affairs and Northern Development), 2016 SCC 12, [2016] 1 S.C.R. 99.
- Dion, S. (2007). Disrupting molded images: Identities, responsibilities, and relationships - teachers and Indigenous subject material. *Teaching Education*, 18(4), 329-342.
- Duckworth, A. L. (2013). *Grit: The power of passion and perseverance*. TED Talks Education. [https://www.ted.com/talks/angela\\_lee\\_duckworth\\_grit\\_the\\_power\\_of\\_passion\\_and\\_perseverance](https://www.ted.com/talks/angela_lee_duckworth_grit_the_power_of_passion_and_perseverance)
- Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC). (2020). *Apply for funding under the Youth Employment and Skills Strategy Program: National or regional*. <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/funding/youth-employment-skills-strategy-program.html#h2.3>
- Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC). (2019). *Apply for the Canada Education Savings Grant (CESG) – About the grant*. <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/education/education-savings/savings-grant.html>
- Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC). (2019a). *Apply for the Canada Learning Bond (CLB) – About the Bond*. <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/learning-bond.html>
- Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC). (2019b). *Evaluation of Pathways to Education: Final report*. Ottawa, Ontario: Employment and Social Development Canada.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/reports/evaluations/pathways-education-report.html>

- Fine, S. (2015). Chief justice says Canada attempted 'cultural genocide' on Aboriginals. *The Globe and Mail*. <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/chief-justice-says-canada-attempted-cultural-genocide-on-aboriginals/article24688854/#:~:text=%22The%20objective%20%E2%80%93%20%20quote%20from%20Sir%20John,to%20be%20tolerated%3B%20rather%20it%20must%20be%20eliminated.>
- Frenette, M. (2015). An investment of a lifetime? The long-term labour market premiums associated with a postsecondary education. *Statistics Canada*. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11f0019m/11f0019m2014359-eng.htm>
- Greenfield, E. (2020). *Supporting Indigenous student success in post-secondary education: Thriving from application to graduation*. Samuel Centre for Social Connectedness. <https://www.socialconnectedness.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/PDF-Supporting-Indigenous-Student-Success.pdf>
- Healey, J. F., & Prus, S. G. (2019). Regression with a dichotomous dependent variable: An introduction to logistic regression. In *Statistics: A tool for social research, fourth Canadian edition*. Nelson Education Ltd.
- Indspire. (n.d.). Frequently asked questions. *Indspire*. <https://indspire.ca/programs/students/bursaries-scholarships/faqs/>
- Indigenous Services Canada. (ISC). (2020). *Inuit post-secondary education strategy*. <https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1578850688146/1578850715764>
- Indigenous Services Canada. (2018). *Inventory of federal Indigenous post-secondary education programs & supports: Students/Institutions/Labour Markets/Research/Other*.
- Indigenous Services Canada. (2021). *Métis Nation post-secondary education strategy*. <https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1578855031863/1578855057804>
- Indigenous Services Canada. (2021a). *Post-secondary student support program*. <https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1100100033682/1531933580211>
- Korteweg, L., & Fiddler, T. (2018). Unlearning colonial identities while engaging in relationality: Settler teachers' education-as-reconciliation. *McGill Journal of Education*, 53(2), 254-275.
- Marom, L. (2019). Under the cloak of professionalism: Covert racism in teacher education. *Race, Ethnicity, and Education*, 22(3), 319-337.
- Mashford-Pringle, A. (2011). How'd we get here from there? American Indians and Aboriginal peoples of Canada health policy. *Pimatisiwin: A journal of Aboriginal and Indigenous Community Health*, 9(1), 153-176.
- Mashford-Pringle, A., & Nardozi, A. (2013). Aboriginal knowledge infusion in initial teacher education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto. *The International Indigenous Policy Journal*, 4(4). DOI: 10.18584/iipj.2013.4.4.3

- Murray-Orr, A., & Mitton-Kukner, J. (2017). An exploratory case study of one early career teacher's evolving teaching practice in Northern Canada. *McGill Journal of Education*, 52(1), 71-92.
- Nardozi, A., Restoule, J.P., Broad, K., Steele, N., & James, U. (2014). Deepening knowledge to inspire action: Including Aboriginal perspectives in teaching practice. *In Education*, 19(3), 108-122.
- National Collaborating Centre for Indigenous Health. (2017). *Education as a social determinant of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Health*. Prince George, BC: National Collaborating Centre for Indigenous Health. <https://www.nccih.ca/docs/determinants/FS-Education-SDOH-2017-EN.pdf>
- Nelson, H. J., Cox-White, T. L-A., & Ziefflie, B. A. (2019). Indigenous students: Barriers and success strategies – A review of existing literature. *Journal of Nursing Education and Practice*, 9(3), 70-77.
- Oskineegish, M. (2015). Are you providing an education that is worth caring about? Advice to non-Native teachers in Northern First Nations communities. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 38(3), 1-25.
- Pickrell, A. (2008). An evaluation of the effectiveness of a postsecondary transition program for Aboriginal students. *Master's Thesis*. Memorial University of Newfoundland. [https://research.library.mun.ca/8675/1/Pickrell Alison.pdf](https://research.library.mun.ca/8675/1/Pickrell_Alison.pdf)
- Railsback, J. (2004). *Increasing student attendance: Strategies from research and practice*. Portland, Oregon: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.
- Rawana, J. S., Siukaran, D. D., Nguyen, H. T., & Pitawanakwat, R. (2015). Development and evaluation of a peer mentorship program for Aboriginal university students. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 38(2), 1-34.
- Romanow, J. T. (2020). *Indigenous student experiences with racism in Winnipeg*. Winnipeg, Manitoba: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. <https://mra-mb.ca/wp-content/uploads/IndigenousStudentExpwithRacismWpg.pdf>
- Rotondi, M. A., O'Campo, P., O'Brien, K., Firestone, M., Wolfe, S. H., Bourgeois, C., & Smylie, J. K. (2017). Our health counts Toronto: Using respondent-driven sampling to unmask census undercounts of an urban Indigenous population in Toronto, Canada. *BMJ Open*, 7, 1-8.
- Stagg Peterson, S., Huston, L., & Loon, R. (2019). Professional lives and initial teacher education experiences of Indigenous early childhood educators, childcare workers, and teachers in Northern Ontario. *Brock Education Journal*, 28(2), 17-32.
- Statistics Canada. (2012). *Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS) 2012*. <https://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p2SV.pl?Function=getSurvey&Id=109115>
- Statistics Canada. (2017). *Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS) 2017*. <https://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p2SV.pl?Function=getSurvey&Id=318572>
- Statistics Canada. (2017). Education in Canada: Key results from the 2016 Census. *The Daily*. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/171129/dq171129a-eng.htm>
- Statistics Canada. (2021). *Table 14-10-0359-01: Labour force characteristics by Indigenous group and educational attainment*. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1410035901>

- Statistics Canada (2020). Tuition fees for degree programs increase in 2020/21. Table 37-10-0004-01. *The Daily*. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/200921/dq200921b-eng.htm>
- Stonechild. B. (2006). *The new buffalo: The struggle for Aboriginal post-secondary education in Canada*.
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (TRC). (n.d.). *Residential schools*.  
<http://www.trc.ca/about-us.html>
- University of British Columbia. (n.d.). *Welcome to decolonizing teaching indigenizing learning*.  
<https://indigenizinglearning.educ.ubc.ca/>
- University of Saskatchewan. (n.d.). *Indigenization*.  
<https://teaching.usask.ca/curriculum/indigenization.php#EldersMessage>
- Wilson, A., & Battiste, M. (2011). *Environmental scan of educational models supporting Aboriginal post-secondary education*. Saskatoon, SK: Aboriginal Education Research Centre, University of Saskatchewan. <https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/38979021/WilsonBattiste.pdf>
- Young, D., Tong, A., Nixon, J., Fernando, P., Kalucy, D., Sherriff, S., Clapham, K., Craig, J. C., & Williamson, A. (2017). Perspectives on childhood resilience among the Aboriginal community: An interview study. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, 41(4), 405-410.

## Appendix A. Additional Information on PSE Programs

Currently CAP's constituents do not qualify for the following:

- Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP) – supports students to advance towards a recognized post-secondary education credential (including CEGEP, community college, undergraduate studies, advanced professional or post-graduate studies)
  - University and College Entrance Preparation Program – supports students enrolled in accepted university and college entrance preparation programs to enable them to attain the academic level required for entrance into degree and diploma credit programs.
  - Post-Secondary Partnership Program (PSPP) – supports First Nations established post-secondary education institutions and First Nations-directed community-based programming.
  - Metis Nation PSE strategy – \$362 million over ten years pledged in 2019. .
  - Support levels up to \$53,000/year for standard programs, \$90,000/year professional programs.
  - Inuit PSE strategy – \$ 125.5 million over ten years pledged in 2019

The non-status and off-reserve Indigenous population are continually excluded in the distinctions-based approach:

- PSSSP requires that First Nations applicants have Status. In several cases, individuals with Status who are living off-reserve are rejected. .
- The Metis Nation PSE strategy is administered through the Metis Nation of Canada (MNC) and affiliated organizations. It is only available to their membership.
- The Inuit PSE Strategy is administered through Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) and affiliated organizations. It is only available to their membership.
- The COVID-19 student funding which received \$75.9 million for Indigenous students is administered under the same distinctions-based model which excludes CAP's constituents. Only status, MNC affiliated and ITK affiliated Indigenous students are included in the distinctions-based model.

CAP's constituents are able to access ISET funding. However, the ISET program is limited:

- It only includes trades, 2-year, and non-degree programs.
- It is not considered for PSE. It is intended for short-cycle job training programs OR the final year of study in PSE (i.e., the 3rd or 4th year only for a degree program). It does not meet the demands of non-status and off-reserve PSE population.
- Provinces from BC to Ontario are provincial Metis ISET Agreement Holders. Therefore,
- Out of the 110 ISET Agreement Holders who allocate funding, the majority focus on on-reserve peoples only.

Admittance to formal PSE programs is needed to preserve culture and language and to provide an opportunity to Indigenize programming.



## Existing Programs

### Indigenous Services Canada (ISC)

- Post-Secondary Education
  - distinctions-based support for First Nations, Metis and Inuit students achieving their PSE
  - Covid-19 Budget: \$75.2 million was made available to distinctions-based First Nations, Metis and Inuit students in PSE programs who were affected by Covid-19
  - Student access: First Nations students apply through their band council/organization who oversee PSSSP; Metis students apply through their Governing Members; Inuit students apply through their Inuit land-claim organizations.
  - Budget 2019: \$814.9 million over 10 years and ongoing \$61.8 million for distinction-based Indigenous students pursuing their PSE programs.
- Post-Secondary Student Support Program
  - First Nations students can receive financial assistance from ISC towards an eligible post-secondary program.
  - Budget 2019: \$320 million is being invested over the next 5 years for the PSSSP (Student access: Status Indians).
  - Inuit Post-Secondary Education Strategy (Inuit students can receive financial assistance to achieve their PSE).
  - Budget 2019: \$125.5 million over 10 years and \$21.8 million ongoing to create a new Inuit PSE strategy (Student access: must reside in Canada and be a beneficiary of an Inuit land-claim agreement).
  - Metis Nation Post-Secondary Education Strategy (Metis Nation students can receive financial assistance to achieve their PSE).
  - Budget 2019: \$362 million over 10 years and \$40 million ongoing to create a new Metis Nation PSE strategy (Student access: Metis Nation students residing in Canada).
- Post-Secondary Partnerships Program
  - First Nations define their affiliation with educational institutions for the purpose of increasing and making available culturally appropriate PSE programs (Access: The First Nations University of Canada, Band Councils). Appointed by Band Councils.
- Urban Programming for Indigenous Peoples (UPIP)
  - Funding that supports, identifies, and addresses the needs of all Urban Indigenous Peoples through Indigenous and non-Indigenous organizations in culturally relevant programs.
  - Budget 2017/2018: \$53 each year for 5 years.
  - Access off-reserve organizations which can include universities
- Further Federal Financial and Non-Financial Assistance for Indigenous PSE students:
  - University and College Entrance Preparation Program.
  - First Nations students can receive financial assistance from ISC to help achieve the required academic for acceptance into post-secondary programs (Student access: Status Indians)

### Employment and Social Development

- Canada Emergency Student Benefit (CESB) - from May - August 2020, PSE students are eligible to receive income support if they have been affected by Covid-19, namely, lost work opportunities. (Student access: PSE students enrolled in programs working towards a degree, diploma or Certificate).
- The Canada Student Financial Assistance (CSFA) Program: Provides eligible students, including learners who self-identify as Indigenous, with targeted grants and loans, and offers repayment assistance to borrowers with financial difficulty. Canada Student Grants provide up-front, predictable, and non-repayable funding and are targeted to full- and part-time students, students with disabilities, and students with dependents from low- and middle-income families who are assessed to have a financial need. (Students who self-identify as Indigenous learners are not expected to contribute to their educational costs by providing a fixed student contribution of up to \$3,000 per year.)

### Correctional Service Canada

- Access to funding: students' responsibility OR the Federal Government provides the programs within individual institutions; PSE funding is made available within individual institutions under their education department; the inmate has PSE programming recognized as part of their Correctional Plan; the inmate satisfies all the needs of specification for PSE programming; the PSE program is accredited.

### Further Federal Financial Assistance for PSE students:

- Canada Student Grants and Loan.
- Canada Apprentice Loans and Repayment Assistance.
- Scholarships.
- Aid for Athletes.
- Aid for protected persons.
- Aid for reservists.
- Registered Education Savings Plans.
- Canada Learning Bond.
- Canada Education Savings Grant.
- Student financial help by Province and Territory

## Appendix B: Additional Program Supports

There is substantial need for supportive resources to develop PSE educators, institutions, and other personnel. These kinds of supports ensure the sustainability and vitality of all other PSE supports for CAP students and facilitate PSE attainment and success. Such additional or indirect PSE supports encompass resources to educate, train, and hire teachers, to transform PSE classroom environments and institutions through the process of indigenization, and to establish internal mechanisms within PSE institutions to ensure CAP students receive support throughout their post-secondary educational journeys. Possible dimensions of such supports are described below.

### Support for Educators

It is vital that non-Indigenous and Indigenous educators within PSE institutions are supported to participate in required skills trainings to aid in the development and delivery of their classroom curricula. Research consistently points to the benefits of non-Indigenous educators participating in Indigenous cultural safety/awareness training to improve their knowledge base of Indigenous histories, perspectives, issues, and policies in and outside of local contexts (Nardozi et al. 2014; Mashford-Pringle & Nardozi, 2013) as well as their ability to incorporate actions of reconciliation into their teaching practices (Korteweg & Fiddler, 2018). Reconciliation in context, is the settler educator's responsibility to address the ongoing colonial reality in Canada, as well as its attendant harms that continue to be imposed on Indigenous peoples. Reconciliation involves accountability on the part of settlers who must make amends and work to improve the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people (e.g. Antoine et al. 2018). PSE support for educators can include cultural safety training in which non-Indigenous educators are confronted with our shared histories and their settler positionalities, privileges, and implicit biases. They are encouraged to use this acknowledgement to challenge their personal beliefs and preconceived notions towards Indigenous peoples (Korteweg & Fiddler, 2018). Within this process educators learn to recognize settler-biases and harmful stereotypes toward Indigenous populations in all areas of education (curriculum, practices, etc.), thereby improving their ability to then create culturally safe and responsive classroom environments for all students (Korteweg & Fiddler, 2018).

Cultural safety/awareness training for educators helps participants to also recognize the importance of incorporating Indigenous worldviews in the classroom and all subject matter (Nardozi et al. 2014), improving the accessibility and inclusivity of PSE education. Educators learn to deliver lessons in a manner that is culturally safe and appropriate, improving their teaching relationship with all students. Supportive resources to promote and deliver cultural safety/awareness training for PSE educators should thus be integrated into CAP PSE programming.

### Support for Institutions

In terms of support for Indigenous educators, PSE institutions require additional supports to hire and retain self-identified Indigenous staff and faculty in full-time positions in all PSE departments and programs (Greenfield, 2020). This measure would improve the inclusivity of PSE institutions for both educators and students, promote Indigenous role models in educational roles, and dedicate spaces for Indigenous educators to teach on a wide range of topics so as to safely infuse Indigenous worldviews and ideologies into Western-based curriculum. As such, in their study on how to improve access,

attainment, and academic achievement of Indigenous students in PSE institutions, Wilson and Battiste (2011) recommend the following:

“Indigenous faculty needs to be in all departments and units and not isolated in certain departments, and if those faculty are not available then the institution should be trying to cultivate them by encouraging non-traditional units to actively recruit for masters and Ph.D. programs” (p. 47).

Researchers explain that without the retention of Indigenous educators in PSE institutions, Indigenous students often migrate and stay confined within “specific areas of study where Indigenous faculty members reside or where [Indigenous] courses are available, and the sensitivities of [Indigenous] people are addressed” (Wilson & Battiste, 2011, p. 18), thereby limiting equitable and safe access to wide range of PSE programs. Such implications shed light onto the need for additional PSE supports catered to PSE institutions and their policies aimed to recruit, hire, and retain Indigenous staff and faculty.

CAP has not yet been supported in establishing PSE programming and there remains minimal mechanisms or capacity to forge and sustain these important institutional relationships. Partnership capacity dollars are needed in order to deliver on these additional supports.

#### Support for Indigenization

Recently, there has been an uptick in the prevalence of PSE institutions working towards indigenizing their academic and education practices and systems (e.g. University of Saskatchewan, University of British Columbia, University of Toronto, Trent University). This process of indigenization calls for ample supportive resources. Antoine et al. (2018) explain Indigenization of PSE as:

“...bringing Indigenous knowledge and approaches together with Western knowledge systems... The goal is not to replace Western knowledge with Indigenous knowledge, and the goal is not to merge the two into one. Rather, Indigenization can be understood as weaving or braiding together two distinct knowledge systems so that learners can come to understand and appreciate both” (p. 6).

Indigenization plays an important role in reconciliation as it paves the way to forge new relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators and students. It provides a space for both to come together and relearn topics historically dominated by Western-based knowledge, and to learn the value of seeing concepts through Indigenous ways of knowing and doing (University of Saskatchewan, n.d.). The process of indigenization prompts critical reflection of current knowledge by both educators and students, facilitating steps toward reconciliation in helping both to address Canada’s colonial past and harm done onto Indigenous peoples; make amends; and improve relationships (Antoine et al. 2018).

The need to indigenize PSE institutions stems from generations of promoting Euro-Western worldviews and approaches to teaching and learning. Current Eurocentric curriculum largely misrepresents and dehumanizes Indigenous knowledge, cultures, histories, and practices as lessons on Indigenous ways of knowing have been masked by harmful stereotypes and predominately Western voices based on uninformed interpretations (Dion, 2007). Indigenization of PSE is therefore of benefit for all faculty, staff, and students. It improves the accessibility of the content, as well as opportunity for settler Canadians to relearn from the Indigenous peoples on their histories and practices, from the land in which students are situated on to pursue their PSE (Antoine et al. 2018). Methods to indigenization of PSE may take the form of integration of Indigenous content into all PSE curricula alongside Western teachings; reframing lessons to consider the whole student’s learning i.e., considering spiritual,

emotional, mental, physical growth as opposed to singular concepts; inviting Indigenous community members, Knowledge Keepers, and/or Elders in the classroom to deliver cultural teachings; land-based education; among many others (Antoine et al. 2018). CAP PSE supports must also focus on allocating resources in support of PSE institutional efforts to indigenize internal practices and curriculum. This process will require close consultation with individual establishments, to ensure the indigenization process involves and is tailored to local Indigenous community members and leaders.

#### Support for Internal Mechanisms

PSE supports also must include the development and maintenance of internal PSE institutional mechanisms set up to guide and support CAP students throughout their PSE journey. In Greenfield's (2020) exploration of influential factors shown to support Indigenous students attending PSE, Indigenous Student Centers were found as key components to aid students from PSE application through to graduation. Indigenous Student Centers may function as liaisons to facilitate communication and distribution of appropriate resources between Indigenous students, their families, and PSE staff and faculty. These structures are often hosted by the PSE institution and are designed to support Indigenous students in PSE recruitment, application, transition from home, and access to appropriate and safe housing. They may also provide holistic services to support the whole student in their PSE experiences, by way of offering supports at the cultural, mental, emotional, social, financial, and academic levels. Greenfield (2020) explains the importance of Indigenous Student Centers as "crucial in carrying out a variety of cultural events and activities that take place such as feasts, ceremonies, traditional teachings, craft workshops, and hosting Indigenous guest speakers" (p. 8). All of which are key components to fostering sustainable efforts toward reconciliation and indigenization of PSE institutions, as described above. For these reasons CAP PSE supports are recommended to incorporate additional funds and resources to promote, develop, and sustain Indigenous Student Centers within PSE institutions.

#### Developing mechanisms or relationships that could be used to establish these supports.

Each of the additional supports described above (e.g., cultural safety training for non-Indigenous educators, hiring supports for Indigenous educators, resources for indigenization of PSE institutions, as well as the development and maintenance of Indigenous Student Centers) require partnership building between CAP and PSE institutions. However, as CAP has not yet been supported in establishing PSE programming, there remains minimal mechanisms and capacity to forge and sustain these institutional relationships. This important next step requires particular attention to deliver all forementioned supports.

Many PSE universities across Canada have implemented internal policies and structures - often Indigenous Student Centers or Services - with mandates to support Indigenous students in their academic attendance and achievements. Their mandates also typically include fostering culturally inclusive environments throughout university campus and curriculum; examples include, although are not limited to, University of British Columbia, University of Saskatchewan, York University in Ontario, Trent University in Ontario, Dalhousie University in Nova Scotia, University of Prince Edward Island). CAP and the Government of Canada must establish partnerships with PSE institutions to co-create mechanisms to design and deliver additional supports and resources wherever necessary, so as to provide in-direct support to CAP students in all aspects of their PSE journey.