

SFNS POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION (PSE) COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

Background

The SFNS PSE Collaborative was established in 2019 by the SFNS Economic Leakage Working Committee, a group representing SFNS' six member First Nations¹ who since 2016 have been driving and overseeing the SFNS Regional Economic Leakage Project. This project is aimed at identifying and recapturing areas of high external spending (outside of member communities) to strengthen the regional First Nations' economy in Southwestern Ontario. The Committee developed this SFNS PSE Collaborative when the Project found that **SFNS' six member First Nations spend over \$40 million externally annually on education.**

Purpose

We, the SFNS PSE Collaborative, have come together with an open heart and mind, in good faith to outline our shared commitment and responsibility to prioritize the needs and interests of aspiring, former and current PSE students who are members of SFNS First Nations in this non-legally-binding partnership agreement. **This agreement provides the framework and conditions under which we agree to work together toward our shared goal of supporting local First Nation post-secondary education (PSE) students to ensure they have a safe, positive and successful PSE experience.**

Parties & Roles

The Parties to this Partnership Agreement include the Southern First Nations Secretariat (SFNS), a secretariat (tribal council) servicing six First Nations in southwestern Ontario (including through PSE support); Tecumseh Community Development Corporation (TCDC), a development corporation servicing ten First Nations in Southwestern Ontario, including all six SFNS member First Nations; and the following post-secondary education (PSE) institutions:

1. Fanshawe College
2. Lambton College
3. St. Clair College
4. triOS College
5. Western University
6. University of Windsor

We agree to work together toward our shared goal of supporting PSE students from SFNS member First Nations, consistent with our detailed Roles & Responsibilities outlined in the Terms of Reference (Appendix).

¹ SFNS member First Nations, include: Aamjiwnaang First Nation, Chippewas of Kettle & Stony Point First Nation, Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, Eelūnaapéewi Lahkékewilt (Formerly Delaware Nation - Moravian of the Thames), Munsee-Delaware Nation and Oneida Nation of the Thames.

Vision

We, the SFNS PSE Collaborative, have developed a vision for the future of SFNS First Nation community members, students, graduates and our institutions based on our work, as follows:

All SFNS First Nation community members who wish to pursue post-secondary education (PSE) have the opportunity. They are exposed to higher education options in their childhood, and have access to PSE funding and localized online and in-community education options.

PSE students from local First Nations are engaged and supported in safe, positive and meaningful lifelong learning. They feel a sense of belonging in their school communities, are valued for the perspectives they bring, and encouraged to succeed.

PSE graduates (alumni) from local First Nation communities are engaged in further education, employed in meaningful positions and enjoying opportunities to give back to their communities. They serve as role models or mentors to the younger generations.

SFNS and member First Nations are valued education stakeholders, engaged in decision-making at PSE institutions, especially in matters affecting First Nations students. Communities are strengthened by the recognition and enhancement of community knowledge, skills and other strengths as well as the creation of jobs, businesses and wealth.

PSE institutions are enriched by SFNS First Nation community and student presence and voice. There are many First Nation Students, Faculty, and Staff members, who bring their Indigeneity to work, dismantling colonialism and Indigenizing institutional structures and processes. Local First Nations' cultures, histories, and knowledge systems are embedded throughout the curriculum across disciplines and subject areas, and reflected across campus.

Values & Traditions

Our Collaborative and our work are guided by the following values and traditions:

- **Two Row Wampum** - Working together in peace, friendship & harmony, recognizing our interdependence, honouring the spirit and intent of the Two Row Wampum
- **7 Sacred Teachings** - Guided by the 7 Sacred Teachings (Wisdom, Love, Respect, Bravery, Honesty, Humility, Truth)

Other Principles

Our Circle and our work are also guided by the following principles:

- **First Nations education jurisdiction** - Respecting First Nations control over education means exercising jurisdiction and that this jurisdiction is community-based.
- **First Nations autonomy** - Respecting SFNS member First Nations' maintain their autonomy.
- **Action oriented** - Commitment to action as a working group advocating for a shared goal that requires institutional change.
- **Collaboration** - Sharing experiences and opportunities to support each other's education goals in the spirit of collaboration in our shared interest in supporting First Nations students as opposed to competition.
- **Ministry Legislative compliance** – Complying with Ministry legislation, including laws & policies, where applicable and compatible with participating First Nations' legislation.

Context

We acknowledge that SFNS member First Nations have special rights that must be taken into consideration as they are among the traditional custodians of the lands and waters where our institutions reside. We also acknowledge and agree to respect and uphold First Nations' inherent right to education jurisdiction, meaning First Nations' control over First Nations' education. We further acknowledge this takes on special significance in light of the historic colonial trauma and its ongoing intergenerational impacts for First Nations peoples and communities, including due to the residential school experience.

In connection with this context, we are committed to upholding the Indigenous Education Protocol (IEP) Agreement (Colleges and Institutes Canada, N.D.) and the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRC) Calls to Action (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015) as a means to ensure this history is not forgotten or repeated and that First Nations students suffering from such traumas can be well supported in safe, positive PSE environments where they can be successful.

Scope of Influence

Our Collaborative is intended to support the critically important work of our Indigenous Education Councils, Indigenous Initiatives Offices, and Indigenous Student Centres, and is not intended to undermine their authority in any way. While we agree that both influence over decision-making on matters affecting First Nations students and commitment to action on priorities identified by First Nations communities are critical to the meaningful engagement of local First Nations communities, we defer to the existing structures within our respective organizations to determine how best to respond to our recommendations.

Additionally, while we acknowledge that we are in different places in our journeys of decolonizing and Indigenizing our respective institutions, we understand that we can learn, grow and accomplish more together toward our shared goal of supporting local First Nation post-secondary education (PSE) students. Consistent with this inclusive outlook, we agree to share any beneficial outcomes of this agreement with SFNS member First Nations, regardless of the level of PSE services they receive from SFNS (direct, coordinated or none), as desired and determined by these communities. Further, we enter into this Agreement, with a willingness to invite other PSE institutions to join our Collaborative who share in our goal as agreed upon by our Collaborative ad hoc.

Data Sharing & Confidentiality

As a Collaborative, we acknowledge First Nations data sovereignty, consistent with OCAP™ (The First Nations Information Governance Centre, 2014). We also acknowledge the importance of protecting individual data, as outlined in the Tri-Council Policy Statement 2 (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, 2014). We agree to share data in a manner that is consistent with both documents, such that data is shared at the aggregate level only as needed and as agreed upon by SFNS member First Nations. We agree to keep all data that is shared private and confidential expect for the expressed purposes agreed upon, which include organizational planning and decision-making on matters that will benefit students who are members of SFNS member First Nations.

Structure For Partnership Working Group

The basic structure for implementing the intentions and commitments of this Agreement will be based on:

- Gathering at regular meetings to share, learn and develop, implement and measure our progress against our action plan;
- Sharing information, experiences and resources as desired toward this goal;
- Developing and implementing action plans that result in tangible institutional change toward our shared goal of supporting students in a safe, positive and successful PSE experience;
- Garnering SFNS member First Nations' support and involvement; and
- Using our existing resources and capacity where possible to support our work, such as meeting space and printing.

Terms of Reference

The details of how we work together will be governed by our Terms of Reference, which we shall develop as a working document subject to change as mutually agreed upon by our group.

SIGNED BY:

Fanshawe College Signing Authority

R. GUY WILLIAMS
Printed Name

[Signature]
Signature

Eni gantzid, SPECIAL ADVISOR INCL. EDUC & DEV'T
Position

AUG 31/20
Date

Lambton College Signing Authority

Rob Kardas

VP, Academic & Student Success

Printed Name
DocuSigned by:
Rob Kardas
Signature

Position
8/31/2020
Date

Southern First Nations Secretariat Signing Authority

SHAWAN PLAIN
Printed Name

[Signature]
Signature

CHAIR SFNS
Position

AUG 31/20
Date

St. Clair College Signing Authority

MURIEL SAMPSON
Printed Name

[Signature]
Signature

INDIGENOUS COUNSELLOR
Position

AUGUST 31/20
Date

Tecumseh Community Development Corporation Signing Authority

Phyllis George
Printed Name

[Signature]
Signature

General Manager
Position

Aug 31/2020
Date

trIOS College Signing Authority

Stuart Bentley

Printed Name

DocuSigned by:
Stuart Bentley
Signature

President

Position

8/31/2020

Date

University of Windsor Signing Authority

J. Boryman
Printed Name

Signature

Associate Vice President Academic
Position

Date

Aug 2020

Western University Signing Authority

Candace Brunette
Printed Name

Signature

Acting Vice President / Associate Vice President
Position

Date

Aug 2020

Appendix:
SFNS POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION (PSE) COLLABORATIVE
TERMS OF REFERENCE
As of July 17, 2020

Mission

Working together to support students from Southern First Nations Secretariat (SFNS) member First Nations in a safe, positive and successful Post-Secondary Education (PSE) experience.

Member Organizations & Roles

Members of the SFNS PSE Collaborative and their respective roles are outlined below.

1. **The Southern First Nations Secretariat (SFNS) is a secretariat (tribal council) servicing six First Nations in southwestern Ontario. Currently, the SFNS provides PSE services to members of Oneida Nation of the Thames and Chippewas of Kettle & Stony Point First Nation and coordinates flow-through PSE funding to Eelünaapéewi Lahkéewiit (formerly Delaware Nation) and Chippewas of the Thames First Nation to provide PSE Services. SFNS does not provide PSE funding to Aamjiwnaang First Nation or Munsee-Delaware Nation because both fall under the Anishinabek Education System (AES). However, SFNS does currently provide services to Munsee-Delaware Nation.**

SFNS serves as a conduit between PSE institutions that are member of this Collaborative, and SFNS member First Nations for communication and coordination purposes. SFNS respects and defers to member First Nations' ultimate jurisdiction over education. SFNS provide ongoing aggregate-level SFNS member student data and information to help inform strategic planning and decision-making among member PSE institutions. SFNS also Chairs and take minutes at the SFNS PSE Collaborative meetings.

2. **Post-Secondary Education (PSE) Institutions servicing students from SFNS member First Nations, including:**
 - Fanshawe College
 - Lambton College
 - St. Clair College
 - triOS College
 - Western University
 - University of Windsor

All member PSE institutions provide PSE services to students who are members of SFNS communities. These PSE institutions agree to work with SFNS to reach out, coordinate, and communicate about how they can best serve First Nations students. This includes serving as a conduit between local SFNS member First Nations and their respective institutions to ensure First Nations student needs are understood, prioritized and

addressed through strategic action planning. PSE institutions coordinate with their respective Indigenous Education Councils, Indigenous Initiatives Offices, and Indigenous Student Centres to ensure that SFNS' input is brought to the institutions' senior most decision-making tables (Presidents, Provosts and Board of Governors) and advocating for commitment to action through inclusion of SFNS' priorities in PSE institutions' strategic plans.

- 3. Tecumseh Community Development Corporation (TCDC) a development corporation servicing ten First Nations in Southwestern Ontario, including all six SFNS member First Nations. They are committed to helping First Nation People in the Southwestern Ontario region who are operating or planning to start their own business. TCDC assists in the following services to First Nation people within their delivery area:**

- **Accessibility to capital/business financing;**
- **Ongoing client support services including business plan assistance, marketing advice and small business counselling;**
- **Community economic development project support to benefit First Nation; and Communities.**

TCDC can provide customized training in business and organizational development.

TCDC will keep all members apprised of opportunities and needs for education and training. TCDC will also take into consideration and respond to capacity development opportunities and needs that are raised by SFNS and member PSE institutions in its program development.

Shared Responsibilities

Member organizations will work together as an organized Collaborative with quarterly in-person meetings with revolving host member institutions to:

- **Act as a Community of Practice (Wenger, 1998), sharing what is working well and what is not working well within our respective organizations to inform action-planning toward our stated purpose; and**
- **Develop, monitor and revise action plans based on our community of practice to ensure we are moving our agenda forward to achieve our stated purpose.**

Membership, Appointments & Terms

Members include the following:

- 1. Two representatives of SFNS Post-Secondary Education Department as designated by SFNS. Suggested representatives include the Post-Secondary Department Manager, and Post-Secondary Education Counsellors.**

2. **Two representatives from each participating PSE institution and an alternate, as designated by the institution. Suggested representatives include Managers & Directors of Indigenous Student Centres or Services, as well as the Senior most executive responsible for the Indigenous Initiatives Portfolio (e.g. Special Advisor Indigenous Initiatives, Associate/Vice-President or Provost (A/VP) Indigenous Initiatives, AVP Student Experience, etc.).**
3. **One representative from TCDC and an alternate, as designated by TCDC. The suggested representative includes someone privy to capacity development initiatives such as the General Manager.**

Ex Officio members who will attend meetings, include the Executive Director of SFNS, as well as an independent Chair to facilitate meetings and a minute-taker, both provided by SFNS. Appointments are made by each participating member organization and terms are fixed.

Decision-Making

Decisions will be made by consensus among members, in accordance with the traditions of SFNS member First Nations. Where a consensus cannot be reached, voting may be used at the mutual agreement of members.

Conflict of Interest

In the event that a member of the Collaborative is in Conflict of Interest during a discussion or decision making process, this member will disclose the nature of the conflict immediately verbally or in writing and propose an appropriate course of action to the Chair. The Chair will deliberate on how to address the conflict with the Collaborative if necessary. Usually, this will consist of removing the person of interest (in conflict) from any (including future) discussion and decision-making related to the matter. In the event that a member observes another member in a potential conflict of interest, it is incumbent upon the observing member to disclose the perceived nature of the conflict and for the Chair to determine the appropriate course of action.

A conflict of interest is defined as a member of the Collaborative or their family member's ability to benefit personally from a discussion or decision-made. Examples include:

- Discussions and determinations related to contracts for specific vendors owned by or services provided by a member or their family member or that of a competitor;
- Discussions and determinations related to employment of a member or their family member or that of a competitor; and
- Accepting of gifts from persons who could be perceived as intending to influence a decision in their favour (this does not include gifts that are tied to cultural traditions and nominal in monetary value).

References

- Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (2014). Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans. Retrieved from <http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-politique/initiatives/tcps2-eptc2/Default/>.
- Indigenous Education Protocol for Colleges and Institutes. (N.D.). Indigenous Education Protocol for Colleges and Institutes. Received from <https://www.collegesinstitutes.ca/policyfocus/indigenous-learners/protocol/>
- The First Nations Information Governance Centre. (2014, May). Ownership, Control, Access and Possession (OCAP™): The Path to First Nations Information Governance. Ottawa: The First Nations Information Governance Centre.
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action. Winnipeg, MB: Author. Retrieved from: http://trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf
- Wenger, E. (1998). Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.