



**Virtual Summit  
AFN Survey of First Nation  
Post-Secondary Students  
2011**

## Introduction

On January 27, 2011, National Chief Shawn A-in-chut Atleo convened a Virtual Summit on First Nations post-secondary education. A second Virtual Summit focusing on Indigenous Institutes of Higher Learning (IIHLs) was held on March 10, 2011.

Both sessions enabled First Nations students across the country to express their thoughts on key issues in First Nations post-secondary education.

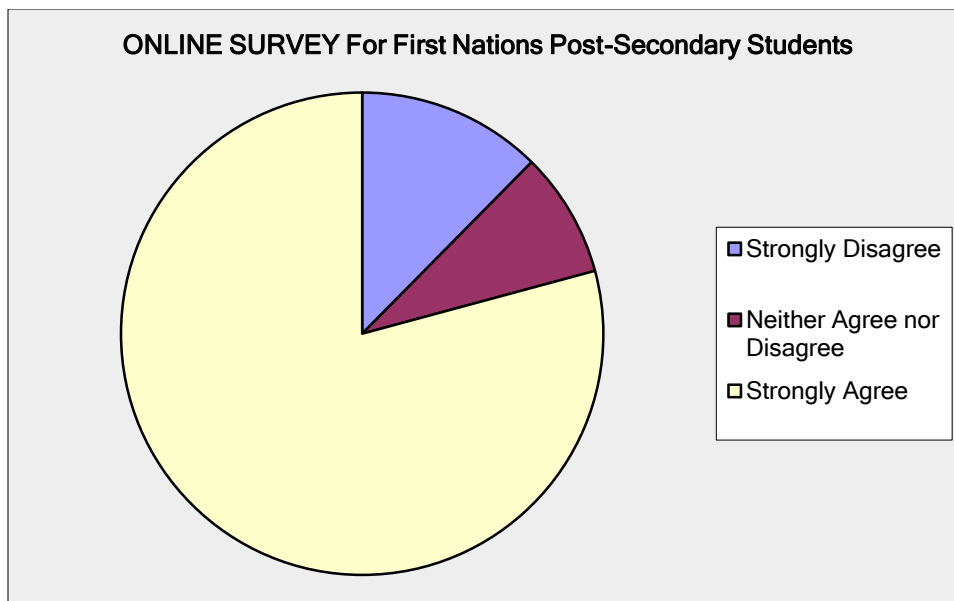
In addition to the two online dialogue sessions, the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) posted a survey online to seek more specific answers to ten questions regarding First Nations post-secondary education.

Students participating in the first Virtual Summit were invited to visit the AFN website and answer the survey questions. Notice of the survey was posted on the AFN website, and the National Chief announced it during the Virtual Summit. The survey was posted for two weeks and filled out 356 times.

### Question 1

Post-secondary education is a fundamental requirement for First Nations self-determination and self-government.

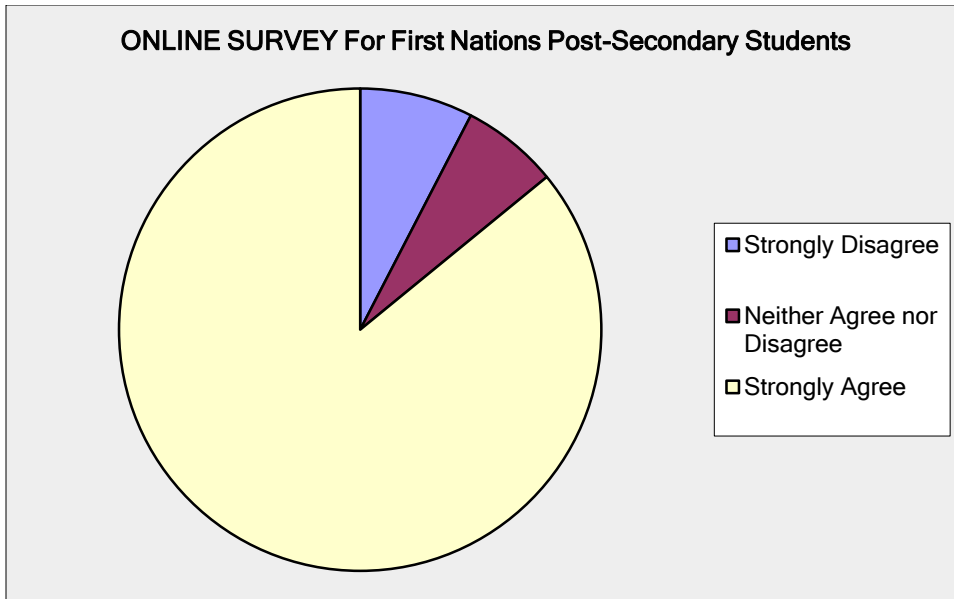
<a href="#">Answer Options</a>	<a href="#">Response Percent</a>	<a href="#">Response Count</a>
Strongly Disagree	12.4%	44
Neither Agree nor Disagree	8.4%	30
Strongly Agree	79.2%	282



### Question 2

First Nations languages, cultures, histories and knowledge are important to me.

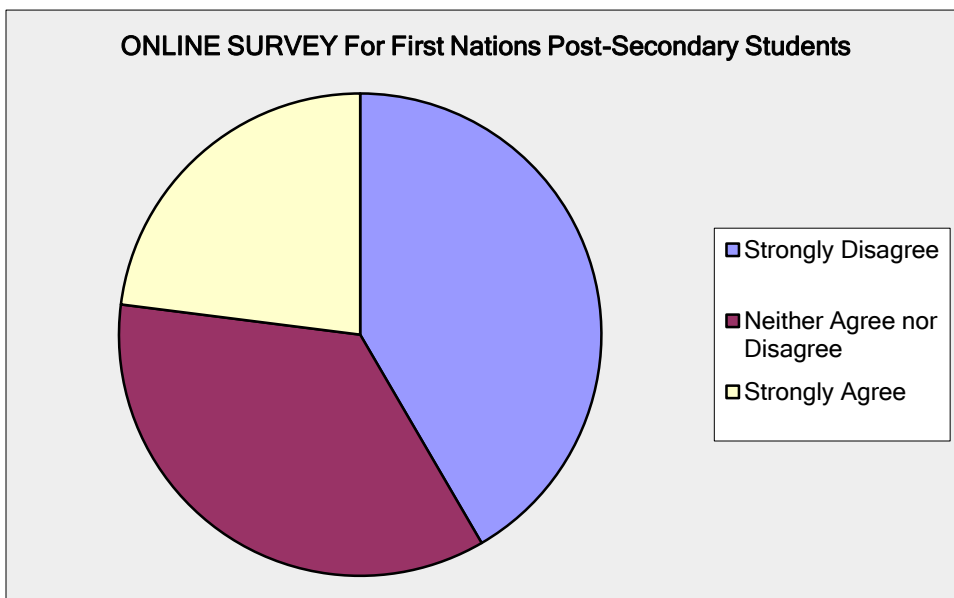
<a href="#">Answer Options</a>	<a href="#">Response Percent</a>	<a href="#">Response Count</a>
Strongly Disagree	7.6%	27
Neither Agree nor Disagree	6.5%	23
Strongly Agree	86.0%	306



### Question 3

First Nations languages, cultures, histories and knowledge are adequately reflected in my post-secondary institution.

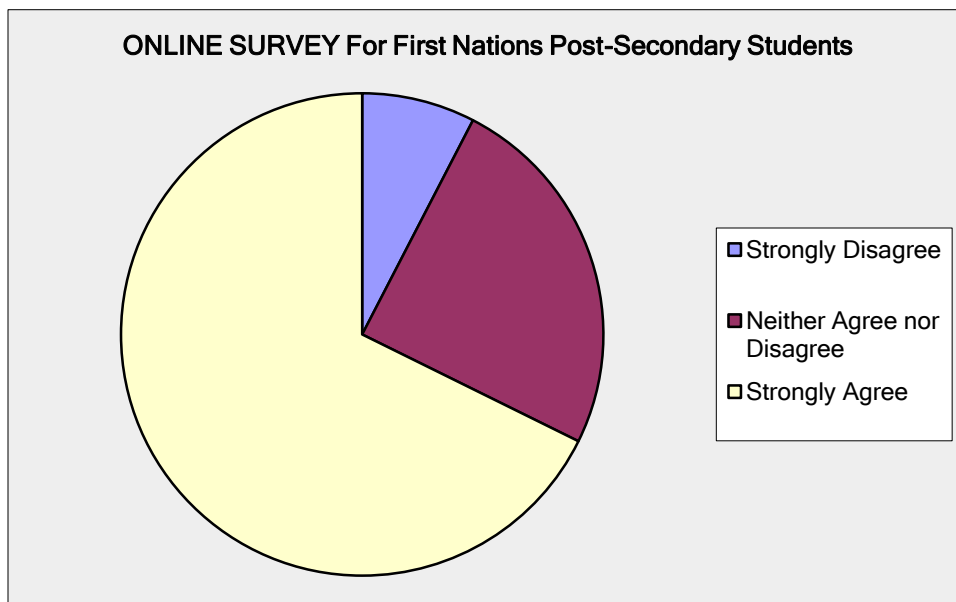
<a href="#">Answer Options</a>	<a href="#">Response Percent</a>	<a href="#">Response Count</a>
Strongly Disagree	41.6%	148
Neither Agree nor Disagree	35.4%	126
Strongly Agree	23.0%	82



#### Question 4

If college and university programs of choice were offered in, or in close proximity to, First Nations communities more First Nations people would enrol.

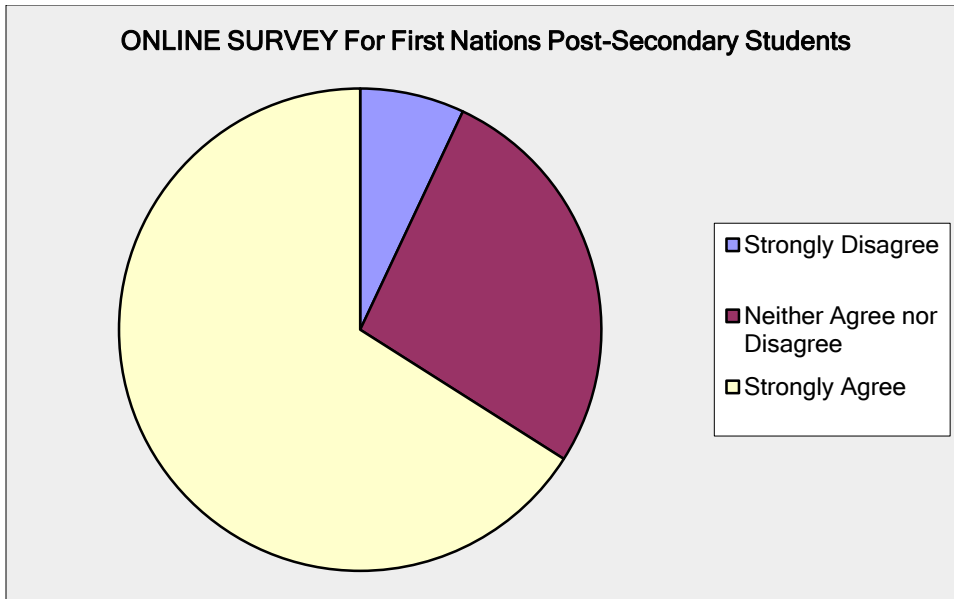
<u>Answer Options</u>	<u>Response Percent</u>	<u>Response Count</u>
Strongly Disagree	7.6%	27
Neither Agree nor Disagree	24.7%	88
Strongly Agree	67.7%	241



#### Question 5

I am confident that I will be able to find a job when my post-secondary education is successfully completed.

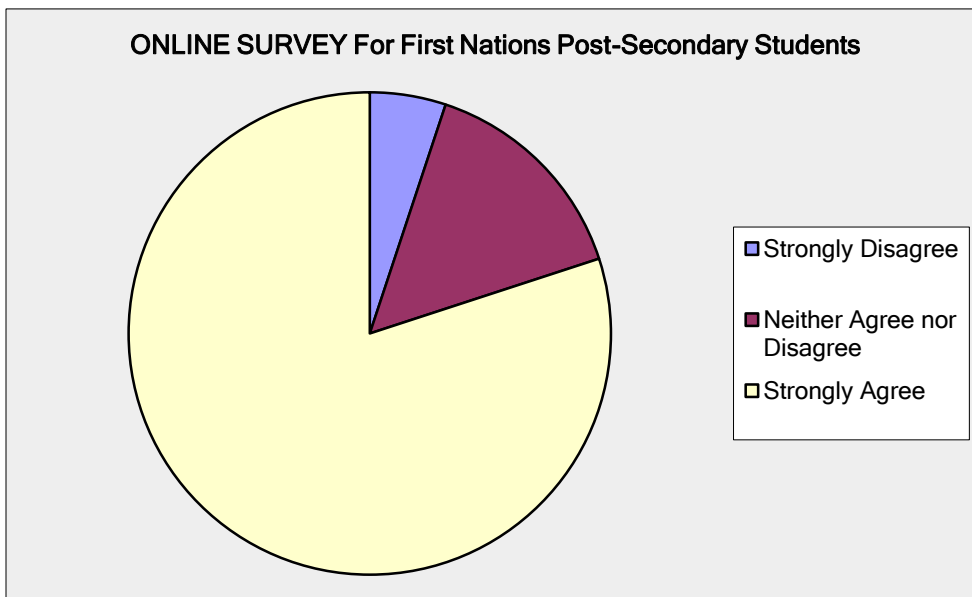
<u>Answer Options</u>	<u>Response Percent</u>	<u>Response Count</u>
Strongly Disagree	7.0%	25
Neither Agree nor Disagree	27.0%	96
Strongly Agree	66.0%	235



**Question 6**

First Nations Post-Secondary Institutions require greater recognition and support.

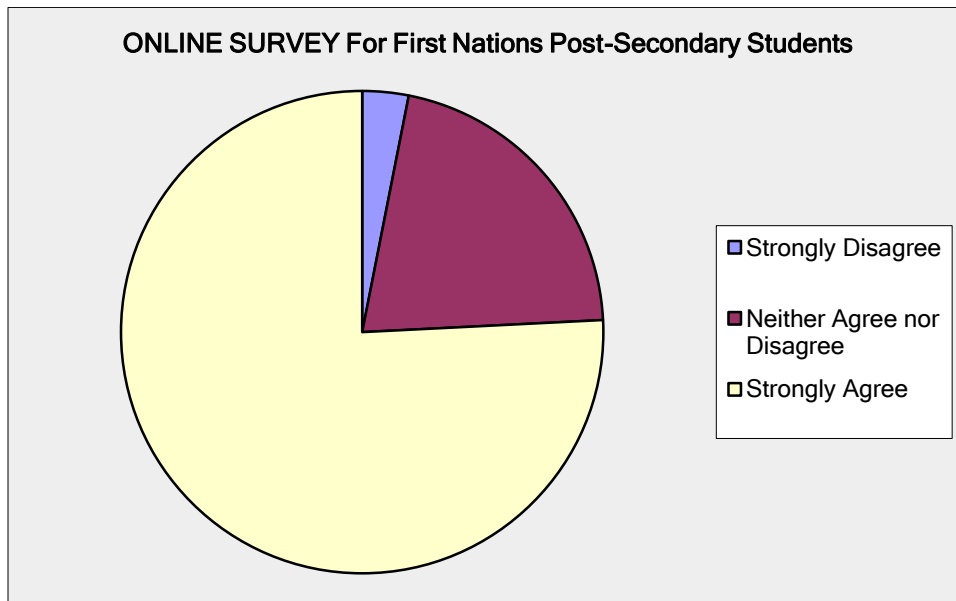
<u>Answer Options</u>	<u>Response Percent</u>	<u>Response Count</u>
Strongly Disagree	5.1%	18
Neither Agree nor Disagree	14.9%	53
Strongly Agree	80.1%	285



### Question 7

Maintaining my connection to my home community is important to me.

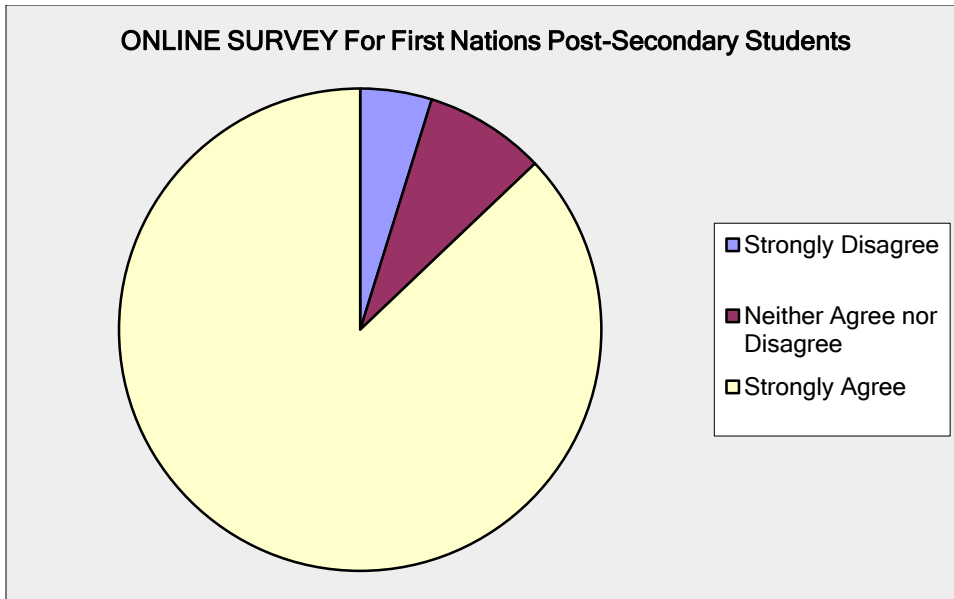
<u>Answer Options</u>	<u>Response Percent</u>	<u>Response Count</u>
Strongly Disagree	3.1%	11
Neither Agree nor Disagree	21.1%	75
Strongly Agree	75.8%	270



### Question 8

Funding for post-secondary education is an inherent Aboriginal and Treaty Right.

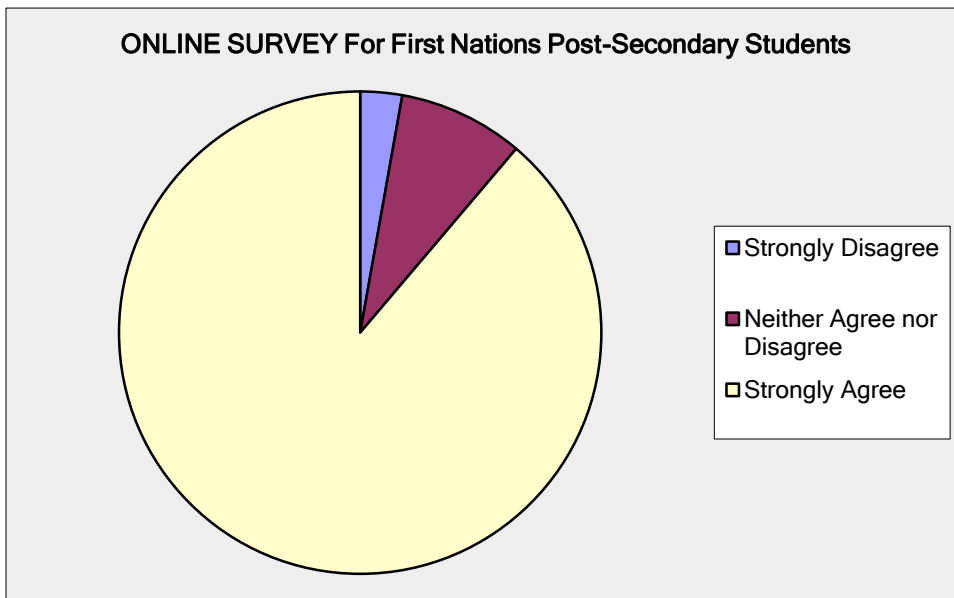
<u>Answer Options</u>	<u>Response Percent</u>	<u>Response Count</u>
Strongly Disagree	4.8%	17
Neither Agree nor Disagree	8.1%	29
Strongly Agree	87.1%	310



**Question 9**

The continuation of the Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP) is vital to ensuring First Nations students can access post-secondary education.

<a href="#">Answer Options</a>	<a href="#">Response Percent</a>	<a href="#">Response Count</a>
Strongly Disagree	2.8%	10
Neither Agree nor Disagree	8.4%	30
Strongly Agree	88.8%	316

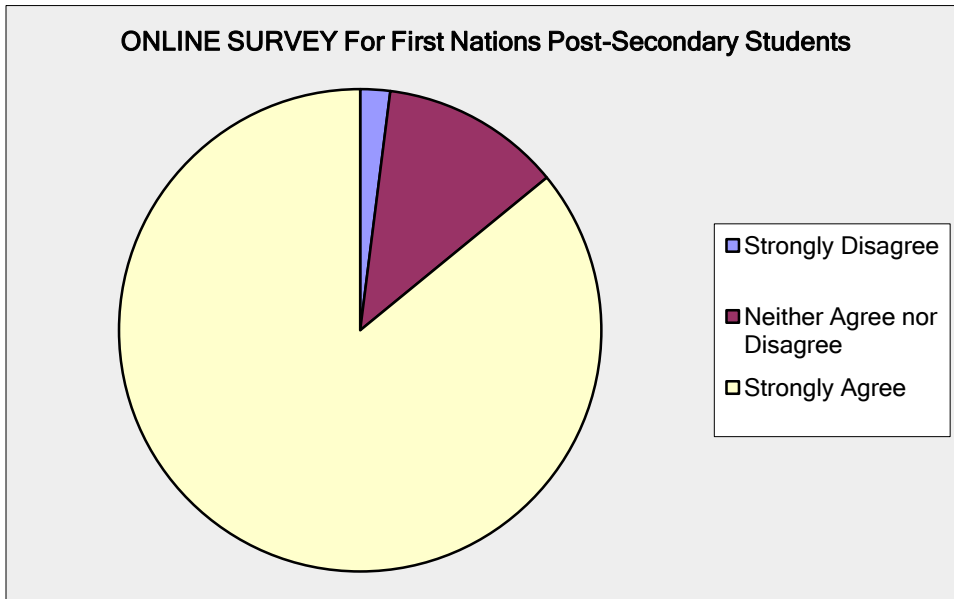




### Question 10

I am concerned about the future of the Post-Secondary Student Support Program.

<u>Answer Options</u>	<u>Response Percent</u>	<u>Response Count</u>
Strongly Disagree	2.0%	7
Neither Agree nor Disagree	12.1%	43
Strongly Agree	86.0%	306



## Conclusion

First Nations post-secondary students strongly agree with the contention that funding for post-secondary education is an Aboriginal and Treaty right. 89% identified that the Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP) is vital to ensure First Nations students can access post-secondary education. This runs counter to a media campaign arising from the release of a report from a right-wing think-tank which questions the usefulness of the current program and calls for its termination. These assaults against the program probably explain why only 2% of survey respondents indicated they were not concerned about the future of the PSSSP.

First Nations students are closely connected to their communities and their cultures. 76% of respondents identified that remaining connected to their home community is very important. 86% of respondents agreed that languages, cultures, histories, and knowledge are very important to First Nations post-secondary students. However, only 23% agreed that these elements were adequately reflected in their post-secondary institution. Almost 42% strongly disagreed that their post-secondary institution adequately reflected First Nations languages, cultures, histories and knowledge. Although many colleges and universities have established Indigenous programs and services, First Nations students believe that this is a work in progress and more needs to be done.

Almost 68% of respondents felt that more First Nations people would enrol in post-secondary programs if they were offered closer to where First Nations peoples reside. Indigenous Institutions of Higher Learning (IIHL's) have specialized in community-based post-secondary program delivery. 80% of respondents noted that IIHLs require more recognition and support.

Only 7% of respondents disagreed with the contention that they would be able to find a job at the conclusion of their post-secondary studies. Almost 80% identified that post-secondary education is a fundamental requirement for self-determination and self-government.

The Assembly of First Nations would like to thank all students who took the time to participate in this survey. Your voices are important and we want to assure you that you are being heard.