
Assembly of First Nations

55 Metcalfe Street, Suite 1600
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 6L5
Telephone: 613-241-6789 Fax: 613-241-5808
www.afn.ca



Assemblée des Premières Nations

55, rue Metcalfe, Suite 1600
Ottawa (Ontario) K1P 6L5
Téléphone: 613-241-6789 Télécopieur: 613-241-5808
www.afn.ca

ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY
July 24, 25 & 26, 2018, VANCOUVER, BC

Resolution no. 29/2018

TITLE: First Nations Post-Secondary Education Review Report and Recommendations

SUBJECT: Post-Secondary Education

MOVED BY: Tyrone McNeil, Proxy, Seabird Island Band, BC

SECONDED BY: Chief David McDougall, St. Theresa Point First Nation, MB

DECISION: Carried; 1 abstention

WHEREAS:

A. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN Declaration) states:

- i. 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.
- ii. Article 13 (2): States shall take effective measures to ensure that this right is protected and also to ensure that Indigenous peoples can understand and be understood in political, legal and administrative proceedings, where necessary through the provision of interpretation or by other appropriate means.
- iii. 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.
- iv. Article 14 (2): Indigenous individuals, particularly children, have the right to all levels and forms of education of the State without discrimination.
- v. 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.

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- vi. Article 23: Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for exercising their right to development. In particular, indigenous peoples have the right to be actively involved in developing and determining, health, housing and other economic and social programmes through their own institutions.
- B. First Nations have an inherent and Treaty right to education, including post-secondary education as part of a lifelong learning process.
- C. The federal government is obliged to uphold and honour the authority of First Nations to exercise control over education. The Chiefs-in-Assembly have passed Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Resolution 36/2016, *Inherent and Treaty Right to Post-Secondary Education* and Resolution 40/2016, *Call on Canada to address the backlog for eligible First Nation post-secondary students*, that both affirm and uphold this autonomy.
- D. In accordance with AFN Resolution 14/2017, *Post-Secondary Education Federal Review*, the Chiefs Committee on Education led the First Nation specific post-secondary review, with support from the National Indian Education Council, nationally-representative post-secondary education technicians and First Nations Institutes of Higher Learning and has prepared a First Nations post-secondary education report.
- E. The federal government is required to obtain the free, prior and informed consent of First Nations on any proposed changes to post-secondary education programs and/or policies relating to First Nations education administered by Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) or other federal departments or agencies.
- F. The 2017 Federal Budget announced \$90 million over two years, beginning in 2017-2018, to the Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP), as well as a comprehensive and collaborative review with Indigenous partners of all current federal programs that support Indigenous students who wish to pursue post-secondary education. The purpose of the review will be to ensure that these programs meet the needs of individual students while supporting attendance at and completion of a post-secondary education degree or credential.
- G. The Minister of Indigenous Services Canada will return to Cabinet with a Memorandum to Cabinet (MC) in Fall 2018 related to Indigenous Post-Secondary Education.
- H. The AFN estimates there are nearly 9,000 First Nations students currently enrolled in post-secondary education who are not receiving funding through the Post-Secondary Student Support Program. There are approximately 78,000 First Nations graduates needed to close the gap in post-secondary education.

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- I. As First Nations high school completion rates are increasing, there is increased enrollment in and demand for post-secondary education by First Nations students. This increased demand has yet to be met by the federal government.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Chiefs-in-Assembly:

1. Accept the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Post-Secondary Education Review 2018 Interim Report and work with respective regions to implement the recommendations as appropriate in fulfillment of AFN Resolution 14/2017, *Post-Secondary Education Federal Review*.
2. Call on the federal government to extend and expand funding commitments to fully support First Nations post-secondary education, including:
 - a) Providing immediate support to First Nations for students currently enrolled in post-secondary education who are not receiving funding through the Post-Secondary Student Support Program.
 - b) Providing immediate support to First Nations to address gaps in post-secondary education, including the increased enrollment demands in post-secondary education due to higher high school completion rates.
 - c) Funding for an honourable joint process that would seek a new policy authority for post-secondary education.
 - d) Ensuring additional annual funding continues through to 2020-2021 and/or until the joint process is complete and First Nations regions have defined the actual demand for post-secondary education.
3. Direct the AFN, Chiefs Committee on Education (CCOE) and National Indian Education Council to work in partnership with Indigenous Services Canada to develop an honourable, joint process that supports existing regional models and the development of regional processes and new models to seek a new policy authority for post-secondary education that includes:
 - a) First Nations-led, regional, and/or Treaty-based processes for engagement on post-secondary education beyond elementary-secondary, as part of life-long learning.
 - b) First Nations-led, regional development of funding models to support post-secondary education as part of First Nations lifelong learning.
 - c) Processes to work directly with First Nations and their mandated institutes of higher learning on a regional basis, in order to develop core institute funding models, address the historical lack of funding, move

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towards accreditation and ensure that First Nations without institutes have access to the resources required to bring post-secondary programming into their community.

- d) Funding to support the regional engagement processes, including support for research and costing for each region to undertake region specific work on, but not limited to: student funding, First Nations institute funding, funding allocation methodologies and community-based delivery funding.
- e) The establishment of new First Nations post-secondary education institutions.
- f) A budget submission to address the historical backlog of First Nations seeking post-secondary education.
- g) A distinct First Nations regional approach including, and where desired and applicable, Treaty-based funding to policy development in co-operation with Indigenous Services Canada to return to Cabinet with an open, transparent and accountable process that empowers a true partnership of post-secondary between First Nations and the Government of Canada.

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