

VANCOUVER ISLAND UNIVERSITY

INDIGENOUS ACCESS AND ENROLMENT PLAN:

NAVIGATING ACCESS

MARCH, 2017

OFFICE OF ABORIGINAL EDUCATION AND ENGAGEMENT

HAY CH QA' SII'EM SIYE' YU MUKW MUSTIMUXW.

Acknowledgement of Traditional Territories

Protocol among the First Nations in our region is to acknowledge and thank them for welcoming students, faculty, and staff to their traditional territories. Therefore, to the Snuneymuxw First Nation, Tla'Amin First Nation (whom we recognize as a different language group), Cowichan Tribes, Snaw-Naw-As First Nation, and Kwaww'wam First Nation we raise our hands and say

Hay ch qa' sii'em siye' yu mukw Mustimuxw.

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Success is not an idea, a job, or outcome; it is happiness, passion and energy.

~Victoria McFarlane, Manager of Education Services
Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council, Education

INTRODUCTION

The Indigenous Access and Enrolment Plan: *Navigating Access* was created from a series of conversations with our local partners, the Hwulmuxw Mustimuxw Siem Advisory Committee, School districts 68, 69, and 79, Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council, Community Adult Learning Centres, Coastal First Nations, Nanwakolas Council. There were also many internal conversations with VIU community including the Office of Aboriginal Education and Engagement (OAEE), Services for Aboriginal Students (SAS), Office of Enrolment Management (OEM), Student Affairs, Cowichan Campus, and the 'Su'luqw'a' Community Cousins Mentorship group.

The plan informed and driven by meetings with the above groups, but also aligns with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action on Education, VIU's Academic Plan *Access to Excellence*, the Aboriginal Education Plan, and the Enrolment Management Plan. The purpose of the Indigenous Access and Enrolment Plan: *Navigating Access* is to articulate collaborative and supportive pathways for all Indigenous learners accessing post-secondary education at Vancouver Island University.

VISION AND VALUES

The vision for *Navigating Access* stems from the need to address gaps in access for Indigenous Learners to post-secondary education at VIU identified by the above partner groups. These internal and external partner groups have informed the "[Four Pillar Philosophy](#)." The Four Pillars are: Mentorship Culture, Supportive Relationships, Cultural Health and Wellness, Outreach, Coaching, and Skill Building. These Four Pillars construct the vision and the values for this Indigenous Access and Enrolment plan, which give shape to the initiatives described within.

There is evidence that attrition of our incoming and current Indigenous student population due to lack of understanding around available supports and services that could make the difference between leaving and continuing. A 2014 Aboriginal Student Survey done by VIU University Planning and Analysis concluded that financial difficulty, overall health and wellness, family relationships, and study skills, were among the top reasons for leaving (VIU University Planning and Analysis, 2014). Regular and supportive contact with VIU's prospective and current Indigenous students is key in fostering the knowledge in each student that they aren't alone and there are resources that can help.

VIU isn't alone in this phenomenon:

“ONECA [Ontario Native Education Counselling Association] commissioned research to examine the supports needed to assist students with transitions to post-secondary. The research found several interrelated and recurring themes, highlighting the need for regular communication between all stakeholder groups (students, parents, educators, administrators, counsellors and other support staff). In addition to the recurring themes, ONECA found the need for, “frequent and continuous monitoring by the support team (teachers, counselors, advisors, faculty, tutor, mentors employers) from the community right through to post-secondary graduation” (Assembly of First Nations, 2012. p. 35).

Navigating Access is a plan that responds to gaps in access to and completion of post-secondary that have been identified by our partners and current Indigenous students ([see Appendix I](#)). The plan also speaks to the seven Indigenous commitments outlined in the Board of Governors Approved Academic Plan Update: *Promoting and Celebrating Access to Excellence* (Witty, 2017, p. 11).

KEY AREAS OF ENGAGEMENT

The Key Areas of Engagement are the nomenclature attributed to what partners describe as a, “future designed in a cultural context” ([NTC, Nov. 3, 2016](#)). The areas of engagement are:

- Build timely and supportive relationships with prospective learners and their community supports (parents, guardians, elders, Education Coordinators, etc.) before they leave home.
- Build timely and supportive relationships with current Indigenous students on campus and VIU’s Indigenous alumni.
- Create a culture of mentorship on campus, in communities, and within faculties, service and support areas.
- Support students to build resiliency, grit and to self-advocate through holistic cultural health and wellness.
- Support students to develop lifelong skills and connections.
- Outreach, coaching and support coordination for each individual learner.

These Key Areas of Engagement are woven into every initiative that follows in this plan.

RELATIONSHIP, AND ACCESS INITIATIVES

Any supportive pathway to education must address the unique barriers that many Indigenous learners face when accessing post-secondary education. Many are the first in their family to attend post-secondary, which on its own presents a minefield of “micro-barriers” (Johnson, 2016). In addition, Indigenous learners graduate high school at a rate of 36% (compared to 72% of other Canadians) and there is a likelihood that students who have graduated do not have required pre-requisites (Chiefs Assembly on Education, 2012). Therefore, connecting early, often and reaching learners, communities,

and families in multiple and individualized ways and is a common need area identified by our partners ([See Appendix I](#)). The following five initiatives are practices that respond to the gaps uncovered in our conversations and are either in currently in progress or need adequate funding to realize.

i. 'Su'luqw 'a' Community Cousins Summer Program, beginning August, 2017

Summer transition programming creates an opportunity for learners to be introduced to the benefits of post-secondary at an early age. Our school district partners note that, "summer is a key transition time" and a space in school programming where students can become disengaged, especially following grade 12 ([School District #69 \(Oceanside\), January 24, 2017](#), [School District #68 \(Nanaimo-Ladysmith\), November 18, 2016](#)). VIU will run an inaugural ten-day summer program in August, 2017 with twenty-five Indigenous students from five local school districts. The 'Su'luqw'a' Community Cousins (Mentors) will plan and execute the camp and participate in a Tribal Journeys canoe trip before the beginning of the program. Following the Tribal Journeys experience, Mentors will host high school students while they learn to navigate the campus environment, engage in program exploration, sexual health programming, gain an understanding of required pre-requisites, and begin a lasting mentorship relationship with current students in the 'Su'luwq'a' Community Cousins program. This program begins to address Action Item #2D in VIUs Aboriginal Education Plan, "As new funding comes available create an "Academy" for incoming learners, providing individualized advice, support, and course options" by creating an initial cohort of prospective Indigenous learners (Hobenshield, Sharon; Lane, 2016). During the summer program students will engage in a number of sessions designed to instill the confidence to pursue their future path, which may include programs at VIU.

ii. Indigenous Portfolio Process, ongoing

The Indigenous Learning and Recognition Portfolio (ILRP) process is a vital, "reflection on the value of lived experience..., history, cultural practice, and traditional knowledge, [which can illuminate] the path forward" (Sinclair & Richardson, n.d.). The Indigenous Portfolio process is currently delivered regularly on a dual credit basis, in-community, in contract programs such as Aboriginal Ecotourism and First Nations Stewardship Tech Training programs and as part of the Aboriginal University Bridging Program (AUPB). A .5 chair position was recently added in the Faculty of Career and Academic Prep to enhance the AUPB. The Indigenous Portfolio Process is potentially a helpful part of the transition to post-secondary education and even more so for adult learners who are returning to school (Hobenshield, Sharon; Lane, et.al. 2016). During the portfolio process students find their past experience not only valid, but that it should be recognized and celebrated. This process can also uncover pathways that can be further explored and may involve post-secondary education at VIU. Many of our partners have identified the ILRP process works on many levels including the following: introducing high school students to current students, opening up pathways, increasing confidence,

creation of community, etc. [Cowichan Campus, January 23, 2017, Event: Supporting Transitions for Aboriginal Students Coming to VIU, November 17, 2016, School District #68 \(Nanaimo-Ladysmith\), November 18, 2016, School District #79 \(Cowichan Valley\), December 14, 2016](#)). Enhancement to the ILRP program would no doubt build on the above benefits students have experienced.

iii. 'Su'luqw'a' Mentorship Initiatives, new

Mentorship is imperative to the success of Indigenous learners and is central to Indigenous Culture (Alberta Education, 2007; Klinck et al., 2005). Providing ample opportunities for connection with mentors is crucial to the success of students at every stage (prospective, current, and alumni). Consistent and regular contact with Indigenous applicants through personalized home phone calls (phone teams) and visits to schools and communities could be a starting place for the mentor/mentee relationship. 'Su'luqw'a' Community Cousins have valuable and inspiring experiences to share with any Indigenous learner accessing post-secondary education. Coordinated gatherings such as homework clubs and other activities in consultation with Elders, schools, and mentors could define post-secondary for Indigenous learners and empower them to pursue post-secondary (Hobenshield, Sharon; Lane, 2016, Action Item 2D, p. 12). Gatherings could roll out with the support of the 'Su'luqw'a' Coordinator and a VIU Regional Resource who could provide program exploration and coaching on an ongoing basis starting with grade 10 students (or younger). Initiatives such as the above also speak to several our partners' comments around the benefits they feel increased mentorship would provide, "VIU students talking about what they wish they knew back in high school would help high school aged students develop a work ethic and see why they should focus on school work" ([School District #68 \(Nanaimo-Ladysmith\), November 18, 2016](#), para.) and "[mentors can help create], inter"National" families [that are] a great source of support and an opportunity to share cultural practices and growth experiences" ([Meeting with Coastal First Nations \(CFN\), February 20, 2017](#), para.). This sentiment is also supported by our current VIU Indigenous students, "Provide mentorship programs for students with similar/specific journey/goals" ([Aboriginal Student Engagement Sessions Sept – Oct, 2016](#)). Increasing opportunities for mentorship across the institution will impact success rates of our students.

iv. Regional Relationship-Building – Education Navigators, new

Building **authentic** relationships and "designing the future together in a cultural context" is a key element of the Access and Enrolment Plan for Indigenous Learners (Assembly of First Nations, 2012; Brotherhood & Brotherhood, 1972; [Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council, November 3, 2016](#)). Even students who are ready for the challenges of university life may not have the support structures in place to assist them (Johnson, 2016).

Applicant reports show that the majority of VIUs Aboriginal students come from the local region (Vancouver Island, Sunshine Coast, and Lower Mainland) and a large minority come from the far

North (NWT & YT), Interior BC, Northern BC, the Lower Mainland and Alberta (Vancouver Island University Applicant Report, May, 2016). At the time of writing the Aboriginal Recruitment Officer currently has relationships with Education Coordinators, Aboriginal Education Workers and Counsellors at schools and in-community in many of the above regions. While many members of the VIU community contribute to student recruitment, the Aboriginal Recruitment Officer drives and supports many of the formalized recruitment and transition efforts for prospective Indigenous students. The majority of Indigenous-specific retention and transition initiatives are not supported by the Aboriginal Recruitment Officer and are mainly supported by the Services for Aboriginal Students team, the Aboriginal University Bridging Program, First Nation Studies and the Office of Aboriginal Education and Engagement, among others.

The [School and Community Outreach Overview](#) outlines the creation of an infrastructure to support prospective and incoming Indigenous learners. Five Education Navigators (ENs) are each assigned a geographic region to support. Incoming students from the assigned regions (prospective and applicants) will be divided among four ENs and informally placed into a cohort. Education Navigators are responsible for reaching out to their new and prospective student cohorts regularly and especially at key transition points. During a Fall, 2016 series of Aboriginal Student Engagement Sessions students identified that, “[i]ndividual support and checking in” would help them stay and complete their programs at VIU ([Aboriginal Student Engagement Sessions Sept – Oct, 2016](#)). Support circles would also serve to, “remind students why they are here” and acknowledge their journey on a new path, both common sentiments echoed throughout our partner meetings ([Event: Supporting Transitions for Aboriginal Students Coming to VIU, November 17, 2016](#), [Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council, November 3, 2016](#), [Meeting with Coastal First Nations \(CFN\), February 20, 2017](#)). ENs will also create new transition programming and must be in active communication with the campus community so that they can provide accurate program information, support, and services to their students. ENs must also be in active communication with the communities they serve and the formal and informal support structures that exist within each. Education Navigators will support students with areas that first generation learners typically find challenging: program exploration, course selection, application support, funding information, self-advocacy, the awareness of campus services and supports, campus student groups, activities, etc. Education Navigators will work to remove as many barriers to post-secondary as possible so that Indigenous learners find it easier to access education in general and at VIU.

Enhanced capacity to build relationships in identified regions would allow Education Navigators to provide personalized support to prospective students, their families, and the community. One of the consistent themes from partner engagement sessions was the need for a dedicated VIU contact point for families and key support people working and living in-community, ([Event: Supporting Transitions](#)

[for Aboriginal Students Coming to VIU, November 17, 2016](#)). Another ever-present theme uncovered by both our local partners and in the literature is the need for a personalized learning and support pathway for each student that includes family and community: “[T]he key elements of First Nations lifelong learning include...parental involvement and accountability, and safe and healthy facilities founded on principles that respect First Nations jurisdiction over education” (Assembly of First Nations, 2012, p. 15; [Appendix I – Meeting Notes](#)).

Education Navigators will enhance opportunities for authentic relationships to flourish and coordinate support, services, visits, communications, promotional materials, new programming, program exploration sessions, community and on-campus events, etc., informed by their home within the VIU community. There will be room in these roles to motivate an organic change in direction where Indigenous students no longer need to learn how to navigate the “system.” The system will begin to fit the person rather than the person attempting to fit the system. Education Navigators able to support incoming cohorts would also address Action Item #2D, “...create an “Academy” for incoming learners, providing individualized advice, support, and course options” (Hobenshield, Sharon; Lane, 2016. p.13) as well as several key objectives from the Enrolment Management Plan (2012).

v. Shush u’yulh Indigenous Alumni, new

VIU’s Indigenous Alumni (Shush u’yulh) are important members of our community. These relationships should be nurtured post-graduation. VIU Graduates’ return to the community can be another time of difficult transition. An Alumni support network could be developed to support graduates while they enter/return to community/the workforce and also to make them aware of the value they bring to prospective students’ who are learning about post-secondary. Central to this would be the creation of a Shush u’yulh Internship program. Along with establishing a support structure for their fellow alumni in consultation with VIU Elders, Shush u’yulh will work alongside Education Navigators and in consultation with Elders and Education Coordinators in local communities to develop and deliver a regional mentorship program. Interns would be hired by the Office of Aboriginal Education & Engagement for the 16 month period following graduation from VIU. Indigenous Alumni will create relationships with local communities and current students with the goal to provide support at key transition times: leaving community, returning home, graduation, first semester, first year, and for students who choose to stop before completing their program.

STUDENT SUPPORT AND RETENTION

Without support from the university, family, and community our students’ journey is much more difficult. The first semester and indeed the entire first year is a time of great upheaval and transition for students. As noted above, students decide to leave due to family responsibilities, health and/or financial reasons, lack of connection with others, and/or poor grades after first semester (VIU

University Planning and Analysis, 2014). Many students leave quietly and either don't know where to turn or choose not to access resources that can help. A practical and multi-faceted internal outreach approach paired with extra support for first year students would begin to address attrition.

i. In-Community Orientation

All partners consulted during the making of this plan agree that most Indigenous students newly enrolled in post-secondary don't know what to expect in advance of their post-secondary journey ([see Appendix I](#)). In fact a 2014 "Did Not Register (DNR)" report done by University Planning and Analysis indicated that students who applied, were accepted to VIU, and chose not to attend were, "more likely to be male, Aboriginal, first-generation students, local (both in-province and Mid-Vancouver Island Region) applicants, mature students..." (Office of University Planning and Analysis, 2014, p. 7). The report further states that the reasons for not registering included"

"...tuition/costs, access to student loans, and availability of financial awards. Course scheduling (including a lack of evening classes and long waitlists) and a lack of information (particularly around which classes to register for) were also identified as reasons for not registering" (Office of University Planning and Analysis, 2014, p. 8).

This data suggests that in-community orientation programming around waitlists, course planning, financial aid and awards, program exploration, and creating learning pathways that include supportive measures, and information in general would mitigate some of the reasons Indigenous students choose to defer their education at VIU. It is not beyond the realm of possibility that students who choose to defer their education ultimately never take action towards attending university at all. As mentioned above, all partners have mentioned their students/community members experience gaps when it comes to transition programming, confidence-building, and a need for learning pathways. In a November, 2016 meeting with representatives from most of our local communities commented about, "education beginning in-community, learning pathways would support the creation of self-worth and understanding the value of learning" ([Event: Supporting Transitions for Aboriginal Students Coming to VIU, November 17, 2016](#)). School districts have said, "connecting transition programming with dual credit students and creating more places for students to connect" would help their students ([School District #68 \(Nanaimo-Ladysmith\), November 18, 2016](#), [School District #79 \(Cowichan Valley\), December 14, 2016](#), [School District #69 \(Oceanside\), January 24, 2017](#)). Communities have requested that information for future students (applicants) be delivered in-community, in a way that includes family and even faculty members (Office of Aboriginal Education & Engagement, 2017, p. 11-13). Information about what to expect, how to access on-campus supports, services, and financial aid & awards would empower students to self-advocate and problem-solve before these gaps in knowledge become barriers to their education. Nanawakolas Council suggests bringing the university to the

community to give students a taste of what it would be like to be a student at VIU, i.e., deliver a day of classes in-community. In-community orientation programming could be created and delivered by Education Navigators under the VIU Regional Relationship-Building scenario above.

ii. Services for Aboriginal Students

The academic, cultural, and social activity at Shq'apthut paired with the support of the team at Services for Aboriginal Students (SAS) is critical to students at every stage of their time at VIU. The people at SAS create a strong sense of community among students and in addition to their roles as Educational Advisors, support many of the cultural and academic activities at Shq'apthut. New to a busy lineup of welcome and other events last year was, Theyul'shenum Tseep. The event is a component of the New Student Welcome, which all new students are invited to at the start of their time at VIU. Theyul'shenum Tseep was hosted for the first time in 2016 jointly by Services for Aboriginal Students and the Office of Aboriginal Education and Engagement. This celebration includes elements of ceremony, the Elders, 'Su 'luqw'a' Community Cousins, Services for Aboriginal Students, First Nations Studies Faculty, and the Office of Aboriginal Education and Engagement are all on hand to welcome students.

While Theyul'shenum Tseep marks the beginning of an important journey for students, there is currently no semester end or year-end celebrations/ceremonies. Ceremony and celebration at key times during the first year could instill students with confidence, provide them with well-deserved recognition, and remind students they aren't alone and foster the courage to keep going (para, [Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council, November 3, 2016](#)). See "First Year Support and Retention Processes," for a comprehensive list of recommend actions in the Enrolment Management Plan, specifically, "Establish regular first year completion and recognition celebrations" (Enrolment Management Plan Committee, 2012, p. 16). Presence of support services at celebrations and ceremonies within the first year as well as mentorship and VIU outreach during this time is critical.

iii. Ongoing Support: On-Campus Outreach

Regular outreach and support from the university is imperative in the first year and beyond, and additional support must also come from the students' communities of origin (Assembly of First Nations, 2012). A campus-wide approach to regular and supportive interactions between students, faculty and staff would make it easier for students to access supports and services at turning points. The following new initiatives may address the need for regular and supportive interaction with our Indigenous student population:

- A) **Faculty Aunties and Uncles Program.** Ideally, each incoming student would have a designated faculty mentor within their chosen faculty or the faculty where they have the most coursework. The establishment of an "Indigenous Aunties or Uncles" mentor in each

faculty could be an important connection point for new students and would also address areas of the VIU Indigenous Commitment such as, supporting ways of knowing, understanding Indigenous interests, etc. in the Academic Plan (Witty, 2017, p. 18-22). A first semester check-in, second semester check-in, and exit interviews could be conducted by the Auntie/Uncle. Faculty Aunties and Uncles who come forward for this initiative will be invited to take training sessions that will prepare them for such an undertaking. Some visible marker of participation in the training program will be given so students know they can approach the designated faculty member for support. Faculty would also be supported by additional Professional Development activities provided by the OAEE, one example being the [Na'tsa'maht Shqwaluwun](#) series, which was offered throughout 2016/2017.

B) **Squle'eq Mentorship Circles** are “check-in” circles held at regular intervals for all Indigenous first year students. Circles would be led by primarily by the Education Navigators and students would be split into their regional groups. This is a safe space where students can ask questions and give and receive support to and from their fellow new students as well as learn about the university. Students asked for feedback in engagement sessions on campus have said that they would be more likely to stay at VIU if, “[m]ore students in similar classes could form groups to help each other” ([Aboriginal Student Engagement Sessions Sept – Oct, 2016](#)). Guest speakers/presenters such as the Aboriginal Student Counsellor, 'Su'luwqw'a' Community Cousins, Shush u'yulh Alumni Interns, Elders, Financial Aid Representatives, others could be integrated into Mentorship Circles to address common first-year concerns. This initiative would further satisfy Action Item #2D, “...create an “Academy” for incoming learners, providing individualized advice, support, and course options” (Hobenshield, Sharon; Lane, 2016. p.13)

C) **Aboriginal Counsellor**

In 2016/2017, VIU created an Aboriginal Counsellor position out of the Student Affairs department. At the time of writing the Aboriginal Counsellor has been in her position for one month. This position will evolve in time. Workshops around balance, grounding, holistic energy care and other initiatives like, “Indigenized yoga” are all in the early planning stages. The Aboriginal Counsellor is also at Shq'aphthut to meet with students (non-private sessions) on Fridays.

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

Navigating Access outlines a coordinated approach to Indigenous student access by many areas of the university. A common understanding and consistent messaging when approaching communities, schools, and other partners, is crucial to building trust and relationships. Therefore, a coordinated, campus-wide Indigenous marketing and communications plan should be developed in relationship with all partners and disseminated. Communications planning would include coordination with all

Indigenous Peer Leadership groups (i.e., 'Su'luqw'a' Community Cousins), Services for Aboriginal Students, The Office Aboriginal Education and Engagement, the Office of Enrolment Management, University Relations and Strategic Marketing, and faculty and program areas.

EVALUATION MEASURES

SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES (BY APRIL, 2018)

By April, 2018 some short-term effects of measures taken under this plan would be relationships beginning to grow between Education Navigators and communities, schools, and in urban areas. Outreach and coaching should be taking place beginning in September, 2017. New students beginning in September, 2017 will certainly begin to develop lifelong skills and connections by engaging in their studies and checking in at regular 'Squle'eq Mentorship Circles. Because students now feel supported, we should start to see some evidence of them building the capacity to self-advocate, self-determine, and bounce back from the challenges that learning itself inherently presents.

MEDIUM-TERM OUTCOMES (BY, OCTOBER, 2019)

By October, 2019 we should see evidence that Indigenous student access to VIU is improving and current student retention is enhanced. Relationships with current students on campus are growing with VIU service and support areas and with Education Navigators. Education Navigators have developed productive and authentic relationships with communities, schools, and urban areas. They are connected with those working with prospective Indigenous student groups and/or individuals. Impact assessments for communities, current students, and families should be conducted to measure whether increased community connection gives students, faculty, staff, and community members the support needed to access post-secondary.

A series of meetings in 2018/2019 with our internal and external partners originally consulted during the creation of *Navigating Access* will help us gauge whether new initiatives have begun to address or have addressed the areas of concern/gaps uncovered in the 2016/2017 meetings [noted here](#). Partner meetings will also provide formative feedback to active areas of engagement under this plan. Note that this plan does not include a strategy to address persistent barriers such as transportation, full-financial support, or child care.

LONG-TERM OUTCOMES (BY OCTOBER, 2020)

By 2020 the original group admitted in September, 2017 will have graduated or nearing graduation. These students will be able to tell us whether they feel that they had access to collaborative and supportive pathways to their aspirations. This group will also make-up our first official group of Indigenous Alumni (Shush u'yulh) under this plan. Education Navigators will now begin to grow and maintain the relationship between Alumni and VIU.

Evaluations of Faculty and Staff done yearly at the conclusion of the Na'tsa'maht Shqwaluwun Professional Development series will help determine whether internal support efforts have resulted in equipping VIU Faculty and Staff with tools they need to support Indigenous students on campus. These evaluations will also provide formative feedback for development of future Professional Development series'.

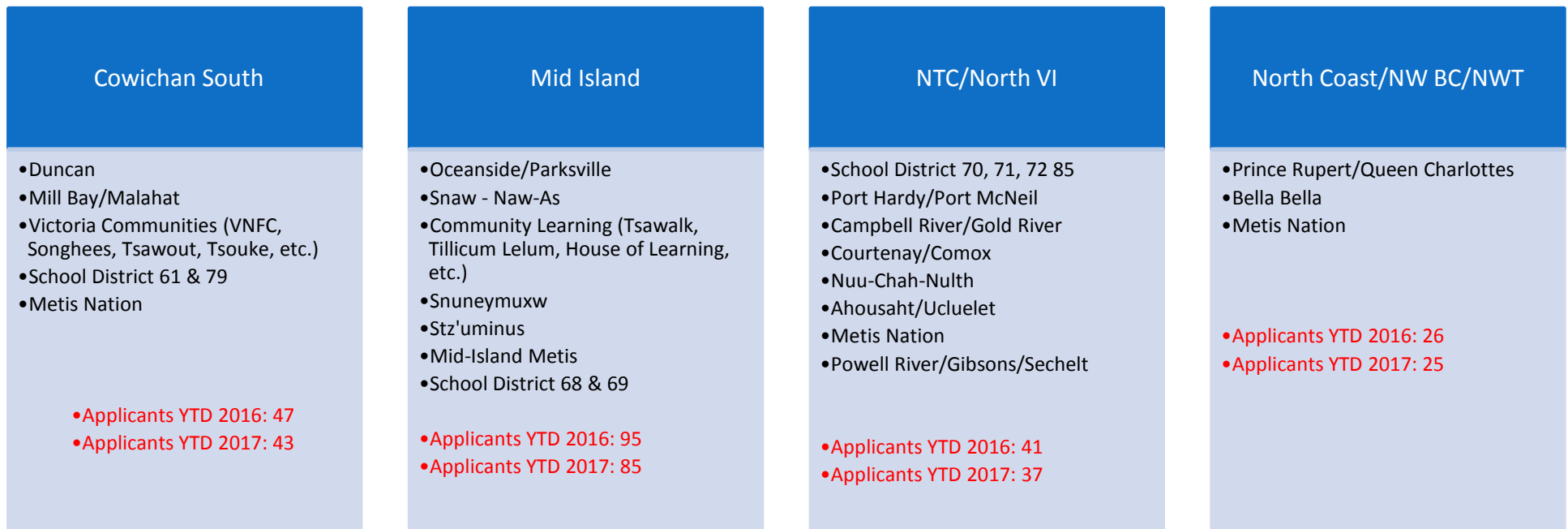
Short, medium and long-term evaluations will use a multitude of methods from surveys, to focus groups, to involving our partners in University Planning and Analysis.

DIAGRAM I – FOUR PILLAR PHILOSOPHY

School and Community Outreach Overview

Four Pillar Philosophy	Mentorship Culture
	Supportive Relationships - Beginning in Communities and Schools
	Cultural Health & Wellness
	Outreach, Coaching, Skill-Building

Regional Breakdown*



Indigenous Applicants from all regions at January 15, 2016 271

Indigenous Applicants from all regions at January 15, 2017 251

Need to extend beyond regional outreach with anticipated 500 a year intake

*Data includes applicants to all campuses in all programs. May include current students who are re-applying to different programs. Applicants from outside the above regions are not included in the regional breakdown.

Resources
Needed
(Process -
Oriented)

Employment Navigators (4) + Travel Budget

Coordinator (ADMIN)

Employment Navigator (1)

Office Support Person (1)

Counsellor

Supports

- SAS
- Mentors (Squle' eq/
'Suluqw'a'/Shush u'yulh
Interns/Alumni)
- Elders
- Employment Navigators
- Student Affairs
- Aboriginal Counsellors (on and
off-campus)
- Squle'eq Mentorship Circles

Events

- They'ul shenum Tseep
- Honouring Ceremonies
(fall/spring)
- In-Community Orientation
- Shq'aphth Cultural and Academic
Events/Supports
- Suluqw'a' Summer Program

Courses

- Indigenous Portfolio
- AUBP
- FNAT 101/102
- INTR Courses
- Uni 101? (not currently running)
- Foundations for Success
- Connexions

Faculty Aunties/Uncles

- Faculty contact points for
questions/guidance

Persistent
Challenges

Transportation

Daycare

Financial (Tuition/Living)

DIAGRAM II – NAVIGATING SUPPORTS AND SERVICES AT VANCOUVER ISLAND UNIVERSITY



In addition to some of the supports/services/special programming above, Education Navigators will connect with Education Coordinators, families, communities, and other off-campus resources to ensure the student has what they need to access education.

Prospective Indigenous Students

- Work with Employment Navigators to find supports, services, and connect with resources.

Indigenous Applicants

- Work with Employment Navigators to engage in conversion activities.

Indigenous Students

- Work with Services for Aboriginal Students and/or Advising at course planning stage and to fully engage with resources.

Navigating Access to Post-Secondary for Indigenous Learners

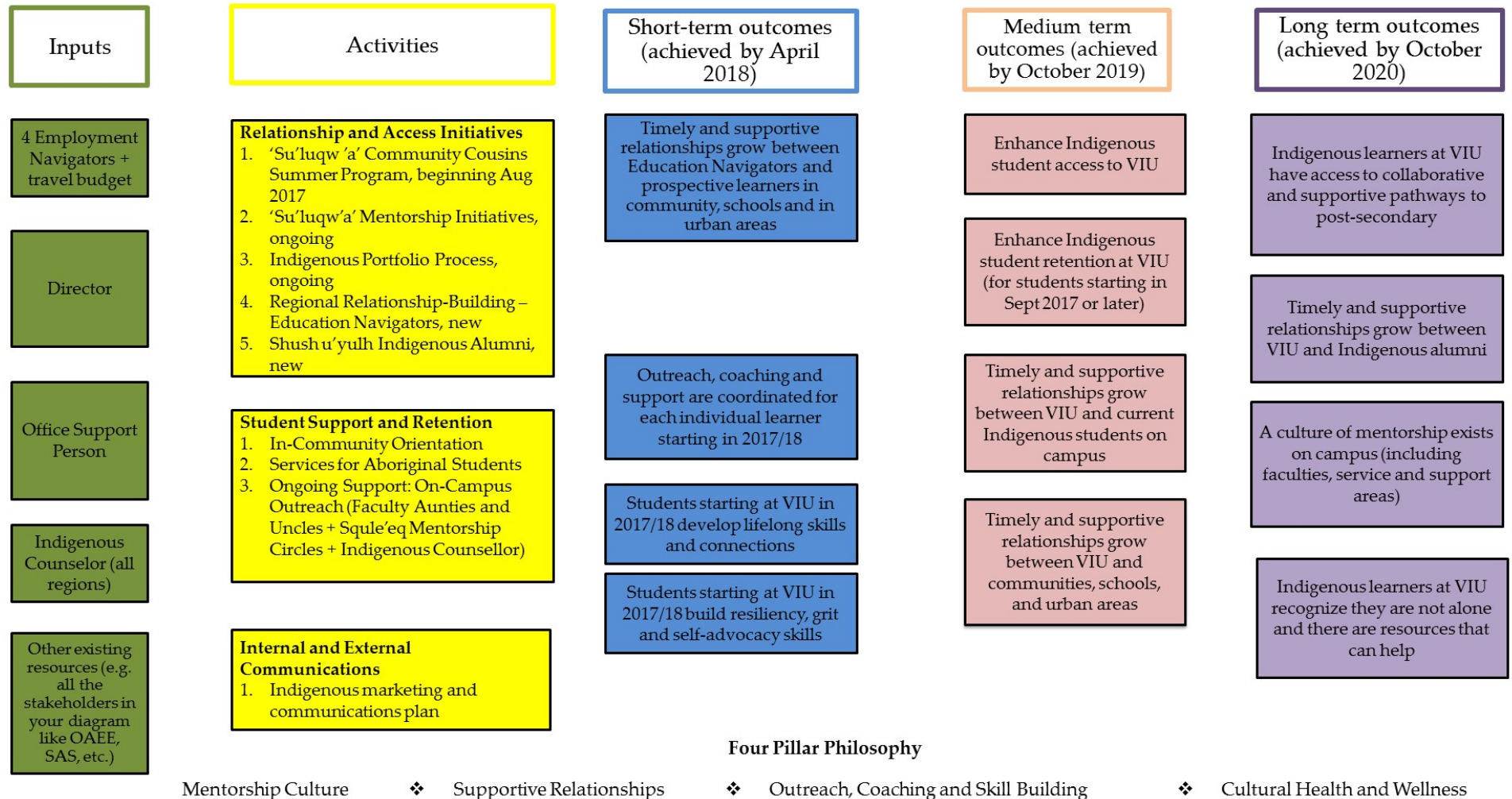


TABLE I – EVALUATION MATRIX FOR *NAVIGATING ACCESS*

Short-term outcomes (to be achieved by Oct 2018)

Evaluation Question	Indicator/Measure	Data Source	Data Collection Method	Data Collection Timeline
Did timely and supportive relationships grow between VIU supports and prospective learners in community, schools and in urban areas?	More than 251 new Indigenous students applied to VIU by March, 2018	VIU Applicant Report	Registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly monitoring • Final number obtained March, 2018 Applicant Report
Were outreach, coaching and support are coordinated for each individual learner starting in 2017/18?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of programming including in-community orientations and visit schedule • Student feedback surveys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education Navigators • Student feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of programming • Survey students from Squle’eq mentorship circles 	March/April, 2018
Did students starting at VIU in 2017/18 develop lifelong skills and connections?	Students report feeling they have begun to develop lifelong skills & connections	Students	Survey students from Squle’eq mentorship circles	April, 2018
Did students starting at VIU in 2017/18 build resiliency, grit and self-advocacy skills?	Students are able to bounce back from struggles and self-advocate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bridging Program students’ exit interviews. • Support areas report increase in Indigenous student traffic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exit Interviews (AUBP) • Meetings with support areas • UP&A Student Retention Survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March/April, 2018 • May, 2018 • October, 2018

Medium-term outcomes (to be achieved by Oct 2019)

Evaluation Question	Indicator/Measure	Data Source	Data Collection Method	Data Collection Timeline
Was Indigenous student access to VIU enhanced?	Compare 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19 academic years: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of Indigenous student applications to VIU • Indigenous student conversion rate • # of new Indigenous students at VIU at beginning of fall terms (headcount and FTEs) 	University Planning	Review of stats provided by University Planning	Pull both 2016/17, 2017/18 numbers in October 2018 & 2019.
	Indigenous students' perceptions around how easy it was to access post-secondary (including how supported they felt through the process)	Compare perceptions of Indigenous students who applied to VIU in 2016/17 vs. 2018/19 (2018/19 being the first full cycle run by Education Navigators).	Student survey (UPA&A)	Annual survey of current students October 2018 & 2019.
Was Indigenous student retention at VIU enhanced (for those students who started in Sept 2017 or later)?	Compare first to second year retention rates for 2016/17 cohort and 2017/18 cohort.	University Planning	Review of stats provided by University Planning	Pull retention statistics in October of 2019.

Evaluation Question	Indicator/Measure	Data Source	Data Collection Method	Data Collection Timeline
Did timely and supportive relationships grow between VIU and current Indigenous students on campus?	Students' perceptions of whether they feel like they have the support and skills to stay at VIU.	Indigenous students beginning at VIU in Sept 2017	Surveys from Squle'eq Mentorship Circles	March/April/May, 2019
Did timely and supportive relationships grow between VIU and communities, schools, and urban areas?	Record of visit schedules, evidence of relationships with partners who work with prospective student groups.	Education Navigators	Education Navigators provide evidence that is backed up by VIU applicant reports.	April, 2019

Long-term outcomes (to be achieved by Oct 2020)

Evaluation Question	Indicator/Measure	Data Source	Data Collection Method	Data Collection Timeline
Do Indigenous learners at VIU have access to collaborative and supportive pathways to post-secondary?	Continue to measure application rates, enrolment rates, retention rates. Partner meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VIU applicant reports, University Planning data • Partners identified in this plan • Students who came in under this plan in 2017. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Reports • Series of meetings with partners to determine whether they see improvements. • Survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant report data, 2017,2018,2019, 2020, Historical UPA&A data to Oct, 2020 • April, 2020
Does a culture of mentorship exist on campus (including Faculties, service and support areas)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student perceptions • Faculty & Staff perceptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indigenous students in all years of study at VIU • Survey of VIU Faculty & Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indigenous student surveys • Survey at VIU Pro-D events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UPA&A Oct, 2019 • Surveys yearly in 2018, 2019, 2020
Do Indigenous learners at VIU recognize they are not alone and there are resources that can help?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retention rates • Student perceptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University Planning • Indigenous students in all years of study at VIU 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indigenous student surveys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UPA&A Oct, 2019 • Surveys yearly in 2018, 2019, 2020
Did timely and supportive relationships grow between VIU and Indigenous alumni?	An established group of Indigenous Alumni (Shush u'yulh) who feel supported and eager to assist Education Navigators in their work with prospective students	Indigenous Alumni (Shush u'yulh)	Shush u'yulh Student Survey	October, 2020

APPENDIX I – MEETING NOTES

NUU-CHAH-NULTH TRIBAL COUNCIL, NOVEMBER 3, 2016

In Attendance: Heather Burke, Tania Smethurst, Sharon Hobenshield, Robin McFarlane, Victoria McFarlane

Discussion on NTC Pathways Program

- Victoria articulated NTC Pathways process and provided documents supporting the process.
- Pathways is a process (not a program) that develops education and training exploration and prevention with support in-community and in partnership with schools and youth organizations.
- The future is designed in a cultural context.
- Students are supported to develop ideas about their future from childhood. This is all done within a circle of support, i.e., family, teachers, NTC Ed Workers, nearly everyone in their lives until graduation.
- Students isolate three goals. By narrowing a focus students are able to pick the correct pre-requisites for ideally all three goals in grade 10.
- Support for parents as students explore post-secondary needs to be addressed/thought about.
- There is an NTC team that supports “at-risk” students.
- Nuu-chah-nulth Education Workers (NEW) meet weekly to support students and keep them on track as well as address any issues that come up.
- The process is entirely relationship-based and includes everyone.
- The central theme is to recognise that success is not an idea, job, or outcome, it is happiness, passion, and energy.
- Being (knowing who you are), becoming (developing goals and aspirations), and belonging (recognizing where you best practice) are the key foundational points of the process.

What would an access/meeting point look like between VIU and NTC?

- Pivotal transition markers (ceremony) throughout the educational journey.
- Reminding and acknowledging why students are here.
- Several support nets.
- Connections between VIU supports and supports available in community so that students know where to go.
- A resource guide for everyone in-community.

In Attendance: Sharon Hobenshield, Linda McCandless, Rachel Watts, Dale Hunt, Crystal Alcorn, Robin McFarlane, Victoria, MacFarlane, Nancy Hamilton, Heather Burke, Janet Sinclair, Jean Maltesen, Troy Barnes, Danielle Abramczyk

Initial Discussion

- What is working @ VIU is IP, COUSINS, ELDERS, SAS, BRIDGING, UCEP.

Needs:

- More Elders in community to support VIU programming. Ed Coordinators and VIU people sharing offices in community and at VIU.
- Giving back to community- students start in community and complete in community.
- VIU creates relationships with the students and the community members who know those students, i.e. Education Coordinators
- Elders in community and VIU Elders in community
- Awareness of supports
- Blended delivery – courses delivered in community and at VIU i.e. study skills delivered both on campus and in community.
- Connected classrooms – deliver/meet students using technology
- HR support for faculty to create understanding – no more singling out of the one indigenous student.
- Broader community representation within VIU elders
- Communities of support within students – childcare groups, transportation groups, etc.
- Portfolio class in all communities with a community elder to support.
- Summer transition programming
- Mentors going to community to share their stories.

Vision and Values for Transitions

- Why are transitions important?
- Sense of community
- Education begins in community – reciprocity and relationship
- Creating awareness around strengths and passions in each individual (program/career exploration, opening possibilities, support in each step towards post-secondary).
- Integrated pathways (weaving the journey together) – it's all one journey. VIU is part of your life journey, i.e., who am I and where am I going? (Learning Journey Coaches) with the awareness that there is more than one passion and journey.
- How do we support and create the understanding of value of learning in individuals? Support the creation of a sense of self-worth in each individual and the realization and understanding of what each individual already brings with them on their learning journey?
- Support the creation of the awareness that they each bring something to the “table” to share (Indigenous Portfolio [recognition of self and relevance and acknowledgement of what they have within]).

- **THE VISION IS TO CHANGE THE EXISTING RELATIONSHIP WITH EDUCATION** (with social and emotional support and the knowledge of what that feels like, tastes like, looks like [mentorship].) Education has to change and become more inclusive of tradition and holistic in approach.
- Demonstrating balance between cultures.
- Holding space for tradition, but not “teaching it.”
- Honesty around the inherent challenges and applying personal vision, goals, and intention to challenges. Remembering why you’re here when things get tough.
- Creating learning plans for each individual (issue – Evergreen grads, **How do we make education fit the individual? How does the system fit the person?**)
- Acknowledging what comes up in the process – how do we do this? Learning can create trauma and how do we support students who aren’t coming forward? Creating support spaces within programs? Space for grieving? Realization that escapes are not spaces for processing and clearing space for new things?
- Shift the view **EDUCATION IS ABOUT BUILDING A PERSON UP** acknowledging that education is a process and it’s not always about getting a credential...sometimes the learning takes place off-campus.
- **CREATING A VISION IS KEY.**
- Ask students who have left or have had a difficult/bad experience why it didn’t work out. Explain what “tools,” i.e., supports are for during the visioning process – support to create a balance between the learning and the feelings that come up during.

In Attendance: Roxanne Boyko, Anne Tenning, Tania Smethurst, Laura Tait, Sylvia Scow, Heather Burke, Sharon Hobenshield.

- Focus on turning students' fears into manageable chunks.
- Summer is a key transition time.
- Connect transition programming with dual credit (Indigenous Portfolio).
- Regular check-in with partners is important.
- Learning plans for each student and someone to support students in the steps involved.
- Reciprocity "back and forth conversation" between district, students, and VIU. Blur the lines between what each "body" does (formalized contact between those working with students in schools and a VIU rep).
- Start very young with activities and visits to campus.
- Reciprocity (between students & VIU), demystify, honouring, experiential, welcoming, mentoring, responsibility (clarifying to each student what their responsibility is).
- Visits and activities on campus are just a part of a potential access strategy. There needs to be several places for students to connect, i.e., wraparound approach.
- VIU students (mentors) talk about what they wish they knew as a high school student in high schools.
- Mentors help high school students develop a work ethic and why they should focus on their high school course work.
- ILRP could be part of the admissions process.
- The district needs a VIU "inventory" to access, i.e., a menu of activity they can choose to participate in.
- Self-advocacy. Students need to feel confident enough to ask for what they need. Connect those less vocal or "at-risk" students with allies that can support them while they advocate for themselves.
- Embed mentorship into high school programming.

In Attendance: Heather Burke, Sharon Hobenshield, Tania Smethurst, Keith Chicquen, Denise Augustine, Larry Mattin, Vanessa MacDowell

- There is an MOU between SD 79 and Cowichan Tribes to work closely together to develop education plans for Aboriginal learners in the area. Currently there are no formalized education plans being developed. Sharon suggests discussing a Learning Partnership Agreement in future.
- Dual credit is an excellent transition for students because they are on campus and meeting current students who sometimes become mentors. Their comfort level is increased.
- **Relationships are key.** (this point was stressed several times)
- Literacy and numeracy skills are limited in students in the district. This would have to be addressed via upgrading. (AUBP)
- Upgrading is not easily accessible for Cowichan students.
- Transportation to Nanaimo is a barrier.
- In-community delivery is best for at risk and gap-year students.
- Formalized outreach and support for students would help. A regular support person who could be attached to in-community and dual credit programming that regularly communicates with district and community members would be ideal.
- Attach mentors and elders to programming (in-community delivery, or dual credit programs...anything that involves at-risk or gap-year students).
- Wraparound supports should be in place for first year students. The more contact, cohorts, support, outreach, elder involvement, the better.
- Transition programming that gets students on the land as well as on-campus.
- Better awareness of funding opportunities to high school students (AUG, Financial Aid & Awards, etc.)
- Start early! Have students involved on campus as early as grade 7. Could elementary and high school teachers hold an entire class on campus occasionally?
- Students need to feel safe everywhere they go on campus and feel included.
- Seamless transitions include consistent and meaningful relationships with adults.

COWICHAN CAMPUS, JANUARY 23, 2017

In Attendance: Heather Burke, Sharon Hobenshield (conference call), Nancy Hamilton, Lexis Linklater.

- UCEP works well on Cowichan Campus. First year students each have mentors. Nancy assigns pods and these pods also receive mentorship from Faculty and Staff.
- Sharing Circle – Lexis rotates through classes and introduces tradition.
- There is a registered mandatory check-in where things like study skills, homework clubs, and time management are covered. There is a prescriptive piece to this that is individualized.
- Could we tie something like this to the co-curricular record where students undergo a progression of contribution-making? For example, Year 1 is portfolio, Year 2 involves projects in-community, Year 3 and 4 are more personalized towards career goals.
- Connect coursework to community events both on and off-campus.
- Transition support throughout the degree – what about trades students?
- There are currently courses that offer communities of support. These are FNAT 101/102, University 101 (if it runs), INTR courses, Connexions, AUBP, Foundations for Success, Indigenous Portfolio, Indigenous Health and Wellness offerings though HHS, and probably others.
- Supportive coursework could be recommended as pathways for new students in a transparent way.
- Can first year retention be built into Co-curricular record for current students?
- Students struggle with walking in two worlds and balancing them in addition to school work. For example, important duties in community must sometimes come second at exam time. How can families understand this or how can we change “the system?”
- The system should be permeable.
- Classes could be held in-community to help family and community understand what students are doing/going through.
- Sharon to share “decolonized version” of University 101.

In Attendance: Loanna Clint, Rosie McLeod-Shannon, Tania Smethurst, Sharon Hobenshield, Heather Burke, Dallas Phillips

- Parent involvement is key.
- Connection to as many people at the university as possible, i.e., students, staff, supports, etc.
- Reciprocal mentorship situations. For example, mentees become mentors.
- Regular connection points/check-ins for students so they can get information they need and feel like someone cares.
- Sometimes students graduate in January and leave town for work, etc. Is there a way to reach these students so they still have university on their minds? What if they had a responsibility to the community that intersected with their educational journey?
- Barriers students face in this area have to do with transportation and financial aid.
- There is no sense of community in this area. What if there were evening community events that included parents and students and a VIU person? Could partner to create a friendship centre environment and involve parents. These evening gatherings would include activities and circles of support.
- Lunchtime events involving food is a place mentors from VIU could be involved with prospective students.
- Regular connection and communication with the school is important. Could put a regular feature in the newsletters so parents get important information about post-secondary.
- There is a sharing app that teachers sometimes use to communicate with parents, "Freshgrade." Is there a mobile way we can communicate with parents?

In Attendance: Sharon Buchanan, Sharon Hobenshield, Dale Hunt, Jennifer Christoffersen, Heather Burke

- Persistent challenges faced by SAS is the need for tutoring.
- Sharon explained new model for potential funding: There will be 5 Education Navigators, 3 Career and Employment Navigators, and a Coordinator to supervise/connect the 8 new VIU employees. All new resources will be employed by VIU.
- Education Navigators will support students to navigate through “the system,” meaning to address current challenges students face when they are accessing education.
- Potentially this new funding will include reduced tuition for students coming directly from community.
- Dale and Jen suggested that the application fee itself is one of the biggest barriers for students and if that alone was paid upfront that would help.
- This new team of VIU employees could potentially create programming around some of the persistent barriers students face.
- Funding for this new program would be grant funding.
- Jen and Dale expressed concern for supporting an increased Indigenous student body.
- SAS partnered with OAEE for They ‘ul shenum Tseep not FNAT
- Connections and communications between proposed Education Navigators and SAS is crucial to the success of proposed new access programming.
- There should be a process map that everyone can refer to in terms of pathways for students so there is no confusion over who does what.
- There will need to be monthly meetings between Ed & Emp Navigator team and SAS so that communication/initiatives are consistently communicated and collaborated on.
- Discussed feasts as a potential place to honour individual students who have completed a term or a whole first year.
- Could also be another ceremony such as the NTC cedar mat ceremony to honour those first term/year completers.
- Programming around honouring ceremonies, etc. will be created and potentially individualized to students by Ed. Navigators.

In Attendance: Heather Burke, Julie Froekjaer-Jensen

- Academic Advisor in Powell River (P.R.) visits the Tla'amin Nation Adult Learning Centre weekly. He is currently learning what he needs to do in terms of outreach from the Nation.
- Focus of his visits is to raise awareness that VIU exists and that the Powell River Campus is a great place to start your education.
- There are already strong relationships with the community, but students don't tend to access education at P.R. campus.
- Julie thinks that any Education Navigator person would have to create relationships first by participating *with* them in community activities.
- Ed Navs would have to help focus learners in community and assist them every step of the way with their plans and regularly promote programs.
- Very few Tla'amin students access university.
- Students haven't been exposed to the idea that they can create their own opportunities and many lack the critical thinking skills required to make informed decisions about their future pathways.
- Students need to know what they will get out of a university or trades program. Right now there is no concept among students around what is possible.
- 50% of students at Brooks Secondary (in Powell River) are Aboriginal many are Tla'amin but a majority are from other nations.
- Tla'amin should be asked for their input on any new VIU programming/people that will be interacting with their community.
- Increase awareness about university in community. Students "don't know what they don't know."
- There should be more visibility in the community and more "no strings attached" pro-d training.
- Contract training has helped introduce people to post-sec. Tla'amin would like to learn how to develop their own programs...they need education in their community first.
- VIU should visit Tla'amin regularly to introduce the community to a varied of people who work there.
- Working on projects together often goes in unexpected directions that often creates a host of new opportunities.
- Relationships have to be authentic in terms of give and take. Sometimes you may be asked to give something you didn't expect to give or know how to give yet.
- Authentic relationships are active relationships. Connections must be kept current and active.
- Unique events should be created for High School students (at Brooks) that raises awareness around post-sec opportunities.
- Need for connection with students in contract programs and the early part of high school (grade 8-10) to create awareness about education, how to make choices, etc.

- Families need to have a role in any programming/discussions and be completely invested in what their student chooses.
- Communities should decide the direction of their members.
- Communities should have their own trades people. Industry supports what industry needs, but communities should be able to choose the trade they want to pursue instead of being dumped into a funding program to create welders, for example.
- Sometimes gaps between the feelings of the community and the decisions made by council.
- Julie recommends contact with Curtis Colgrave to get a sense of how the advising meetings are going in community.
- Julie recommends connecting with the Ed. Coordinator to get a sense of her vision.
- Julie recommends doing a session in community to get a sense of what the community's vision is.

In Attendance: Heather Burke, Marge Huntley, Noelle Hanuse

- Aboriginal Counsellor Position is new at Student Affairs.
- Noelle helps students care for their energy. Her specialities are balance and holistic energy care.
- Noelle visits Shq'apthut on Fridays to meet with students, but the setting isn't private. Marge is thinking about getting her a divider, which would be a visual barrier, but not a sound barrier.
- Noelle described her care in terms of the "Gladue Report." She sees this evolution of VIU resources as individualized support based on cultural needs and demands. How do we manage important rites of passage for students within "the system?"
- How can we change "the system" to include room for self-care?
- Marge stressed that while students should definitely be aware of Noelle's work as an Aboriginal counsellor, the counselling department is open to all students and some Aboriginal students choose to access general counselling.
- It's difficult for students to know how to declare ancestry. Some awareness around that would be beneficial.
- The connection Noelle has with Elders and how her services are different will need to be figured out as time goes by.
- Noelle seeks to "Indigenize" westernized self-care techniques like yoga, for example. She does an activity called, "Indigenized chair yoga" that is really popular.
- Noelle stresses that work should be balanced with fun activities and self-care.
- Marge stressed that **all** students should be aware of the larger suite of services/supports/workshops provided by the Counselling department.

In Attendance: Heather Burke, Sharon Hobenshield, Tina McComb

- Sharon explained that the target for funding purposes for the Education Navigator model is that there will be 5000 **new** Indigenous students between VIU and Yukon College.
- VIU will be responsible for the majority of these new students.
- Initiative will start in September, 2017.
- New students are defined as “active and engaged.”
- Funding program is for all “tertiary programs.”
- The Education Navigator model will have to absorb the current Aboriginal Student Recruitment position because operating alongside the new model will be very problematic.
- Students currently complete at a 30% rate for a six-year bachelor degree. Completion rates will need to be higher under new model for Indigenous students.
- The group went over budgetary considerations for each new Employment Navigator.
- Emp. Navs will still need to regularly connect with OEM for training purposes, department connections (i.e., updated program info), to plug into school visit tours, take part and help coordinate transition activities.
- Because of high targets Emp. Navs would need to take part in currently established recruitment practices undertaken by the The Office of Enrolment Management (OEM) at present time.
- Costing for new employees would need to include things like, banners, technology (ipads, projectors, phones, computers, spaces, etc.), travel, etc.
- Employees would benefit from being situated together because of amount of information they have to be up-to-date on.
- In addition to their work in communities Emp. Navs would have to see prospective Indigenous students on campus as Recruitment Officers currently do in order to have access to incoming Indigenous students.
- What would happen with Strengthening Connections tours? Would the Emp Navs take part in those or would VIU step away from that group? What are the implications of stepping away?
- There needs to be a sketch of how Emp. Navs fit in to the way prospective students connect on campus.
- How will current relationships that Recruitment Officers have with regions be handled in terms of inviting the Emp. Navigators in?
- Training will need to be considered for Emp. Navs...it takes a year to get up to date on everything that they need to be able to share with students.
- There are other things done by the OEM that will be crucial to the role that we haven't brought to the table yet.
- The OAEE and the OEM will need to keep talking as things progress to iron out how these new roles will work together with the Recruitment Officers and other campus connections.

In Attendance: Heather Burke, Elodie Button

- System doesn't fit the person.
- Instructors in contract courses don't always understand intercultural communication. Learning sometimes suffers because of this.
- Thinking of developing a CFN training module before allowing VIU instructors to work with CFN students.
- In-community delivery is the future of Indigenous education. UNBC, in partnership with other schools delivers a Bachelor of Arts, Master of Arts and others in New Aiyansh. <http://wwni.bc.ca/>
- There are systemic barriers – trauma/addiction. VIU staff would need to be prepared to work with students facing these issues.
- Students need an advocate while they are still in community to work through university “system.”
- Relationships and “creating a family” of learners before going to post-secondary would help.
- Learning is a collaboration. Important for EN's to know that.
- More “guaranteed funding.”
- Continual engagement with students at all stages is key.
- Inter “National” families can be a great source of support for students and an excellent opportunity for cultural sharing/growth.
- Involve families.
- Create solid, active, engaged, reciprocal relationships.
- Reducing the pressure of post-secondary in general would be helpful.
- Paying for students to visit home during their degree would help students keep going.
- In-community orientations would be helpful so students know what to expect before they leave home could result in smoother transitions. This could be a first “module” continued on-campus.
- Cohort learning would be essential.
- Support/tutoring/counselling and trauma-informed coursework would be best.
- Support for the Employment Navigators would be essential due to the things they will face: travel, the complications of relationship-building. Elodie suggests basic counselling training would be helpful. Courses like Non-Violent Crisis Intervention etc.
- Bridging model would be helpful for CFN students. Many need help with literacy/numeracy and application process for regular programs is too overwhelming.
- If EN model becomes a reality, Elodie suggests building in that “bridge to post-secondary” focus as part of the overall planning.
- Provide some strategic direction to CFN in terms of post-secondary engagement (recruitment) so that students can be aware of options, possibilities, etc.

In Attendance: Heather Burke, Chris Roberts

- Would benefit from a dedicated contact at VIU
- More in-community delivery would help students gain confidence needed to attend university.
- Important to connect learning with what's happening in students' communities. Context for learning is important otherwise motivation is lacking in students.
- Workshops on TRC action items would get students thinking about how they want to serve their communities and/or what action they feel they could take in the world to effect change.
- In-community class for a day. Bring a VIU classroom to community and include professors, Elders, current students. Students' in-community would benefit from knowing what it would be like to be a student. Again, it also adds context to high school coursework and why someone would invest the personal cost of taking a harder course (i.e., Communications 12 vs. English 12). If the university is brought to community it gives them a reason to complete the required high school pre-requisites for university/trades programs.
- Role models in community could help students know what kinds of jobs are out there and what kind of education is needed to get those jobs.
- Sharing stories is so important. When students hear about the university experience from other students it reduces fear and instills them with confidence and the knowledge that university is for anyone who wants it.
- Providing work context during schooling is important. Could reduce fear students' have of not being able to find work in their field or know how their skills are applicable. There are many career options for any given degree, but students don't often know that. Community members play a role in letting students know what kinds of jobs they can do at home.
- It would be good for Faculty to visit students' in-community so they know where students are coming from. Increased cultural knowledge would be a huge benefit.

Summary of Surveys (Bubbles) Respondents: 4

What should VIU do to help make the transition to post-secondary easier for Aboriginal learners?

- Bi-annual info sessions
- Have info sessions like these
- Provide mentorship programs for students with similar / specific journey / goals
- The Bridging program was great, all FN should do this program
- Maybe trips to high schools (for younger students) to let them know what is offered, the groups that are there for help, what they can get help with
- Offer scholarships / bursaries

What should VIU do to help Aboriginal learners stay at VIU and complete their programs?

- More students in similar classes could form groups to help each other
- Mentorship programs
- I would like to learn more about Cousins, etc.
- Individual support and checking in
- More Indigenous-led and inspired courses for each program (language, culture, resistance, decolonial love and healing)

What should VIU do to help more Aboriginal learners' access post-secondary education?

- Scholarships/bursaries!
- Info for bursaries, etc.
- Scholarships and info sessions
- Help with application, registration, pre-requisites
- Be emotionally-generous with us, we are still facing oppression every day

What should VIU do to make our institution more receptive to and relevant for Aboriginal learners?

- Make at least ONE Indigenous-led and inspired course required for every single program → we are on NDN (?) land.
- Support to instructors to learn about who's territory we're on; in my many years here in the RMOT program, this year was the first time I had an instructor acknowledge Snuneymuxw or orange shirt day, etc.
- Some sort of FN intro course for instructors
- Workshops and internship in the Aboriginal communities
- As a new student to VIU I've been reassured everyday to ask for help and I have received help every time I asked. I believe that so far in my journey here VIU has been great.

In Attendance: Heather Burke, Sylvia Scow, Sheldon Scow, Desiree Lawson, Evangeline Clifton, Morgan Mowatt, Sara Daigle-Stevens, Sara Fulla, Sheena Robinson, Natalie Johnson, Patrick.

- Counselling during early stages of considering post-secondary might be helpful. I had lots of mental health issues that made it difficult for me to take steps to come to school.
- Understanding the process was really hard.
- Tips for registering or making the process easier on the website, i.e., step-by-step what to expect.
- Fees don't line-up with band funding. Flexibility and understanding would be crucial for many students.
- Afraid of getting kicked out due to fees and inflexibility of deadlines.
- Communication between VIU cashiers/finance people. Neither side knows what's going on and it's difficult for the student to understand too. Would be nice if VIU could figure it out with the band.
- Some knowledge of the band funding process would have made me feel less awkward.
- Assistance with finding a place to live would really help.
- Affordable housing.
- Indigenous student housing on campus.
- Acceptance and inclusiveness from everyone on campus would be nice, i.e. seeing instructors engaged with the Indigenous community on campus, attending Indigenous events, interacting with Indigenous students, doing protocol at the beginning of classes before they read the course outline or on the course outline would make me feel more included.
- Outreach to undeclared students who might feel alone in their classes and not want to speak up.
- What you need to know before you get here poster campaign in communities might be a good idea.
- Instructors should understand that learning can trigger emotions.
- Individual attention and in-community delivery would help students be aware of what post-secondary education can do.

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