



BC ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

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BCAFN 18th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
September 14, 15 & 16, 2021
Online via Zoom

Resolution 23/2021

SUBJECT: **SUPPORT FOR CORE AND CAPACITY FUNDING FOR FIRST NATIONS-MANDATED POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTES**

MOVED BY: **CHIEF GREG LOUIE, AHOUSAHT FIRST NATION**

SECONDED BY: **CHIEF DONNA ALJAM, NICOMEN INDIAN BAND**

DECISION: **CARRIED**

WHEREAS:

- A. First Nations-mandated post-secondary institutes are established and controlled by a First Nation or group of First Nations and deliver post-secondary programs.
- B. The First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) and the Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association (IAHLA), under the direction of British Columbia First Nations, are developing a British Columbia First Nations Tripartite Post-Secondary Education Model ("the PSE Model"), one of the pillars of which is the provision of ongoing, core funding for First Nations-mandated post-secondary institutes.
- C. First Nations-mandated post-secondary institutes support the inherent rights of First Nations to self-determination and self-government, including First Nations control of First Nations education. These inherent rights are recognized in section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982* and the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration) and the *Draft Principles that Guide the Province of British Columbia's Relationship with Indigenous Peoples*.

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- D. First Nations-mandated post-secondary institutes play a unique and critical role in the post-secondary education system in British Columbia by providing programming that is relevant and responsive to the needs of their communities and increasing First Nations students' participation and success in post-secondary education.
- E. First Nations-mandated post-secondary institutes play a key role in the revitalization of First Nations languages and cultures by providing access to accredited First Nations language and culture programming in First Nations communities across British Columbia.
- F. First Nations-mandated post-secondary institutes do not have access to ongoing core and capacity funding and have had to rely on proposal-based funding in order to complete their important work in First Nations post-secondary education.
- G. The Nicola Valley Institute of Technology is currently the only publicly funded and recognized First Nations-controlled post-secondary institute in British Columbia.
- H. The Province of British Columbia is exploring the expansion of the Aboriginal Service Plan funding to all 25 BC public post-secondary institutions, and the FNEC Board has called upon the Province of British Columbia to identify ongoing core funding for First Nations mandated institutes prior to increasing funding to the public post-secondary system for Indigenous education initiatives.
- I. Over 30 years ago, in its report to the then-Minister of Advanced Education, the BC Provincial Committee on Post-Secondary Education for Native Learners recommended that core funding be provided to existing and developing First Nations post-secondary institutes in BC.
- J. Recommendation 3.5.26 of *Volume 3: Gathering Strength of the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* states: "Federal, provincial and territorial governments collaborate with Aboriginal governments and organizations to establish and support post-secondary educational institutions controlled by Aboriginal people, with negotiated allocation of responsibility for
 - (a) core and program funding commensurate with the services they are expected to provide and comparable to the funding provided to provincial or territorial institutions delivering similar services;
 - (b) planning, capital and start-up costs of new colleges and institutes;
 - (c) improvement of facilities for community learning centres as required for new functions and development of new facilities where numbers warrant and the community establishes this as a priority; and
 - (d) fulfilment of obligations pursuant to treaties and modern agreements with respect to education".

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- K. *Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education in British Columbia: A Place for Aboriginal Institutes*, published by FNEC in 2008, recommended that First Nations post-secondary institutes in BC should have access to funding from British Columbia to strengthen their programs and enhance their contributions in an integrated British Columbia post-secondary education system.
- L. In 2012 British Columbia committed to work with Canada to explore mechanisms to mutually support Indigenous post-secondary institutes in the *2012 Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Policy Framework and Action Plan* (the "Policy Framework"), a commitment that has not yet been fulfilled.
- M. In 2017, in response to a questionnaire from the First Nations Leadership Council, the BC New Democratic Party committed to implement the Policy Framework.
- N. The Province of British Columbia has committed to lasting, meaningful reconciliation with Indigenous peoples and to implement the UN Declaration, which affirms that the establishment and operation of First Nations-mandated post-secondary institutes is a human right:

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.

(2): Indigenous individuals, particularly children, have the right to all levels and forms of education of the State without discrimination.

(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.

- O. The *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* requires British Columbia, in consultation and cooperation with the Indigenous peoples in British Columbia, to take all measures necessary to ensure the laws of British Columbia are consistent with the UN Declaration.
- P. In 2017, the Ontario government passed the *Indigenous Institutes Act*, which recognizes the unique and complementary role of Indigenous post-secondary institutes in the Ontario post-secondary education system and commits to providing ongoing, core operating funding for Indigenous institutes.
- Q. In response to a proposal from FNEC and IAHLA to provide ongoing core funding for First Nations-mandated post-secondary institutes, the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills

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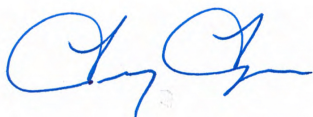
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Training has provided \$4 million in one-time core funding to support the core costs of First Nations-mandated institutes and \$750,000 in one-time capacity funding to support activities such as needs assessments, community engagement, program evaluation, institutional planning and partnership development, but has not committed to providing additional core and capacity funding beyond the 2021-22 fiscal year.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly call on British Columbia to immediately provide ongoing core and capacity funding to First Nations-mandated institutes.
2. The BCAFN Chiefs-in-Assembly call on British Columbia to work with FNEC and IAHLA to co-develop legislation that recognizes the unique and critical role of First Nations-mandated post-secondary institutes in the British Columbia post-secondary system and commits British Columbia to providing ongoing core funding for First Nations-mandated post-secondary institutes.

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Terry Teegee, BC Regional Chief