

FINAL REPORT

EVALUATION OF THE BC ABORIGINAL POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION STRATEGY

Submitted to:

**THE EVALUATION STEERING COMMITTEE AND
THE MINISTRY OF ADVANCED EDUCATION**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

This report provides the results of a consultant's (the "Evaluators") evaluation of the 2007 Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education Strategy and Action Plan (the "Strategy").

As the result of a Request for Proposals and upon the recommendation of the Evaluation Steering Committee, the Ministry of Advanced Education (the "Ministry") awarded a contract to Human Capital Strategies (HCS) to conduct the evaluation of the Strategy by February 18, 2011.

Upon the recommendation of the BC Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Partners, the Ministry took action to conduct an outcome or summative evaluation of the 2007 Strategy. The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the degree to which the actions and initiatives implemented under the Strategy helped the Ministry to achieve its objectives. The evaluation was intended to:

- Assess whether actions and initiatives implemented under the 2007 Strategy helped to achieve or make progress towards achieving the intended objectives; and,
- Identify challenges, lessons learned and effective practices from the 2007 Strategy.

In determining whether progress was achieved, the evaluation was to compare pre- and post-Strategy results from public post-secondary institutions and Aboriginal communities and institutes.

While the main focus of this evaluation is on Strategy outputs and outcomes, "process" is important in this context because of the following considerations:

1. The Strategy processes are, in some cases, important outcomes and indicators in themselves.
2. The Strategy processes can impact (positively and negatively) the nature and extent of outcomes.
3. The Strategy processes can enable or limit the extent to which attainment of outcomes can be evaluated.

Almost 800 individual responses were received between December 2010 and February 2011 from Aboriginal people, students, communities, organizations and institutes; from board members, management, staff and students of public post-secondary educational institutions; and from other British Columbians. Three hundred and twenty-two people responded to an online survey; over 340 people attended six regional sessions; and over 150 individuals and organizations attended other meetings and/or made written submissions to the Evaluators.

This has been a very challenging project to enable as many individuals and groups as possible to provide their input about the 2007 Strategy, specifically, and about Aboriginal post-secondary education in BC, generally. Further, achieving this and completing a comprehensive and evidence-based evaluation report within 100 days has proven to be an enormous endeavour.

In addition to outlining the context for this evaluation and the evaluation terms of reference, this report summarizes the methodology and the program logic models and evaluation questions for each program element of the 2007 Strategy.

After summarizing the results of an online survey of stakeholders, the report analyzes existing and new data for each of the program elements and present conclusions and recommendations for each.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Aboriginal Service Plan

1. Comprehensive, Consistent Monitoring and Evaluation Process – For any future such initiatives, it is recommended that comprehensive and consistent evaluation and reporting processes and expectations are identified from the very outset and monitored more closely throughout the duration of the project. Ongoing analysis should be built into the process so that funding is directed to institutions that are demonstrating success and accountability. Also, there should be a review done each year by the Ministry with an Aboriginal advisory committee or perhaps with the MOU Partners Group to determine what changes may be needed.

Reporting should include documentation of resources shared with Aboriginal partners and more detailed evidence of respectful, collaborative and productive partnerships and relationship-building with Aboriginal communities – including urban Aboriginal populations – and Aboriginal institutes.

2. Provincial Policy Identifying Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education as a Priority for Public Post-Secondary Institutions – When institutional commitment was evident at senior management level, there were stronger indications of success factors across the entire campus(es). The Ministry could encourage public post-secondary institutions to identify Aboriginal education as a priority through institutional leadership and policy development and by making it a consistent point of discussion between institutions and the Ministry.
3. Continued, Targeted, Sustainable Funding – Significant progress has been made with ASP funding and it is essential that this progress be maintained. The Ministry should be engaging with the institutions to consider the success of the ASP program, and to consider, where successful, what action can be taken to make the necessary resources available for ongoing, sustainable funding. An important consideration is that if this funding were to fall under base funding, would the Ministry forego engagement with the institutions? Would the Ministry reduce control, ongoing evaluation and accountability of funding?

Notwithstanding the base funding issue, the Ministry should review any future ASP-like funding to try to extend it to all public post-secondary institutions, perhaps to varying degrees based on Aboriginal population, regional needs and other factors. Evaluators heard from many Aboriginal communities – including urban Aboriginal populations – that essentially “lost out” on the benefits of ASPs because there was not one in their region.

There are a number of options for the Ministry to further extend any ASP-like funding. It could provide funding to all institutions based on some type of formula related to Aboriginal population, institutional capacity, proposed results, etc.

Finally, given the timelines and uncertainty about future funding, the Ministry may want to consider 2011/12 as a “transition” year and roll forward status quo funding from the previous year, and introduce a new “improved” ASP-like initiative in the subsequent year.

4. Respectful, Reciprocal Partnerships – First it is important to identify key components of genuine, respectful partnerships between public post-secondary institutions, Aboriginal communities, IAHLA and Aboriginal-controlled institutes. These partnerships were discussed throughout the documentation, survey and regional sessions and there is a marked disparity in how some institutions and Aboriginal stakeholders interpreted these “successful” partnerships. This needs to be a clear criterion in being eligible for and reporting on in any future ASP-like funding.

It is vital to recognize the power imbalance that exists between Aboriginal communities – including urban Aboriginal groups – and Aboriginal institutes and public post-secondary institutions. Public institutions need to ask the question: *What do our partners offer us?* In honouring and recognizing these community assets, Aboriginal learners will be better served.

When community stakeholders indicate that these partnerships are not working, the Ministry could re-evaluate the ASP and determine whether or not it is appropriate to continue funding.

Another aspect of this question is that the Aboriginal community voice should play a more direct and substantive role in any future ASP-like initiative. At a provincial level and regionally, First Nations and urban Aboriginal communities should be (more) involved from the start during development of an ASP-like initiative and during planning and throughout implementation. The Ministry should require assurances of Aboriginal community material involvement in all stages.

5. Development of Partnerships with IAHLA and Aboriginal-Controlled Institutes – Effective partnerships with IAHLA institutes and/or Aboriginal-controlled institutes have proven highly successful in community-based delivery programs and bridging programs. Furthermore, these programs provide an opportunity for learners to ladder into other public post-secondary programs, through bridging programs.

The Ministry should consider this within any future funding structures developed for Aboriginal post-secondary education and look at ways of ensuring the inclusion of IAHLA/Aboriginal-controlled institutes within it. Suggestions include:

- Requiring that public post-secondary institutions partner with IAHLA/Aboriginal-controlled institutes for certain funding programs.
- Allowing IAHLA/Aboriginal-controlled institutes to apply for the same funding opportunities as public post-secondary institutions either in partnership with a public institution or not (thus allowing funds to flow directly into the IAHLA/Aboriginal-controlled institute if their bid is successful).

- Related to the above, the Ministry might consider including in any future ASP-like funding to institutions an envelope of funds specifically for Aboriginal communities, institutes and urban Aboriginal populations.
 - Providing a voice to IAHLA/Aboriginal-controlled institutes by including appropriate representation on future advisory group for the selection of successful proposals for funding.
6. Ongoing Engagement with Aboriginal Communities (broadly defined) – It is vital to continue providing venues for Aboriginal learners, community members and leaders to share their voices, concerns and success stories. These discussions need to result in some form of action that addresses the concerns, in order to maintain the trust and relationships that have been built in good faith over the past three years through ASP initiatives.

These successful strategies should be shared so that Aboriginal post-secondary education in BC will continue to develop and meet the needs of the learners. Funding to support these types of programs should be continued and/or expanded to include non-ASP institutions to help build provincial capacity. Ongoing evaluation and monitoring of the implementation of these initiatives is imperative for accountability to not only the Ministry, but to Aboriginal communities.

Gathering Places

1. Given that many of the Gathering Places established through the Ministry's Strategy have only recently been, or soon will be, completed, it is premature to draw definitive conclusions regarding the level of their success. While the results to date are generally positive, it would be appropriate for further evaluation to be conducted after a further three to five years of operational experience with these facilities.
2. The Ministry could – and should – continue to follow up with public post-secondary institutions to assess the alignment between the goals of the Strategy and the operational experience at each of the Gathering Places. Early attention should be focused on those institutions where the level of the use of Gathering Places appears to be less robust than what had been anticipated.
3. Post-secondary institutions with Gathering Places, or with other associated student support areas, should be encouraged to ensure that those facilities are not encumbered by restrictive access policies that operate to undermine the intended purposes of Gathering Places.
4. While most institutions receiving Gathering Place funding acted with reasonable diligence to consult, plan and implement capital changes, this cannot be said of all institutions. Given the level of unmet demand at some of the institutions that have been effective in developing Gathering Places – and particularly those with multiple campuses where there is disparity in the level of access to such facilities – the Ministry may wish to consider the re-allocation of under-utilized resources.
5. In the event that further Gathering Place funding is made available, closer attention should be focused on making certain that planning has addressed the need for sustainable partnerships with the broader Aboriginal community in pursuing the shared goal of improving the educational experience of, and outcomes for, Aboriginal students.

Aboriginal Special Projects Fund

1. In consultation with post-secondary institutions and Aboriginal communities, it is recommended that the Ministry consider an ASPF-type of program as part of any renewal of an Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education Strategy. One option to consider could be for ASPF to be a component within a renewed ASP. Considering the support for ASPF projects and its long tenure as a program, it could also be left to stand on its own in any future new funding strategy.
2. It is recommended that the Ministry consider the “short-term” nature of these ASPF projects (which has some good features) by requesting the post-secondary institutions, in conjunction with their Aboriginal partners to devise long-term strategies with individual component parts. These parts, or annual projects – consistent with the longer-term institutional strategies – can then be funded by the Ministry based on its evaluation on an as-needed basis subject to Ministry budgeting capabilities. Such a thrust will allow each institution to develop its long-term plans or strategy, yet allow the Ministry, if it agrees, to fund elements of the strategy on a piece-by-piece basis subject to budget availability.
3. The Ministry should consider a more thorough and formal monitoring and evaluation process to be established for funding of all ASPF projects. Funding of future projects should be seen as more closely aligned with past program performance once a cohort of projects has been funded. It should also be clear that some projects will take longer to bear fruit, some will be very difficult to measure effectiveness, some will be experimental in nature, and some projects possibly may not attain their goals. As part of this evaluation process attention should be paid to “lessons learned”.
4. The Ministry could consider playing a stronger role in coordinating the ASPF projects to ensure that benefits and best practices are readily available amongst institutions. Perhaps a regional or provincial forum could be held to ensure that best practices and plans are available to all institutions.
5. The Ministry might consider a small fund that could be held back for supplemental funding of projects that show promise of enhanced performance. A small sum of dollars invested here could result in improving ASPF project effectiveness throughout the year.

6. If ASPF project funding continues in the future, the case for some pilot projects initiated through the Aboriginal communities and institutions might be considered in partnership with public post-secondary institutions. In these pilot cases, communities could choose how they would partner with public post-secondary institutions to achieve community aims within the post-secondary system.
7. The Ministry could consider awarding one larger budget to two or more institutions that are pursuing similar programming in order to stimulate institutional cooperation. This also might be helpful where there is a shortage of instructors (e.g. unique Indigenous languages).
8. It is recommended that if overhead costs to an institution are to be paid, that they be made explicit in any guidelines developed and an explicit maximum rate be established for the project to contribute.

Aboriginal Awards and Scholarships

1. The Ministry should require and enforce more reporting and data from the Award and Scholarship administrators and do the same for any future Aboriginal student financial assistance initiatives as part of a future Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education Framework Policy. This information should include a profile (while maintaining anonymity) of applicants and recipients by Aboriginal status, region, type of program/discipline, value of award/scholarship/financial aid, whether they are a new or repeat applicant/recipient, etc.
2. The Ministry should undertake – in combination with the findings and recommendations of this section of this evaluation – an analysis of Aboriginal student participation in the BC Student Financial Assistance Program, of other ancillary financial assistance programs such as the Adult Basic Education Student Assistance Program, and of federal government sources of financial assistance to identify how these are working, to identify gaps, and to determine what more action and funding is needed.
3. The Ministry should work with the Award administrators to see how its funding can be used to benefit a broader range of Aboriginal students in terms of type of programs, types of institutions (including IAHLA institutes), Aboriginal status, and regions of the province.
4. The Ministry should work closely with institutions, IAHLA institutes, Aboriginal communities and others to promote awareness of a) the Award; b) the Scholarship; and c) other financial assistance.
5. The Ministry should consider working on an on-going basis with an Aboriginal student and advisor committee and/or an existing body such as the Unified Aboriginal Youth Collective to develop a concerted strategy around promoting awareness of and access to Aboriginal post-secondary student financial assistance.
6. As part of other program funding or as a distinct grant, the Ministry should consider modest grants to institutions and Aboriginal communities to support staff to promote awareness about and help students navigate and access various sources of post-secondary financial assistance.

Aboriginal Transitions Research Fund

1. The ATRF program should be considered as a key component of any future Strategy. This future program should:
 - Utilize the large volume of valuable information to inform the next phase
 - Review the program call to ensure that it is much clearer on the desired results and types of projects that will and will not be considered
 - Continue to ensure that there is a strong emphasis and associated resources on developing and maintaining effective institution/Aboriginal community partnerships, particularly for projects with large geographic areas and wide-ranging partner communities
 - Translate the information and products generated in these pilots to the full post-secondary education system
 - Capture areas that were not done in the first phase, most notable are the K-12 to post-secondary education transition and secondarily the post-secondary education to labour market transition
2. Even if a future ATRF program is not established, additional work is required to support research on the K-12 to post-secondary and the post-secondary to work transition areas.
3. A cross-analysis of the three pilot projects' results should be considered. The findings, recommendations and initiatives were very similar and there may be synergies that may yield even better results. Note that this is underway but will not be completed in time for this review.
4. The Ministry should facilitate widespread dissemination and communication of the results and tools from the three ATRF projects.

Strategic Investment Plan (Targeted Aboriginal Seats)

1. Where the use of Targeted Seats is being considered, there ought to be a much greater degree of demonstrable partnership between public institutions and community-based entities before such resources are allocated. Furthermore, the Ministry should continue to monitor progress to assist with sustainability and to help disseminate knowledge regarding the outcomes of successful partnerships. A much higher degree of transparency between the Ministry and institutions regarding the expectations during the start-up phase would be beneficial.
2. Given that Targeted Seats were allocated as base funding – and given the relative non-performance of some institutions – the Ministry should review funding allocations with a view towards redistributing resources either to institutions that have over-performed (and now face resulting budget pressures from that success), or to better

support some of the more promising institution/community partnerships that have emerged during the course of the first three years of the strategy.

3. In the event that the Ministry carries out a funding review of Targeted Seats with a view towards the redistribution of unused resources, some consideration should also be given to making at least a portion of those funds available to Aboriginal-controlled institutes to support aspects of their work including the important transitional support work necessary to sustain longer-term student success.
4. While demand clearly exists to support the deployment of further Targeted Seats, some consideration should be given to resourcing broader institutional Aboriginal education plans that show evidence of success, partnership and potential for growth. There appears to be some institutional interest in performance-based approaches that may hold greater potential for improved results.

One-Time Grants

1. The Ministry should follow up on all outstanding One-Time Grant projects and obtain reports of the results on each, including a financial accounting.
2. If a similar program is funded under a new Strategy, there should be a clear logic model at the start, and the Ministry should require and enforce reporting of results. This should include clear guidelines and criteria that are published in advance of receiving applications.
3. If a similar program is funded in the future, the Ministry should provide more definition around priorities for this funding, perhaps focusing it on meeting needs that relate to gaps in Aboriginal post-secondary education support that would not otherwise be funded.

Aboriginal Representation on Institutional Governance Bodies

1. A future Aboriginal post-secondary strategy should retain the general goal of “Enhance Aboriginal Representation on Institutional Governance Bodies.” However, this directive needs to be re-formulated as a goal with an associated logic model, desired outcomes and appropriate follow up.
2. Consideration should be given to re-framing this goal to ensure that there is a strong Aboriginal voice in establishing public post-secondary institutional direction. This should include Aboriginal representation on boards of such institutions, but as a goal, it should also support other methods of achieving the larger goal.
3. Establish measures to help public post-secondary institutions select qualified Aboriginal members and establish a strong Aboriginal voice in establishing the strategic direction of such institution. Some measures that were suggested include:
 - i Use experienced Aboriginal organizations to help a public post-secondary institution identify skilled board members using the institution’s skills matrix. This allows the institution to gain additional perspectives through single board members.
 - i Have public post-secondary institutions with First Nations Advisory Councils have those Council’s chairs as mandatory institutional board members.
 - i Extend the six-year board member term limit for Aboriginal members if a suitable alternate is not available.
4. Cabinet and BRDO should commit to Aboriginal representation on public post-secondary institution boards. This should include a regular reminder letter from the Minister and establishing this as a standing component of BRDO’s consideration for post-secondary institution board members.

System-Wide Data Tracking and Performance Measures

1. It is recommended that the Ministry continue to invest resources in the data and statistical analysis function of the Ministry. In this way, the Ministry can more effectively target its other resources aimed at closing the gap between Aboriginal post-secondary students and non-Aboriginal student by 2015.
2. It is recommended that the Ministry continue to support the Student Transitions Program and focus on the issue of Aboriginal student retention and the resulting required efforts with disaggregation of relevant data. In doing so, it should work to improve statistical knowledge about Aboriginal students who leave post-secondary institutions and often return. Any attempt to better track them and to better understand the flows involved will be valuable. The portion that returns to post-secondary institutions and how long (on average) students stay away should continue to be studied. It should also continue its investigations the effects of interventions in the K-12 system to maximise Aboriginal post-secondary student retention.
3. The Ministry and IAHLA should create a formal joint project to identify a way to “tag” IAHLA post-secondary students so they are counted as IAHLA students and be reflected as such within the Central Data Warehouse.
4. Two economic studies from Ontario (*Under Represented Groups on Post Secondary Education in Ontario* and *Access to Postsecondary Education: How Ontario Compares*) published by the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario in February 2011 may be instructive for BC. These studies examine the participation of various groups in the Ontario post-secondary system and including the role of Aboriginal origin, low-income families, history of attending post-secondary education, rural versus urban residence, single parent families, and the role of disabilities in predicting post-secondary participation and performance. The Ministry is aware of these studies and should consider replicating the methodology to obtain BC-specific data on potentially predictive variables for Aboriginal post-secondary participation and completion.

5. In the light of concerns in Aboriginal communities regarding the validity and reliability of the Aboriginal student head-count, it is recommended that the Ministry re-examine the head-count and explain the recent surge of enrolment numbers in the BC post-secondary sector to the satisfaction of all parties. This would appear to be valuable, especially for the Aboriginal community at large. Perhaps a representative advisory group can advise the Ministry and reassure the relevant Aboriginal audiences of the quality of information forthcoming from the Ministry.

CONCLUSIONS AND OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS

Closing the post-secondary educational gap for Aboriginal learners is a long-term goal – success in this area will take some time. This evaluation was conducted after three years of the Strategy, where many aspects of the Strategy are less than three years old. Making conclusions on the attainment of long-term outcomes of the Strategy and each program element is premature. However, the Evaluators are able to assess how elements were implemented and the direction these elements are taking; and are also able to provide a general framework for future evaluations.

Overall, there were indications of many positive activities and outputs of the 2007 Strategy. Particularly positive, is that each of the four “priority” elements (i.e. ASP, ASPF, Gathering Places, and Awards and Scholarships) showed promise in the outputs and short-term outcomes achieved to date. Of course, they were not perfect and therefore, we have identified some challenges and recommended future actions.

With the exception of the ATRF, the smaller Strategy elements (i.e. One-Time Grants, Aboriginal Representation on Institutional Governance Bodies, Targeted Aboriginal Seats, and Data Tracking and Performance Measures) tended to involve more questions about their effectiveness and processes to date.

The lack of an evaluation framework built into (from the start) the 2007 Strategy and clear logic models and measurement indicators for some program elements, made it challenging to assess the outcomes of every element.

This evaluation was completed within very limited time and resource parameters. These factors limited the extent of the analysis and it limited the nature and extent of participation in the evaluation by stakeholders.

One has to keep in mind when reviewing this report that the participation of Aboriginal communities, institutes and students was limited because of timelines and resources. Despite best supporting efforts by IAHLA, FNEESC, MNBC, and other Aboriginal organizations plus additional resources to support travel costs and other costs by the Ministry, the participation of Aboriginal people in some parts of the regional sessions and parts of the online survey was less than desired.

One trend that varied by element of the Strategy showed differences between public post-secondary institutions in the success or level of effective practices in Aboriginal post-secondary education. Some institutions were singled out by Aboriginal groups as role models and very effective in relationship-building; about others – albeit a smaller number – we heard a pattern of complaints about not being inclusive, not responding as well to local Aboriginal community needs, etc.

While having reliable and valid data on Aboriginal student participation, retention and successful completion of educational programs has been identified as a challenge throughout this evaluation, it should also be noted that there have been gradual improvements in data tracking and performance measurement by the Ministry and its partners in recent years.

One strong message from Aboriginal post-secondary students and Aboriginal communities was about the serious financial barriers impeding participation and retention in higher education. This was particularly an issue for First Nations students. While it is beyond the scope of this evaluation, the Evaluators believe mention should be made of concerns consistently raised by Aboriginal students, educators and communities regarding what they see as deficiencies and, in fact, real declines in the levels of resources available for post-secondary studies. It would be remiss on the part of the Evaluators to identify part of the potential solution, without considering the broader context. These concerns – which appear to be grounded in empirical evidence – are driven by four inter-related factors:

1. Federal funding levels for First Nations post-secondary education were “capped” in the mid-80s and annual adjustments, when available, have been limited to 2%.
2. The Aboriginal 15-30 year old cohort is the only demographic group in Canada experiencing dramatic population growth. Accordingly, it would be reasonable to expect that the post-secondary eligible population would also be growing but little has been done to adjust the funding level available to reflect that change;
3. Aboriginal learners' K-12 graduation rates, although still well below where they need to be, have gone up

- quite significantly¹ and yet nothing has been done to increase the overall level of resource to support a larger pool of eligible students;
4. Tuition levels at colleges and universities have gone up dramatically in Canada. Particularly at the university level, these increases have been in the order of 100%, or more, in some jurisdictions. The consequence of this very real cost increase, without action at the federal level to modify funding levels accordingly, is a very significant loss of the “buying power” of First Nations communities with respect to post-secondary access opportunities for their students.

In reality, substantial reductions in buying power, coupled with the impact of more students calling on a capped level of resource that has not been properly modified to reflect actual inflationary pressures, results in tough choices about who gets to go on to post-secondary education and for how long. Many of those we talked to feel that, in effect, access to post-secondary education is being rationed and this is difficult to reconcile with general Federal recognition regarding the importance of Canadians having broad access to post-secondary studies.

Overall Recommendations

1. For future initiatives such as the 2007 Strategy, the Ministry should develop an evaluation framework before/as it is implemented, with clear logic models, measurable indicators and program logic models. The prescribed reporting and monitoring should be consistent with the evaluation framework’s indicators and logic models. It is realized that initiatives evolve and such a framework may need to be updated along the way. This evaluation framework should include both formative and summative evaluation and both process and outcome evaluation.
2. When the Ministry is ready to have such initiatives evaluated, it should have data and documentation packaged and ready to provide to evaluators early in the evaluation process.
3. If for whatever reason an element of such initiatives is discontinued before the end of the initiative or before it can be evaluated, the Ministry should do some kind of review and analysis of the element to date (until it was discontinued).
4. Realistic timelines and resources should be carefully considered regarding evaluations of this scope and magnitude. This should include a methodical process of estimating the amount of time and resources by considering the complexity, the number and type of stakeholders to be involved, geographic considerations, time of year, etc. In particular, an evaluation of an Aboriginal post-secondary education initiative needs to reflect time and resources that will allow Aboriginal communities, institutes and students throughout the province adequate time to have meaningful input. It may also be possible to address some of this outreach component through the ongoing monitoring system.
5. The conception, development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of any future similar strategy should place an even greater emphasis on involving the Aboriginal community, institutes and student representatives in direct, timely and comprehensive ways. Even those Aboriginal representatives that are not directly involved in a post-secondary partnership or program should have the opportunity to understand and provide input on any new strategy.
6. Related to the previous recommendation, the Ministry and provincial stakeholder groups – particularly led by the BC Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Partners – should prepare, implement and monitor a comprehensive communication process in developing, launching and implementing any new Aboriginal post-secondary initiative. This needs to be an on-going activity and not just around the launch of such an initiative.
7. Reciprocal, respectful and collaborative relationship-building, communication and partnership with Aboriginal communities and institutes should be part of the requirements and accountability for funding to public post-secondary institutions under any new Aboriginal post-secondary strategy. This has been happening to an increasing extent already at many public institutions; but we have heard reports of a number of exceptions to this from Aboriginal organizations and communities.
8. Mechanisms like funded Aboriginal Service Plans have been – and could continue to be – an effective tool to accelerate services to Aboriginal students and communities and perhaps, over time, to shift the numbers on recruitment, retention and completion success. The ASP approach is, however, not the only option and the Ministry may wish to consider the value of institution or sector-specific approaches that would fund strategic plans designed to more directly address core objectives. Some institutions are clearly ready for this and would be prepared to entertain a form of “pay for performance” funding. In many cases, momentum will be lost if there is an absence of some form of support to sustain programs and services that have been developed through the ASPs.
9. Notwithstanding the benefits of ASP, the Ministry and post-secondary system should review more closely how some institutions and regions without ASP funding were able to achieve significant growth in Aboriginal student enrolment and other important outcomes.

¹In British Columbia the increase over the last 15 years has been from approximately 30% to closer to 50%, making it clear that the community of students potentially ready for post-secondary studies is growing quite significantly.

10. The Evaluators consistently heard concerns (particularly from community education coordinators) that Aboriginal K-12 students are not at the skills and knowledge levels that their paper credentials illustrate. The Evaluators cannot confirm or deny these allegations however the Evaluators feel that it is worthwhile seriously considering the recommendation that a review similar to this review explore the K-12 system. The Evaluators also recommend that an associated research project be incorporated into future versions of this strategy that deals with Aboriginal student transition from K-12 to post-secondary. It is highly likely that this associated project would capture these concerns.
11. While it is beyond the scope of this Review, deficiencies in federal funding consistently emerged as an issue. Failure to resolve this could impair the potential for continued progress at the provincial level and there is a clear need to come to some form of understanding that would help to reduce the ambiguities that currently limit the capacity of some of the IAHLA institutes to be as effective as they could be.
12. This type of strategy is highly dependent upon higher-level factors that are beyond individual program element. Some of these include: the number and quality of relationships between all relevant players; the levels of resources that were leveraged from external sources; the amount that aboriginal graduates have made a difference in the evolution of the aboriginal community, etc. These elements of success are not explicitly addressed in the strategy or the associated monitoring system. Future versions of the strategy should consider these meta-indicators and use them throughout, i.e., determining program priorities, monitoring, implementation, etc.
13. This first iteration of the strategy represents a good start. Like all first attempts there are many things to be learned. Some higher level learning that should be incorporated into future versions include:
 - a. Put more effort into creating ownership and buy-in by the relevant players through the design stage;
 - b. Establish tighter outcomes and measures for all elements and incorporate these into a formalized monitoring system;
 - c. Use the monitoring system to collect data on the any future program elements a new Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education framework that would be required during its evaluation;
 - d. Establish higher-level outcomes for the overall strategy (again incorporating their measures into the monitoring system);
 - e. Ensure that the monitoring system is easy, provides information that is useable at all stages to all involved with the strategy (particularly those collecting the information); and
 - f. Establish longer-term outcomes and targets that work towards those outcomes for each iteration of the strategy.

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- Sarah Cormode
- Garry Merkel
- Dr. Jim Rae
- Ruth Young

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Sincerely,



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ACRONYMS

Readers may wish to print off this list of acronyms for use while reviewing this report.

ABE	Adult Basic Education
AHRDA	<i>Former</i> Aboriginal Human Resources Development Agreement [holders]
ALMD	<i>Former</i> Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development
APSES	Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education Strategy and Action Plan
ASETS	Aboriginal Skills for Employment Strategy
ASP	Aboriginal Service Plan
ASPF	Aboriginal Special Projects Fund
ATRF	Aboriginal Transitions Research Fund
AVED	<i>Former</i> Ministry of Advanced Education
BCAAFC	BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres
BCAIU	BC Association of Institutes and Universities
BCC	BC Colleges
BCIT	BC Institute of Technology
BRDO	Board Resourcing Development Office (Government of BC)
CALP	Community Adult Literacy Program
CC	Camosun College
CCC	Coastal Corridor Consortium
CDW	Central Data Warehouse
CNC	College of New Caledonia
COR	College of the Rockies
CU or Cap U	Capilano University
DC	Douglas College
DTPM	Data-Tracking and Performance Measurement
ECUAD	Emily Carr University of Art + Design
FNESC	First Nations Education Steering Committee
FNSA	First Nations Schools Association
FTE	[Student] Full-Time Equivalent
GP	Gathering Places
GPCF	Gathering Places Capital Funding Program
HCS	Human Capital Strategies
HRSDC	Human Resources and Skills Development Canada
IAHLA	Indigenous and Adult Higher Learning Association
INAC	Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
ISSP	Indian Student Support Program
JI or JIBC	Justice Institute of BC
KPU	Kwantlen Polytechnic University
LC	Langara College
MNBC	Métis Nation BC
NBBC	Native Brotherhood of BC
NEC	Native Education College
NIC	North Island College
NLC	Northern Lights College
NVIT	Nicola Valley Institute of Technology
NWCC	Northwest Community College
OC	Okanagan College

OTG	One-Time Grants
PCTIA	Private Career Training Institutes Agency
PIMS	Pacific Institute for the Mathematical Sciences
PPSI	Public Post-Secondary Institute
PSE	Post-Secondary Education
PSSSP	Post-Secondary Student Support Program
RRU	Royal Roads University
RUCBC	Research Universities Council of BC
SAGE	Supporting Aboriginal Graduate Enhancement
SFU	Simon Fraser University
SIP	Strategic Investment Plan (Targeted Seats)
STP	Student Transitions Project
TRU	Thompson Rivers University
UAYC	Unified Aboriginal Youth Collective
UBC	University of British Columbia
UFV	University of the Fraser Valley
UNBC	University of Northern British Columbia
UVic	University of Victoria
VCC	Vancouver Community College
VIU	Vancouver Island University

1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

This report provides the results of a consultant's (the "Evaluators") evaluation of the 2007 Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education Strategy and Action Plan (the "Strategy").

Upon the recommendation of the BC Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Partners, the Ministry took action to conduct an outcome or summative evaluation of the 2007 Strategy. As the result of a Request for Proposals and upon the recommendation of the Evaluation Steering Committee², the Ministry of Advanced Education (the "Ministry") awarded a contract to Human Capital Strategies (HCS) to conduct the evaluation of the Strategy by February 18, 2011.

The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the degree to which the actions and initiatives implemented under the Strategy helped the Ministry to achieve its objectives. The evaluation was intended to:

- Assess whether actions and initiatives implemented under the 2007 Strategy helped to achieve or make progress towards achieving the intended objectives; and,
- Identify challenges, lessons learned and effective practices from the 2007 Strategy.

In determining whether progress was achieved, the evaluation was to compare pre- and post-Strategy results from public post-secondary institutions and Aboriginal communities and institutes.

While the main focus of this evaluation is on Strategy outputs and outcomes, "process" is important in this context because of the following considerations:

1. The Strategy processes are, in some cases, important outcomes and indicators in themselves.
2. The Strategy processes can impact (positively and negatively) the nature and extent of outcomes.
3. The Strategy processes can enable or limit the extent to which attainment of outcomes can be evaluated.

Almost 800 individual responses were received between December 2010 and February 2011 from Aboriginal people, students, communities, organizations and institutes; from board members, management, staff and students of public post-secondary educational institutions; and from other British Columbians. Three hundred and twenty-two people responded to an online survey; over 340 people attended six regional sessions; and over 130 individuals and organizations attended other meetings and/or made written submissions to the Evaluators.

This has been a very challenging project to enable as many individuals and groups as possible to provide their input about the 2007 Strategy, specifically, and about Aboriginal post-secondary education in BC, generally. Further, achieving this and completing a comprehensive and evidence-based evaluation report within 100 days has proven to be an enormous endeavour.

² The Policy Working Group of the BC Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Partners fulfilled the role as the Evaluation Steering Committee overseeing this evaluation project.

2. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The context and significance of this evaluation is critical for the Ministry and its partners in moving ahead with developing a clear strategic direction on Aboriginal post-secondary education policy in conjunction with the BC Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Partners (the “Partners”) and First Nations.

Education is the foundation of success for any society – traditional, contemporary or otherwise. In BC (and all of Canada), Aboriginal communities need to build strong governments, economies, community wellness, land management and many other complex elements required for strong societies in today’s world. To accomplish this, post-secondary education is key. As post-secondary credential attainment increases, so too do employment and income opportunities. However, according to Statistics Canada (2008), the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people persists in the post-secondary education realm, with only 35% of Aboriginal people attaining a post-secondary credential in the 2006 census compared to 51% of the non-Aboriginal population. In order to close this gap, the question is, what is needed for the post-secondary system to best meet the unique and diverse needs of Aboriginal people in order to enable them to succeed.

“The success of First Nations people in PSE should be of vital interest to all Canadians as the country’s social and economic prosperity depends on it. With increased education (from no education degree to a university diploma), the gap in employment rates between First Nations and non-Aboriginal people is essentially closed.”

(Assembly of First Nations, *Fact Sheet on First Nations Post-Secondary Education*, 2011)

Many individuals and organizations continue to work towards improving the post-secondary experience for BC’s Aboriginal learners and positive trends in the success of Aboriginal learners continue to be seen – success that translates into stronger and healthier communities. This success comes from the strategic vision and collaboration of many groups committed to this cause, including the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC), the Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association (IAHLA), Métis Nation BC, and the BC Assembly of First Nations among other federal and provincial government partners who make up the Partners table.

The Ministry’s 2007 Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Strategy and Action Plan was built on the principle of engaging these key communities and recognizing the importance of authentic relationship-building between post-secondary institutions and Aboriginal communities and organizations. The Strategy was a key document that guided the Ministry’s approach to improving Aboriginal post-secondary education success in BC. It builds towards the education goals outlined in the *Transformative Change Accord* and is a key component of realizing *The New Relationship* vision with respect to BC First Nations and “to make BC the best educated, most literate jurisdiction on the continent.”

The 2007 Strategy committed to improving outcomes for Aboriginal learners and ‘closing the gap’ with respect to higher education and employment. It was intended to help the Province implement its commitments in *The New Relationship*, *Transformative Change Accord*, and the *Métis Nation Relationship Accord*, as well as its commitments to work collaboratively to improve Aboriginal learner participation and success in the *Memorandum of Understanding on Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training*.

The Strategy included a four-year (2006/07 to 2009/10) funding commitment. Some of the programs created under the Strategy, in particular the Aboriginal Service Plan initiative, were viewed as pilots, intended to explore and identify new initiatives to support and enhance Aboriginal learner success.

The New Relationship recognizes that BC's overall vision and goals "can only be achieved if First Nations citizens attain these goals". As integral contributors to Canadian society, Aboriginal people must be given the opportunity to succeed, as their success is directly linked to the success of Canadian society as a whole. The Ministry is currently working with partners to develop a new policy framework for Aboriginal post-secondary education and training. The evaluation of the 2007 Strategy is intended to inform this policy framework. Review of the 2007 Strategy and ongoing reviews of subsequent versions of this strategy are key measures in ensuring the Ministry is accountable to improving and supporting the success of Aboriginal learners in post-secondary education and training.

A submission to the Evaluators from FNEC and IAHLA puts it well:

"Specifically, jointly determining a response to and building upon the evaluation findings would provide an important opportunity to demonstrate the kind of collaboration that is needed at all levels of the BC post-secondary education system – **indeed, the collaboration that makes BC a leader in addressing Aboriginal post-secondary education challenges that are experienced across the country.**"³

While much work remains to be done, British Columbia has the benefit of dedicated provincial resources that have been focused on addressing the gaps that are often identified but rarely acted on. The resulting programs may require adjustment – or the need for different approaches may be apparent – but the Province is to be commended for taking a leadership role that distinguishes it from other provincial counterparts

3. EVALUATION TERMS OF REFERENCE

This section provides the project terms of reference for the Evaluators. It is excerpted verbatim from the Ministry contract with HCS.

In 2007, the Province announced the Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education Strategy and Action Plan (2007 Strategy), which committed to improving outcomes for Aboriginal learners and 'closing the gap' with respect to higher education and employment. The Ministry is currently working with partners to develop a new policy framework for Aboriginal post-secondary education and training. The evaluation of the 2007 Strategy is intended to inform this policy framework.

The Ministry established an Evaluation Steering Committee to provide guidance, advice and direction in the evaluation. This Steering Committee consists of members of the Policy Working Group of the British Columbia Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Partners Table, including Aboriginal organizations, post-secondary institution organizations, and federal and provincial representatives. The Steering Committee was accountable to the British Columbia Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Partners Table; however, the Ministry was responsible for the procurement and contractual obligations.

³ February 8, 2011 submission to the Evaluators from the First Nations Education Steering Committee and the Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association.

The Ministry assigned an evaluation manager to represent the Ministry during the evaluation. The evaluation manager coordinated the evaluation, based on the direction provided by the Steering Committee. The evaluation manager was responsible for:

- Overall responsibility and accountability for the evaluation.
- Providing guidance to the consultant project lead throughout all phases of execution, as directed by the Steering Committee.
- Approval of all deliverables, as directed by the Steering Committee and subject to government approval processes.
- Co-ordination of communications, review and approval processes between the consultant project lead and the Steering Committee.

Outputs

The contract for the evaluation indicated that the Contractor must:

1. Conduct an outcome or summative evaluation of the 2007 Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education Strategy and Action Plan. The evaluation will adopt an eclectic approach which may include multiple lines of evidence, as well as quantitative and qualitative methods, to assess whether the major initiatives under the 2007 Strategy made progress towards achieving their intended objectives, and to identify lessons learned, challenges and effective practices. The evaluation will be conducted based on the evaluation work plan revised and developed with the Evaluation Steering Committee.
2. Specifically, the Contractor must provide the project team outlined in Part 4 of Schedule A.

The Contractor's project lead will be responsible for:

- a. Overseeing and coordinating the evaluation;
 - b. Ongoing liaison and coordination with the Ministry;
 - c. The day-to-day management of the project;
 - d. Regular progress reporting to the evaluation manager and a minimum of four meetings with the Steering Committee to discuss evaluation design and planning, information collection, progress reporting and results of the evaluation; and
 - e. The production of deliverables in accordance with contractual requirements.
3. In carrying out the evaluation, the Contractor must:
 - a. Meet with the Evaluation Steering Committee to review and/or revise the Contractor's work plan as submitted in the response to the Ministry's Request for Proposals.
 - b. Provide a revised work plan for the evaluation, including methodology, by November 12, 2010, and upon the request of the Contractor and/or the Evaluation Steering Committee, meet with the Evaluation Steering Committee to finalize the work plan and assist in implementing evaluation methodology.
 - c. Provide a report on interim draft findings and progress to date by December 29, 2010, and meet with the Evaluation Steering Committee to review and/or revise this interim report.

- d. Provide a draft final report on the evaluation, including introduction and background; methodology; findings; analysis of results; and draft recommendations, by February 4, 2011, and meet with the Evaluation Steering Committee to review and/or revise this draft final report.
- e. Provide a final report on the evaluation by February 18, 2011, and present this final report to the Evaluation Steering Committee, Ministry executive and the Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education Partners Table, as requested by the Evaluation Steering Committee.
- f. Provide a financial statement of account upon completion of the project.

Inputs

The contract for the evaluation indicated that the Contractor must:

1. Provide the experience and knowledge listed by the Contractor in the response to the Ministry's Request for Proposals.
2. Develop evaluation methodology that includes, but is not limited to, a document review, key informant interviews, focus groups, or site visits.
3. Examine a variety of primary and secondary data, such as data on Aboriginal learners in the Ministry's Central Data Warehouse or the Student Transition Project, public institution's data on Aboriginal learners, data on learners from Aboriginal institutions, project reports, as well as interviews and testimonials from staff and participants involved in the 2007 Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education Strategy and Action Plan.
4. Seek advice from the Evaluation Steering Committee on all substantive issues related to the evaluation, which includes but is not limited to the evaluation methodology, review and approval of deliverables, and any other substantial issues that may be raised during the course of the evaluation.
5. Provide for meaningful involvement by partners and other interested parties in Aboriginal communities and the post-secondary system.

Outcomes

Through the delivery of the Services, the Province wishes to realize the following outcomes and, without limiting the obligation of the Contractor to comply with other provisions of this Part, the Contractor must use commercially reasonable efforts to achieve them:

1. Assess whether actions and initiatives implemented under the 2007 Strategy helped to achieve or make progress towards achieving the intended objectives.
2. Identify challenges, lessons learned and effective practices from the 2007 Strategy.
3. Inform development of a new policy framework for Aboriginal post-secondary education and training.

The parties acknowledge that the Contractor does not warrant that these outcomes will be achieved.

Reporting Requirements

The contract also indicated that the Contractor must:

1. Meet with the Evaluation Steering Committee to review and/or revise all deliverables within the timelines outlined in “Outputs”.
2. Provide regular (minimum bi-weekly) reports to the Ministry evaluation manager on progress in the evaluation.
3. Be available to meet with the Ministry evaluation manager and/or the evaluation manager to address issues that may arise throughout the evaluation.
4. Present the final report for the evaluation to the Evaluation Steering Committee, the Ministry executive and the Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education Partners Table, as requested by the Evaluation Steering Committee.

4. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

4.1 Overview

The Evaluators’ methodological approach to conducting the evaluation emphasized a comprehensive range of activities with which to collect and analyze secondary (existing) and primary (new) data, while inviting and reviewing input from as many interested individuals and organizations throughout BC as possible.

The evaluation was conducted by a team of six professionals with varying amounts and types of experience and expertise:

- Don Avison (Strategic Policy Advisor);
- Sarah Cormode (Researcher);
- Kerry Jothen (Project Leader and Senior Advisor);
- Garry Merkel (Strategic Policy Advisor);
- Dr. James Rae (Strategic Policy Advisor); and.
- Ruth Young (Researcher).

Project management of the evaluation was led by the principal of HCS (the Contractor), Kerry Jothen. While each team member fulfilled various roles throughout the evaluation, during the analysis of existing and new data, each focused on one or more program elements of the Strategy. This carried on throughout the drafting of the final report, with each team member drafting certain sections of the report, and allowing for the input of all team members on all sections.

In addition to the Steering Committee and key Ministry management staff, a key Ministry person throughout the evaluation was the evaluation manager, Naomi Adams. She played a key central role and communication link between the Ministry, the Evaluators and the Steering Committee.

4.2 Evaluation Scope

The Steering Committee and Ministry identified four elements as priorities for this evaluation:

- Aboriginal Service Plans;
- Gathering Places;
- Aboriginal Special Projects Fund; and,
- Scholarships and Financial Awards:
 - Endowment for Aboriginal Student Award (Irving K. Barber Scholarship Society)
 - Chief Joe Mathias Scholarship for Aboriginal Learners (First Nations Education Steering Committee)

This relative priority meant that the Evaluators spent more time and effort on these program elements in terms of collection and analysis of existing data and in terms of asking about them in the online survey and during regional and stakeholder meetings. Nevertheless, it was still important to conduct due diligence on the other Strategy program elements. They tended to be smaller in the amount of existing and new data to analyze. Those other elements of the Strategy are as follows:

- Aboriginal Transitions Research Fund;
- Strategic Investment Plan (Targeted Aboriginal) Seats;
- One-Time Grants;
- Aboriginal Representation on Institutional Governing Bodies;
- Agreements and Partnerships;
- System-Wide Data Tracking; and,
- Performance Measures.

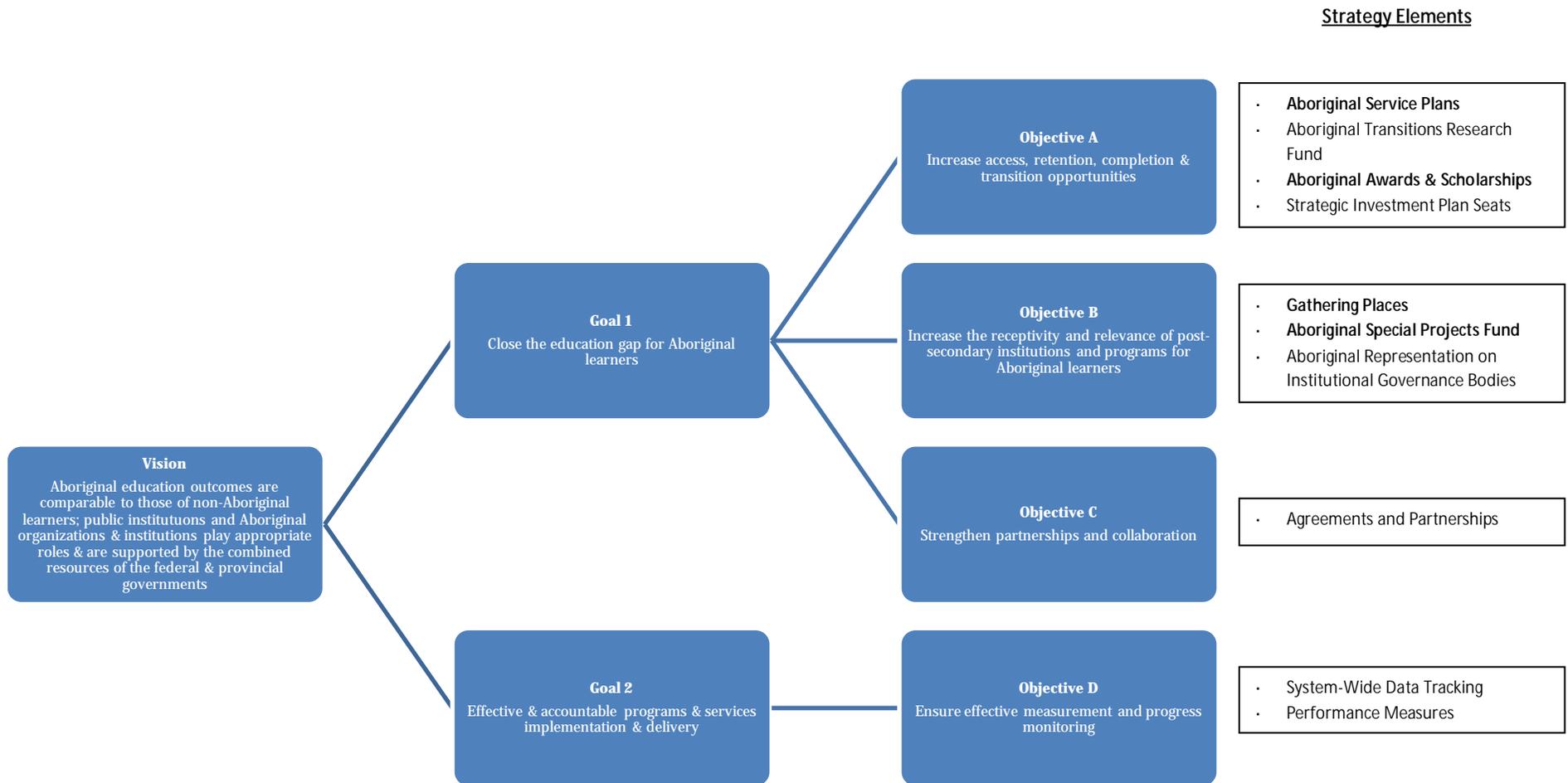
Subsequent discussions led to the following two initiatives being excluded from the scope of this evaluation: Community Adult Literacy Program (Aboriginal component) (being evaluated separately); and Alberta Centennial Scholarship for Aboriginal Learners (has been phased out by Alberta).

The figure on the next page provides a conceptual hierarchy of the 2007 Strategy vision, goals, objectives and elements. It shows the relationship between the Strategy's original two goals, four objectives and the program elements.

4.3 Methodological Process

The following table outlines the steps and details of the methodology process that was used throughout the evaluation of the Strategy.

2007 Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education Strategy Vision, Goals, Objectives and Program Elements



Methodology Process	Details of Methodology Process
Methodology	
1. Completion and Approval of Evaluation Plan	After an initial meeting with the Ministry, the Evaluators drafted a detailed Evaluation Plan, which was discussed and accepted by the Steering Committee with minor adjustments. The Plan included a detailed list of existing data to obtain and analyze, and initial options for primary data gathering.
2. Drafting and Approval of Logic Model and Evaluation Questions	Section 5 of this report contains the logic models and evaluation questions for each program element. These were developed through the combined work of the Ministry (before this evaluation) and the Evaluators ⁴ , with input and vetting by the Steering Committee. Each logic model contained the following information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Program Element Name · Goals/Objectives · Inputs · Outputs · Short/Medium-Term Outcomes · Long-Term Outcomes · Measures · Evaluation Questions
3. Drafting and Approval of Online Survey	The online survey was informed by the documentation reviewed, the evaluation questions and input from the Steering Committee.
4. Drafting and Approval of Primary Research Approach	An initial description of methodologies was submitted to the Steering Committee and finalized in late November 2010.
5. Drafting and Approval of Regional Session Approach	The Steering Committee and Evaluators identified the need for regional sessions to engage community members and stakeholders throughout the province. The intention was to identify a “sample” of institutions/regions in which an all-day evaluation input session would be held. Based on geography, resource and time limitations, as well as the type of institution (i.e. university, college or institute; public or Aboriginal), five sites were agreed to by the Steering Committee and Evaluators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · University of Northern British Columbia, Prince George · University of British Columbia, Vancouver · Native Education College, Vancouver

⁴ Before data collection and analysis could begin, it was essential to complete program logic models for each element of the Strategy and to also develop evaluation questions for each element. There were no logic models for six of the elements (ATRF, One-Time Grants, Governance, Agreements and Partnerships, System-Wide Data Tracking, and Performance Measures) and existing logic models for the other elements had to be reviewed and in some cases refined. Then evaluation questions were written for all program elements of the Strategy. All logic models and evaluation questions were provisionally approved by the Steering Committee with a view to the possibility of refining parts of them as appropriate throughout the project.

Methodology Process	Details of Methodology Process
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Northwest Community College (videoconference), Hazelton, Prince Rupert, Terrace · Camosun College, Victoria · Okanagan College, Kelowna <p>This was a fundamental decision as it had direct time and budget implications for the Evaluators, and required extensive cooperation and effort among the Evaluators, Ministry staff, host institutions, FNEESC and IAHLA, and other Steering Committee members.</p>
Secondary Research	
6. Identify and Obtain Existing Data	The Evaluators worked closely with the Ministry to obtain all pertinent materials: reports, financial documentation, briefing notes, email correspondence and communiqué.
7. Receipt of Existing Data	While the bulk of existing data was received from the Ministry throughout December and early January.
8. Analysis of Existing Data	Each team member reviewed the documentation associated with each element of the Strategy.
9. Request for and Receipt of Additional Data	Based upon the review of existing data, the evaluators requested additional data and documentation.
10. Further Analysis of Existing Data	The data analyzed included the online survey and other primary data collected since the Interim Report (such as the Regional Sessions and further meetings with stakeholder groups).
Primary Research	
11. Communication of the Project and Execution of Online Survey	A background overview of the 2007 Strategy, with the online survey link included, was distributed by the Ministry of Advanced Education to all stakeholder groups. During the period that the survey was open, various Aboriginal and post-secondary groups redistributed the online survey link within their networks; particularly after the Christmas holiday period.
12. Planning and Delivery of Primary Research Meetings	Primary research meetings were conducted throughout December 2010 with various stakeholder groups to inform the next steps of the evaluation process (please see next page for listing of stakeholder groups).
13. Preparing for Regional Sessions and Inviting Participants	During late December 2010 and early/mid January 2011, the Evaluators worked the Ministry, host institutions and the Steering Committee to organize and invite participants to the Regional Sessions.
14. Further Meetings with Stakeholders	These meetings were conducted throughout January and early February 2011 and informed the process for conducting the regional sessions.
15. Conducting Regional Sessions	The regional sessions were conducted throughout the province at six locations from January 20-February 2, 2011.
16. Analysis of Primary Data	The data analyzed included the online survey and other primary data collected since the Interim Report (such as the Regional Sessions and further meetings with stakeholder groups).

Methodology Process	Details of Methodology Process
Reporting & Feedback	
17. Drafting and Submission of Interim Report	An extensive Interim Report was submitted to the Ministry on December 31, 2010.
18. Interim Report Feedback	Formal Ministry feedback on the Interim Report was received January 12, 2011.
19. Drafting Final Report	A draft Final Report was submitted to the Ministry on February 25, 2011.
20. Feedback on Final Report	Formal feedback from the Ministry and Steering Committee was received March 3, 2011, along with additional documentation and data.
21. Submission of Final Report (Penultimate Draft)	The penultimate draft of the Final Report was submitted March 14, 2011.
22. Final Feedback on Final Report	Formal feedback from the Ministry and Steering Committee was received March 22, 2011.
23. Submission of Final Version of Final Report	The final version of the Final Report was submitted March 25, 2011.

4.4 Community and Stakeholder Participation

The following table demonstrates the type of consultation method and also the number of participants at the various meetings. Meetings and interviews are presented in chronological order.

Consultation Event	Representation:			Total Attendees
	Aboriginal Communities & Organizations	Post-Secondary Education System	Students (Number)	
Stakeholder Meeting December 9, 2010	First Nations Higher Learning Consortium			8
December 10, 2010		Vice-Presidents, Academic (RUCBC)		10
Stakeholder Meeting December 10, 2010 and January 17, 2011	IAHLA Board of Directors			13
Stakeholder Meeting December 13, 2011		BC College Presidents		10
Stakeholder Meeting January 11, 2011		ASP Coordinators Conference Call		13

Consultation Event	Representation:			Total Attendees
	Aboriginal Communities & Organizations	Post-Secondary Education System	Students (Number)	
Stakeholder Meeting January 18, 2011	Vancouver Island Public Post-Secondary Indigenous Leadership Consortium	UVic, VIU, Camosun College, North Island College		7
Stakeholder Meeting January 20, 2011		BCAIU Presidents		9
Regional Session, North (UNBC) January 20, 2011	Weekend University, Prophet River	CNC, NLC, UNBC	14	46
Stakeholder Meeting January 26, 2011	Unified Aboriginal Youth Collective, Métis Nation BC			15
Staff Interview January 26, 2011		TRU		2
Regional Session, Lower Mainland (UBC) January 26, 2011	Métis Nation BC, Ts'zil Learning Centre, Sto:lo Shxweli, FNEESC, Squamish FN	UBC, BCIT, Langara College, Douglas College, SFU, KPU, UFV	12	51
Regional Session, Lower Mainland (NEC) January 27, 2011	Métis Nation BC, Ucluelet FN, Squiala FN, Native Education College, Chawathil FN, Shxw'ow'hamel FN, Sechelt FN, United Native Nations Society, Richmond School District, Carden Consulting	VCC, Capilano University, NVIT Burnaby, JIBC, ECU	23	59
Regional Session (Video-conference), Northwest (NWCC) January 28, 2011	Elders, Board members, Education Coordinators, Aboriginal Coordinators	NWCC	16	71
Regional Session, Vancouver Island (Camosun College) February 1, 2011	Saanich Adult Education Centre, Chemainus Native College, Caring for First Nations Children Society, Quatsino FN, Campbell River FN, Tsaxana FN, Komoks FN, School District #61	UVic, VIU, NIC, RRU	20	77

Consultation Event	Representation:			Total Attendees
	Aboriginal Communities & Organizations	Post-Secondary Education System	Students (Number)	
Regional Session, Interior, Okanagan, Kootenays (Okanagan College) February 2, 2011	Okanagan Métis Association, Education Coordinators and Advisory Council	NVIT, TRU, Selkirk College, College of the Rockies, UBCO	17	37
Stakeholder Meeting February 3, 2011		BC Aboriginal Post-Secondary Coordinators		27
Staff Interview (undated)		SFU		2
TOTAL				457

In addition, 15 individuals submitted individual input via email or completed a “mini” survey that identified best practices and what worked or did not work in the Strategy program elements. This, combined with the above meeting participants, the Steering Committee members, Ministry staff and 322 respondents to the survey, documents almost 800 individual responses during this evaluation.

4.5 Survey Methodology

After extensive drafting, the survey questions, design and methodology were reviewed and vetted by the Ministry and the Steering Committee.

The survey link was initially distributed by the Ministry with a backgrounder on the evaluation, and invited stakeholders to respond to this opportunity to provide input. Subsequently, a number of groups within the post-secondary and Aboriginal communities distributed the survey within their memberships and networks. Particularly helpful were a call for action on the survey by FNEESC and IAHLA as well as repeated reminders by members of the BC Aboriginal Post-Secondary Coordinators throughout the public post-secondary system and among members’ other networks.

The survey contained 32 closed and open-ended questions about the 2007 Strategy and its individual program elements. The survey was designed and administered using the *QuestionPro* proprietary online survey tool. See the Appendix for the detailed analysis of survey results.

The survey was initiated in early December 2010, and was extended several times to allow ample time for individuals to respond, particularly in light of the two-week holiday period starting in the latter part of December.

The survey was closed on February 7, 2011. As of that date, there were 1,247 individual “views” of the survey, with 577 “starts” and 213 completions (after any duplication was eliminated). In addition to the completions, another 119 respondents completed the survey to varying degrees. These responses are included in the analysis.

The number of responses to questions that involve a single reply (i.e. “select one only”) only range from a low in the 50s to a high of 322; most of these types of questions involved between 150 and 300 responses. The reason for variability in these numbers is mainly two-fold: 1) some respondents may have dropped out of the survey at a certain point before completing; and 2) some questions did not apply to some respondents, and even if there was a “does not reply” response option, some people may still have refrained from responding to the question.

The average time taken to complete the survey was 33 minutes.

4.6 Project Risk Management

At an early Steering Committee meeting and in the Evaluators’ Interim Report, the following risks were identified, and were managed throughout the evaluation.

Potential Key Risks	Risk Management and Results
Expectations	This is the first evaluation of a strategy that will take a longer timeframe to effectively measure the produced results. Coupled with the fact that there is no baseline in the case of many elements of the Strategy, it is challenging to determine definitive conclusions in some cases.
Ministry and Steering Committee Response Time	The Evaluation Steering Committee was composed of several people; they and Ministry staff are all very busy with multiple priorities to attend to. Despite this, the Ministry staff and Steering Committee members responded quickly to requests for information, feedback and decisions. These groups never slowed down the progress of Evaluators.
Time	The overall project timelines were challenging; in particular, the limited “window” for primary data collection before the Christmas break. The limited timeframe meant that data analysis of existing documentation could not inform the collection of new data as these two processes were completed simultaneously.
Resources	The Evaluators had limited contract resources (fees and expenses) for each phase of the evaluation. These resources were closely monitored to ensure that resources were not exhausted during the data collection phase. The decision to hold regional sessions throughout the province put significant pressure on the Evaluators’ time and resources. The Ministry provided additional funds for stakeholder travel, institutional hospitality costs, and Evaluators’ expenses – however, Evaluators had to spend significantly more time on the regional sessions, analysis of data and drafting of the final report than anticipated.
Availability of Data Within the Timelines	There was a risk that the Evaluators would not obtain all the available data and collect and analyze all necessary new data within the required timelines. This risk was evident as new data was still submitted to the Evaluators in early March, a few days prior to the final report submission. This was a function of the overall project timeline. Ministry staff did an admirable job in responding to requests for data throughout the project.

Potential Key Risks	Risk Management and Results
Clear Logic Models or Statements of Goals, Inputs, Outputs and Outcomes	Statements of goals, outputs and outcomes for each element are important starting points, which drive evaluation questions and methodology. These models and statements did not exist for all of the elements and had to be developed and approved, and refined during drafting of the final report.
Stakeholder Availability	Effective primary data collection methodology was predicated on the nature and extent of stakeholder availability during the short period of primary data collection. Moving to the use of regional sessions and additional Ministry funding for travel costs of Aboriginal community members increased the regional access to participate in the evaluation. However, the short timelines and vastness of our province created limitations, and Aboriginal representatives on the Steering Committee indicated many more Aboriginal people would have liked to participate.
Aboriginal Student and Community Participation	These two stakeholder groups were critical in assessing the elements of the Strategy. Due to the aforementioned limitations of time and resources, it was challenging to reach all of the potential participants to obtain their perspectives about the Strategy. It was particularly challenging to obtain the participation of Métis, youth and IAHLA student representatives.

Collectively, the Evaluators, Ministry and Steering Committee have done their best to manage these challenges and risks. To their credit, in the case of a number of these factors, the Ministry and Steering Committee listened and responded to them. At the same time, many of these risks remained relevant throughout the project. The Evaluators, Ministry and Steering Committee were required to continuously manage these challenges and risks.

5. 2007 STRATEGY AND LOGIC MODELS

This section provides a brief description of the program elements of the 2007 Strategy, as well as the program logic models and evaluation questions for each element.

5.1 Overall Goals of the Strategy

Aboriginal parity is being pursued in a variety of areas: access to health services, housing, access to infrastructure, employment, and post-secondary participation. In order to understand how successful these initiatives are, data tracking and the measurement of performance play key roles in determining the nature and extent of success or lack thereof.

The goals and objectives of the 2007 Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education Strategy are:

Goal 1: Close the educational gap for Aboriginal learners.

Objectives:

- Increase the access, retention, completion and transitions opportunities for Aboriginal learners.
- Increase the receptivity and relevance of post-secondary institutions and programs for Aboriginal learners.
- Strengthen partnerships and collaboration in Aboriginal post-secondary education.

Goal 2: Effective and accountable programs and services implementation and delivery.

Objective:

- Ensure effective measurement and progress monitoring.

5.2 2007 Strategy Expenditures

The 2007 Strategy budget was \$65 million, however, according to the most recent Ministry data, under \$58 million has been expended. The Ministry-provided table on the next two pages shows a breakdown of the Strategy allocations by program element and public post-secondary institution. It does not include one-time grants, awards and scholarships or Community Adult Literacy Program funding.

The last two columns provide total allocation per each institution and percentage of total Strategy allocations, respectively. The figures are all thousand dollars and the percentage of total is rounded to the nearest whole number (i.e. Royal Roads University shows 0% but received \$218,000). This table provides an overall financial picture of the 2007 Strategy.

While the patterns of allocations per institution under each Strategy program element is interesting, Evaluators bring readers' attention to the last four columns of the table:

- The fourth column from the right provides the total 2007 Strategy funding per institution;
- The third column from the right provides the Aboriginal population within the mandate of each institution as a percentage of total population within each;
- The second column provides a ranking among institutions ("1" being the highest and "25" being the lowest) in terms of the amount of 2007 Strategy funding allocation to each; and,
- The last column on the right provides the proportion of total Strategy funding allocated to each institution.

It is interesting to note the when comparing Aboriginal populations as a percentage of total in each institution's region/mandate with the proportion of total 2007 Strategy funding, the largest differences were in three northern institutions and an interior one:

- NWCC received 7% of total funding and 29% of the population in the Northwest College region is Aboriginal (as of 2006 Census);
- Northern Lights College received 3% of the Strategy funding and 14% of Northern Lights region's population is Aboriginal;
- College of New Caledonia received 6% and 13% of New Caledonia region's population is Aboriginal; and,
- TRU received 7% of the funding and has 13% of the Cariboo region's population is Aboriginal.

Conversely, a few institutions received a higher proportion of funding than their proportion of the Aboriginal population:

- Camosun College received 7% of Strategy funding and 3% of the Camosun region is Aboriginal;
- Vancouver Community College received 6% of the funding and 2% of the Vancouver region is Aboriginal; and,

EVALUATION OF THE 2007 ABORIGINAL POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION STRATEGY – MARCH 2011

Funding Allocations to Public Post-Secondary Institutions Under the 2007 Strategy

Institution	Aboriginal Service Plans - Planning	Aboriginal Service Plans - Year 1	Aboriginal Service Plans - Year 2	Aboriginal Service Plans - Year 3	Aboriginal Service Plans - Transition	Aboriginal Special Projects Fund	Aboriginal Special Projects Fund	Aboriginal Special Projects Fund	Gathering Places	Aboriginal targeted Seats	Aboriginal targeted Seats	Aboriginal targeted Seats	Inventory of Programs & Services	Transitions Research Funding Y1 (ATRF)	Transitions Research Funding Y2 (ATRF)	Total by Institution	Aboriginal Population within Institution Mandate (2006 Census)	Total Funding (highest = 1 to lowest = 25)	Proportion of \$ Allocated per Institution
	(Thousands)																		
Fiscal Year	06-07	07-08	08-09	09-10	10-11	06-07	07-08	08-09	n/a	07-08	08-09	09-10	06-07	07-08	08-09				
British Columbia Institute of Technology	--	--	--	--	--	\$71	\$137	\$95	\$600	--	--	--	\$25	--	--	\$928	5%	20	2%
Camosun College	\$175	\$400	\$400	\$400	\$100	\$97	\$41	\$43	\$610	\$166	\$294	\$294	--	--	--	\$3,020	3%	5	7%
Capilano University	\$175	\$540	\$540	\$540	\$135	\$116	\$100	\$135	\$600	--	--	--	--	--	--	\$2,880	3%	7	6%
College of New Caledonia	\$150	\$400	\$400	\$400	\$100	\$75	\$169	\$200	\$627	--	\$138	\$138	--	--	--	\$2,796	13%	8	6%
College of the Rockies	--	--	--	--	--	\$75	\$285	\$100	\$450	--	--	--	\$25	--	--	\$935	6%	19	2%
Douglas College	--	--	--	--	--	--	\$96	\$96	\$770	--	\$174	\$174	\$25	--	--	\$1,335	2%	13	3%
Emily Carr University Art and Design	--	--	--	--	--	\$70	--	\$102	\$600	--	--	--	\$25	--	--	\$797	5%	23	2%
Justice Institute of British Columbia	--	--	--	--	--	\$72	\$200	\$150	--	\$175	\$175	\$175	\$25	--	--	\$971	5%	18	2%
Kwantlen Polytechnic	--	--	--	--	--	\$56	\$124	\$25	\$600	--	--	--	\$25	--	--	\$830	2%	21	2%
Langara College	--	--	--	--	--	\$29	\$154	\$99	\$304	--	--	--	\$25	--	--	\$610	2%	22	1%
Nicola Valley Institute of Technology	\$150	\$400	\$400	\$400	\$74	\$69	\$370	\$163	\$600	\$212	\$350	\$350	--	--	--	\$3,537	5%	2	8%
North Island College	\$150	\$200	\$200	\$200	\$50	\$119	\$135	\$81	\$606	--	--	--	--	--	--	\$1,740	12%	12	4%
Northern Lights College	--	--	--	--	--	\$123	--	\$140	\$662	\$74	\$147	\$147	\$25	--	--	\$1,318	14%	14	3%
Northwest Community College	\$150	\$600	\$600	\$600	\$145	\$171	--	\$97	\$600	--	--	--	--	--	--	\$2,964	29%	6	7%
Okanagan College	--	--	--	--	--	--	\$97	\$160	\$253	--	--	--	\$25	--	--	\$535	5%	24	1%
Royal Roads University	--	--	--	--	--	--	\$93	\$100	\$0	--	--	--	\$25	--	--	\$218	5%	25	0%
Selkirk College	--	--	--	--	--	--	\$170	\$138	\$600	\$37	\$74	\$74	\$25	--	--	\$1,117	4%	16	2%
Simon Fraser University	--	--	--	--	--	\$66	\$275	\$92	\$600	--	--	--	\$25	--	--	\$1,058	5%	17	2%

EVALUATION OF THE 2007 ABORIGINAL POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION STRATEGY – MARCH 2011

Institution	Aboriginal Service Plans - Planning	Aboriginal Service Plans - Year 1	Aboriginal Service Plans - Year 2	Aboriginal Service Plans - Year 3	Aboriginal Service Plans - Transition	Aboriginal Special Projects Fund	Aboriginal Special Projects Fund	Aboriginal Special Projects Fund	Gathering Places	Aboriginal targeted Seats	Aboriginal targeted Seats	Aboriginal targeted Seats	Inventory of Programs & Services	Transitions Research Funding Y1 (ATRF)	Transitions Research Funding Y2 (ATRF)	Total by Institution	Aboriginal Population with Institution Mandate (2006 Census)	Total Funding (highest = 1 to lowest = 25)	Proportion of \$ Allocated per Institution
(Thousands)																			
Fiscal Year	06-07	07-08	08-09	09-10	10-11	06-07	07-08	08-09	n/a	07-08	08-09	09-10	06-07	07-08	08-09				
Thompson Rivers University	\$150	\$300	\$300	\$300	\$59	\$75	\$223	\$100	\$600	\$110	\$221	\$221	--	\$256	\$300	\$3,214	13%	3	7%
University of British Columbia	--	--	--	--	--	\$147	\$571	\$150	\$600	--	\$166	\$166	\$25	\$213	\$296	\$2,334	5%	10	5%
University of Northern British Columbia	\$150	\$200	\$200	\$200	--	\$140	\$357	\$50	\$600	--	--	--	--	--	--	\$1,896	5%	11	4%
University of the Fraser Valley	--	--	--	--	--	\$56	\$200	\$200	\$600	--	\$92	\$92	\$25	--	--	\$1,265	6%	15	3%
University of Victoria	\$175	\$400	\$400	\$400	\$100	\$150	\$381	\$196	\$600	--	\$83	\$83	--	\$302	\$300	\$3,570	5%	1	8%
Vancouver Community College	\$175	\$540	\$540	\$540	\$135	--	--	\$68	\$611	--	--	--	--	--	--	\$2,609	2%	9	6%
Vancouver Island University	\$150	\$420	\$420	\$420	\$105	\$149	\$190	\$145	\$600	\$156	\$156	\$156	--	--	--	\$3,068	7%	4	7%
TOTAL by initiative	\$1,750	\$4,400	\$4,400	\$4,400	\$1,003	\$1,925	\$4,366	\$2,922	\$13,293	\$929	\$2,069	\$2,069	\$350	\$771	\$896	\$45,544	5%		100%

Notes:

1. Excludes all one time funding projects (approximately \$2.695 M) except for the funding directed towards Non-Aboriginal Service Plan institutions for the Inventory of Programs & Services, as well a Aboriginal projects under the Community Adult Literacy Program (CALP), and approximately \$300,000 (\$12,000 per institution) for institutions to implement the Aboriginal administrative data standard, as this was not originally included in the 2007 Strategy
2. Includes Aboriginal Service Plan Transition funds, which were not originally included in the 2007 Strategy
3. Gathering Places funding reflects actual and anticipated cash flow to 2011/12 as of March 2011.
4. Targeted Seats funding allocations reflect additions to base budget allocations, and thus remain in base operating after initial year of allocation.
5. Aboriginal Program Review excludes \$25,000 allocated to the Institute of Indigenous Governance, which was taken over by NVIT in June 2007.
6. Data for Aboriginal Population within Institution Mandate: Proportion – Custom tabulation, Statistics Canada, 2006 Census; Numbers – Aboriginal Profiles of BC: 2006 Census, Statistical Profiles by College Region.

- UVic and NVIT both received 8% of the Strategy funding and have 5% of the population they serve is Aboriginal (note that since both have provincial mandates, the provincial proportion of 5% is used).

Overall, UVic, NVIT, TRU, VIU and Camosun College were the top five in terms of amount of Strategy funding allocated to institutions – ranging from \$3.57 million for UVic to \$3.02 million for Camosun. The 11 ASP institutions were in the top 12 of institutions in terms of total Strategy allocations.

Obviously there are additional (in addition to proportion of Aboriginal population) important factors to be considered when allocation decisions are made regarding strategies and programs such as those reviewed in this data. There are other factors such as the nature and extent of institutional proposals, the nature and extent of existing institution-Aboriginal partnerships, the existing supply of services for Aboriginal post-secondary students elsewhere in a region, the existing levels of education and readiness of potential Aboriginal students in a region, etc.

There will be additional comments about this and related in associated Ministry-provided data later in this report.

5.3 Program Logic Models and Evaluation Questions

The rest of this section outlines the logic models and evaluation questions associated with each Strategy program element. The logic models identify objectives, outputs, short/medium/long-term outcomes and measures.

5.3.1 Aboriginal Service Plan

The objective of the Aboriginal Service Plan (ASP) initiative was to increase services to Aboriginal students and enhanced engagement/partnership with Aboriginal communities and organizations with the over-arching goal of increasing transition/retention/ completion success

The goals of the ASP are:

- To increase the access, retention, completion and transitions opportunities for Aboriginal learners
- To increase the receptivity and relevance of post-secondary institutions and programs for Aboriginal learners, including providing support for initiatives that address systemic barriers
- To strengthen partnerships and collaboration in Aboriginal post-secondary education

Logic Model and Evaluation Questions

The logic model identifies outputs, short/medium-term outcomes, long-term outcomes (to be realized by 2016), measures and evaluation questions.

The outputs for the ASP include: the number of institutions and communities participating in the development of the ASPs; and the development of plans that outline goals to increase programming, support services, outreach initiatives and affiliation agreements

Short/Medium-Term Outcomes:

- Increased programming
- Increased support services
- Increased outreach initiatives
- Increased affiliation agreements
- Increased number of Aboriginal learners enrolled in post-secondary education
- Increased number of Aboriginal students completing programs
- Increased level of credentials awarded
- Increased transitions (i.e., into post-secondary, within post-secondary, into work) and increased retention in studies (see Student Transitions Project data for baseline)
- Increased respectful collaborative partnerships

Long-Term Outcomes (to be realized by 2016):

- Parity in BC Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal learners in participation, completion and level of credentials awarded
- Parity in BC Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal employment rate (to the extent it can be measured)

Measures:

- Inventory of ASPs funded across BC
- Number of programs and services initiated by ASP funding
- Number of programs and services initiated by Indigenization Plan funding
- Participation rate
- Transition rate
- Retention rate
- Level of credential awarded

Since the intended long-term outcomes of ASP are targeted for 2016, the Evaluators can only deem whether the ASP initiative has been moving in the direction of achieving longer-term outcomes.

Evaluation Questions:

1. Has this program element achieved the intended outputs and outcomes?
2. What were the costs and benefits of developing and implementing ASPs?
3. What were non-ASP institutions able (or not able) to accomplish over the past 3 years in activity areas relevant to the ASP goals?
4. How has the ASP funding strengthened partnerships and collaboration in Aboriginal post-secondary education? Have these been sustainable, integrated and imbedded within respectful partnerships?
5. How has the process of implementing the ASP affected faculty, staff, students and

Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community members?

6. How much of the funding was transferred directly to Aboriginal institutes and communities to support their participation in the delivery of these projects? Were there any other resources (aside from funding) that were shared in this project?
7. How has the ASP funding increased access, retention, completion and transition success for Aboriginal learners?
8. How has the ASP funding increased the receptivity and relevance of post-secondary education for Aboriginal learners?
9. To what extent did ASP projects address systemic barriers for Aboriginal students?
10. To what extent do Aboriginal partners (institutes, communities) actually have and perceive that they have influence and reciprocal roles in partnerships with institutions, including recognition of intellectual property rights in their ASP partnerships?

5.3.2 Gathering Places

Logic Model and Evaluation Questions

Outputs:

- Number of post-secondary institutions developing proposals for Gathering Places

Short/Medium-Term Outcomes:

- Increase in the number of post-secondary institutions with Gathering Places
- Expectation of greater engagement with Aboriginal Communities
- Increased level of Aboriginal student satisfaction with a more welcoming post-secondary institution environment

Long-Term Outcomes:

- Increases in transition, retention and completion levels
- Increased satisfaction level with the post-secondary experience of Aboriginal students
- Higher degree of community engagement

Measures:

- Inventory of Gathering Places funded and implemented
- Number and nature of relevant programs and services now available through Gathering Places
- Evidence regarding use of Gathering Places by Aboriginal students
- Transition/recruitment data
- Participation rates
- Completion rate data

Evaluation Questions:

1. To what extent has the process of developing the Gathering Place had a material impact on the nature of the engagement between post-secondary institutions, Aboriginal students and Aboriginal communities?
2. How effectively are Gathering Places being utilized to assist in meeting the objectives of improving levels of transition, retention, completion and success?
3. Does the existence of the Gathering Place assist in the provision of more comprehensive supports and services to Aboriginal students?
4. Is there any evidence to support the conclusion that there has been any improvement in the level of student/faculty engagement generated by the deployment of a Gathering Place on campus?
5. If Aboriginal communities were significantly involved in the development of proposals for Gathering Places, is there evidence that this level of engagement has been sustained, or otherwise built upon, during the implementation and operational phases?

5.3.3 Aboriginal Special Projects Fund (ASPF)

It should be noted that ASPF existed before the 2007 Strategy was introduced and thus all ASPF outcomes cannot necessarily be attributed to the Strategy.

Logic Model and Evaluation Questions

Short/Medium-Term Outcomes:

- Increased programming
- Increased support services
- Increased outreach initiatives
- Increased Aboriginal specific programming in labour market and strategic priority areas
- Increase in the number of sector specific access programs

Long-Term Outcomes:

- Parity of Aboriginal with non-Aboriginal learners in participation, completion and credentials awarded
- Parity of Aboriginals with non-Aboriginals in employment rates in the province

Measures:

- Number of programs and services initiated by ASPF
- Numbers of new programs and services specifically designed for Aboriginal learners in key strategic areas
- Participation rate, transition rate, retention rate and level and rate of credentials awarded

Evaluation Questions:

1. How many of these projects (particularly education programs and services) are still in existence today?
2. How well was the ASPF administered (e.g., communication, proposal process, project management, reporting requirements, follow-up etc.)?
3. How have these projects impacted students' lives and communities' ability to forward their goals?
4. What has been the impact of suspending ASPF for the year 2009/10?
5. Were there other resources (aside from funding) that were shared in these projects?

5.3.4 Aboriginal Awards and Scholarships

Logic Model and Evaluation Questions

There was a basic logic model provided by the Ministry for the Aboriginal Award and Scholarship as part of the 2007 Strategy. This looked like one created at the start of the Strategy and it is entitled "Student Financial Assistance – Supplementary Grant Funding for Aboriginal Students." During the refinement of logic model for each Strategy program element, the information from the original logic model was retained with a few adjustments. First, "increased transition across PSE programs" was added as a Short/Medium-Term Outcome. Second, a set of evaluation questions was added (see below). This new version of the logic model was developed by the Evaluators in consultation with and in consideration of feedback from the Steering Committee. It identifies outputs, short/medium-term outcomes, long-term outcomes (to be realized by 2016), and measures.

Outputs:

- Increased number of students receiving additional financial support from provincial government

Short/Medium-Term Outcomes:

- Increased participation rate
- Increased completion rate
- Increased transition across post-secondary programs

Long-Term Outcomes:

- Parity between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal learners in BC in terms of program completion

Measures:

- Outputs
 - Central Data Warehouse SFA data, number of students accessing supplementary grants
- Short/Medium-Term Outcomes:
 - Participation rate data
 - Completion data

- Level of credential awarded
 - Long-Term Outcomes:
 - Completion data
- (Sources – Central Data Warehouse and RUCBC)

Evaluation Questions:

1. Has this program element achieved the intended outputs and outcomes?
2. How many scholarships have been provided?
3. Is there a pattern of distribution across the system?
4. What is the profile of scholarship recipients (including urban/rural, etc.)?
5. How have the criteria and selection/approval process worked?
6. Qualitative information: Anecdotal/narrative information about how they have impacted recipients' lives, including completing their post-secondary education and their propensity to complete further post-secondary education.
7. What is the impact of providing the Mathias scholarship exclusively to members of BC First Nations?

5.3.5 Aboriginal Transition Research Fund

Logic Model and Evaluation Questions

This program has no formal associated logic model however the Evaluators prepared the following logic model to guide its analysis, and which was vetted by the Steering Committee:

Outcomes:

- Number of institutions implementing transition measures
- Number of research projects
- Number of pilot projects
- Number of individuals and organizations involved in the research
- Number of transition strategies developed

Note: If the ATRF program is maintained over the longer-term other outcomes should be considered that reflect how the measures developed in the pilots have been adopted across the post-secondary system, e.g., number of institutions implementing transition measures, integration of transition strategies within broader Aboriginal post-secondary education strategies, programs and agreement.

Short/Medium-Term Outcomes:

- Evidence-based policies, programs or practices to increase the number of Aboriginal students transitioning to public post-secondary institutes
- Evidence-based policies, programs or practices to encourage wide-spread partnerships working towards effective transition measures, including

- Evidence-based policies, programs or practices to increase the number of agreements/partnerships between Aboriginal communities/institutes and public post-secondary institutes
- Evidence-based policies, programs or practices to integrate transition strategies within broader Aboriginal post-secondary education strategies, programs and agreement

Long-Term Outcomes:

- Effective Aboriginal student transition models implemented and integrated throughout BC

Measures:

- Basic output measures including institutions, partners and individuals participating, research projects, pilot projects, transition strategies, etc.
- Number of Aboriginal students transitioning to public post-secondary institutions
- Number of formal agreements and other partnerships between Aboriginal communities and institutes and public post-secondary institutes

Evaluation Questions:

1. Has this program element achieved the intended outputs and outcomes?
2. What type of improvements are you seeing in Aboriginal student transition?
3. What types of measures have you implemented to track transition?
4. What are the best practices and critical success factors for Aboriginal transition from these projects?
5. How would you define an effective transition?
6. What types of partnerships have you established?
7. How will your model be replicable across the province?
8. What have you learned that can help the remaining transition models?
9. What transition gaps remain?

Note: If the ATRF program is maintained over the longer-term, additional questions should be considered such as, “What types of improvements is the system seeing in terms of Aboriginal student transition?”

5.3.6 Strategic Investment Plan (Targeted Aboriginal Seats)

Logic Model and Evaluation Questions

Outputs:

- Use of targeting to increase the number of seats available in priority areas
- Increased delivery of community-based programs throughout the province

Short/Medium-Term Outcomes:

- Increased Aboriginal enrolment in key program areas
- Increased number of Aboriginal people graduating with credentials in key labour market program areas
- Strengthening partnerships between public post-secondary institutions and Aboriginal-controlled institutes

Long-Term Outcomes:

- Progress towards closing the gap on graduation outcomes
- Increases in the numbers of Aboriginal people graduating with credentials in priority areas
- Evidence of more sustainable relationships between public institutions and Aboriginal-controlled institutes

Evaluation Questions:

1. What were the Ministry processes and criteria for funding these seats?
2. How were funded seats strategically important? Were they directly tied to unmet demand?
3. Was the selection process reasonably compatible with the original objectives of the initiative?
4. To what extent was success achieved in the establishment of the new Targeted Seats in priority areas?
5. Did the process for allocating new seats facilitate an opportunity for new or improved relationships with Aboriginal-controlled educational institutes?
6. What were the outcomes on retention, completion and credentialing?
7. To what extent were funded seats utilized?

5.3.7 One-Time Grants

Logic Model and Evaluation Questions

There was no logic model provided by the Ministry for the One-Time Grants element of the 2007 Strategy; however, one was developed by the Evaluators in consultation with and based on feedback from the Steering Committee. It identifies outputs, short/medium-term outcomes, long-term outcomes (to be realized by 2016), and measures as follows:

Outputs:

- Programs, services, curricula, resources, partnerships and collaboration to increase Aboriginal learner access, retention and completion in post-secondary education
- Funding leveraged from other sources

Short/Medium-Term Outcomes:

- Increased institutional capacity to serve and support Aboriginal learners

- Increased partnerships, agreements and collaboration
- Increased innovation among institutions and Aboriginal partners in addressing the educational gap of Aboriginal learners
- Ministry flexibility in responding to requests for funding of unique programs, services and projects that cannot be funded through other initiatives

Long-Term Outcomes:

- Increased access
- Increased retention
- Increased completion
- Increased successful transitions

Measures:

- Grant-specific measures
- Also possibly broader measures depending on the nature of the grant projects (e.g., participation rate, completion rate, credentials, transition rate)

Evaluation Questions:

1. Has this program element achieved the intended outputs and outcomes?
2. What were the process and criteria for awarding these grants?
3. To what extent was this element perceived by institutions and Aboriginal stakeholders as fair and transparent in its criteria, application approval and allocation of funds?
4. What were the outputs of each grant?
5. Were there evaluations and/or reporting on results for programs/services/projects funded?
6. What portion of grant funding was provided directly to Aboriginal institutes and other Aboriginal community partners?
7. To what extent did the grants provide funding for programs/ services/projects that could not otherwise be funded?
8. Did this element provide flexibility for and enable the Ministry to respond to a priority need that would not otherwise be funded?

5.3.8 Aboriginal Representation on Institutional Governance Bodies

As part of the Ministry's goal to "close the educational gap for Aboriginal learners" and the associated objective to "increase the receptivity and relevance of post-secondary institutions and programs for Aboriginal learners", one action of the Strategy was to increase the Aboriginal voice on public post-secondary institution decision-making bodies which translated into more specific objectives of:

- An increased number of Aboriginal people on governing boards

- Aboriginal interests and perspectives reflected in post-secondary institutional planning, policies, practices and programming

Logic Model and Evaluation Questions

This goal has no formal associated logic model, however the Evaluators prepared the following logic model to guide its analysis. This logic model was accepted by the Steering Committee.

Outcomes:

- Increased participation of Aboriginal representatives on governing bodies of post-secondary institutions
- Increased number of post-secondary institutions with Aboriginal representatives on governing bodies

Short/Medium-Term Objectives:

- Inclusion of Aboriginal 'voice' in policy development, strategic planning and program development
- Increased relevance of post-secondary education for Aboriginal students (programming, student services, partnership agreements)

Long-Term Objectives:

- Increased participation rates
- Increased completion rates
- Emergence of authentic (i.e., equal and reciprocal) partnerships

Measures:

- Number of post-secondary institutions with bona fide Aboriginal representation on their governing bodies
- Increased number of Aboriginal representatives on governing boards
- Aboriginal perspective reflected in planning, policies, practices, programming and environment because of governing body direction
- Clearly defined goals and strategies around Aboriginal education in institutional strategic planning and policy development

Evaluation Questions:

1. Has this program element achieved the intended outputs and outcomes?
2. Do you have Aboriginal representation on your board?
3. Has the governance direction on Aboriginal representation in your institution changed over the last three years?
4. How much of this change do you think can be attributed to government direction through the APSES?

5. What other governance structures do you have in place/how have you modified other governance structures to ensure the inclusion of Aboriginal voice and perspectives in strategic planning and program and policy development?

5.3.9 System-Wide Data Tracking and Performance Measures

Logic Model and Evaluation Questions

Short-Term Outputs:

- Development of provincial curriculum specifically designed for Aboriginal students
- Increase in Aboriginal-specific programming in labour market and strategic priority areas (e.g., ABE, health)
- Increase in the number of sector-specific access programs

Short/Medium-Term Outcomes:

- Ability to examine the 2007 Strategy and assess improvements
- Evaluation of measures used for Aboriginal student performance
- Consideration of both direct and indirect measures of performance
- Consideration of both quantitative and non-quantitative measures

Long-Term Outcomes:

- A common set of data and performance measures that can be relied upon by all post-secondary and Ministry decision makers
- Capability to build new data series and statistics on base of data and performance measures
- Capability to ask further questions of data and measurement systems, particularly with disaggregated data
- Provide base upon which to undertake more measures (e.g., polls, surveys)

Measures:

- Data and statistics within CDW, BC Statistics and within Student Transitions Project system capability
- Qualitative and quantitative measures

Evaluation Questions:

1. Do you feel data needs are satisfied by existing data availability?
2. How familiar are you with the existing stock of data?
3. Do you consult data sources more than you did three years ago?
4. Are there measures that you think should be evaluated?
5. Are there any performance measures that systematically track Aboriginal students (for example for 12 months after they leave the post-secondary system)?

6. Has the system-wide data collection process made your job any easier?

6. SUMMARY OF ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS

6.1 Methodology

The online survey methodology was summarized in the Methodological Approach section earlier in this report and is discussed in more detail in the Appendix to this report. The following is a high-level summary of the survey responses. For details on differences in responses among various categories of respondents, please refer to the detailed version in the Appendix.

The survey yielded a large amount of data involving a diversity of several affiliations or memberships among the respondents. Since it was very important for the Evaluation Steering Committee members and other leadership groups that responses be qualified by who was responding to a particular question, the analysis of each question took much time and space in order to review responses by each of the several respondent groups (e.g. First Nations, Aboriginal communities, Aboriginal leadership bodies, Métis, urban Aboriginal people, Aboriginal students, Aboriginal-controlled institutes, public post-secondary institutions, unions and faculty at public institutions, etc.).

In the end, while there was much agreement – in terms of orders of magnitude – among these groups, it is fair to say that overall public post-secondary institution respondents, including unions and faculty, tended to rate aspects of the Strategy more positively than many of the Aboriginal groups. There were exceptions to this and often the differences were a matter of degree and not direction; however, on a number of the survey questions, the responses were almost diametrically opposite.

One challenge that the survey design and software were not able to overcome is multiple affiliations or memberships of respondents. For example, many respondents who indicated they were part of a public post-secondary institution also indicated they were a member of a First Nation and/or a member of an Aboriginal community, and/or an urban Aboriginal person and/or a Métis person. Therefore, because the respondent groups could not be differentiated more finely, the respondents who were, for example, only a member of a First Nation or only a Métis person, could not be identified.

For this reason, it is important to be cautious about the extent to which one interprets and bases decisions on differences in responses to the survey questions among the various respondent categories or groups.

6.2 Who Responded to the Survey?

Thirty-seven percent of respondents (n=118) reside in the Vancouver Island/Coast region. The next two largest regions of response were Mainland/Southwest at 21% (n=68) and North Coast/Nechako at over nineteen percent (n=62). There were very low response levels from the Kootenays and the Northeast region of BC.

The two single largest groups of affiliation or membership among respondents were public post-secondary institutions (n=186) and First Nations (n=139). Other significant groups in terms of number of respondents were Aboriginal communities (n=105), union or faculty association (n=60), Métis organizations (n=41), and Band schools or learning centres. Membership in other

groups that involved still sizeable numbers (n=27 to 30) included Tribal Councils, Urban Aboriginal organizations, Friendship Centres, IAHLA institutes, student associations and provincial ministries.

This is a pivotal question in the survey. First, because of the total responses selected, one can see many respondents have multiple memberships. Second, when the responses to this question are cross-tabulated with itself, one can further distinguish different profiles of respondents. Responses to this question will be cross-tabulated with other questions in this survey to show how similarities and differences exist among groups of respondents in the survey. These comparisons are provided in the detailed version of the survey in the Appendix and very little in this summary version.

The most prevalent roles or positions among respondents were Educational Administrators (n=85), Management (n=65) and Instructors/Faculty (n=59). Again, given the number of responses, a number of those responding indicated more than one role. Over fourteen percent (n=66) selected “other”; the most frequent categories were Board members (n=7), Educational Coordinators/Advisors (n=11), Management (n=6), Researchers (n=5), and Policy Advisors (n=4).

6.3 Respondent Awareness of and Experience with the 2007 Strategy

Overall, respondents had the most *awareness* of Gathering Places (3.35) (1 being “no awareness” and 5 being “very high”), Aboriginal Service Plans (3.28), and Aboriginal Special Projects Fund (3.08). Lowest awareness was of the Strategic Investment Plan Seats (SIPS) (2.09), the Aboriginal Transition Research Fund (ATRF) (2.23), One-Time Grants (OTG) and System-Wide Data Tracking/Performance Measures (DTPM) (2.29), and the Chief Joe Mathias Scholarship (2.38).

More specifically, 39%, 37%, and 32% of respondents had no awareness at all of the SIPS, ATRF, and OTG and DTPM, respectively. Conversely, 20%, 20% and 19% of respondents had a very high awareness of the ASP, Gathering Places and ASPF initiatives. This is not surprising since these programs have the largest number of partnerships and thus a better chance of being known beyond public institutions. The lesser-known initiatives have a low awareness among respondents for various reasons.

Respondents were also asked about their level of *experience* with Strategy program elements. On a scale of 1 (no experience) to 5 (very high level of experience), at 2.73, respondents had the most experience (albeit “moderately” on average) with Aboriginal Service Plans and Gathering Places; the Aboriginal Special Projects Fund was the next Strategy component that respondents had the most experience with (2.52). The lowest were the Strategic Investment Plan Seats (1.72), Chief Joe Mathias Scholarship (1.76), and the ATRF (1.79).

More specifically, the survey asked respondents about the *extent* of this experience with the Strategy:

- Extent to which one was consulted on the Strategy – Of the 245 who responded to this part of the question, 112 and 49 indicated they were not consulted at all or minimally, respectively – a total of almost 66%.

- Extent to which one provided input on parts of the Strategy – Of the 243 who responded to this part, 111 and 48 did not provide input or provided minimal input, respectively, for a total of over 65%.
- Extent to which one provided feedback on draft material about one or more elements of the Strategy – Of the 240 who responded to this part, 120 and 43 indicated they provided no or minimal feedback – a total of almost 68%.
- Extent to which one participated on an advisory committee to provide formal input on the Strategy – Of the 241 who responded to this part of the question, 143 and 43 indicated they did not participate on an advisory committee to provide input on the Strategy or did so to a minimal degree – a total of over 78%.
- Extent to which one made formal recommendations that were adopted in the Strategy – Of the 237 who responded to this part, 145 and 41 indicated they made no or minimal recommendations that were adopted in the Strategy – a total of over 78%.

When asked to what extent they were involved in the *implementation* of one or more program elements of the 2007 Strategy, overall, the extent of involvement in the implementation of the Strategy ranged from a high average response of 2.29 (2 being minimal involvement and 3 being moderate involvement) for administrators or executive members of responding organizations and 2.27 for program or project managers, to a low of 1.46 for Elders and 1.54 for board members (1 is no involvement).

6.4 Achievement of Aboriginal Service Plan Objectives

In regards to the ASP objectives being achieved, the overall responses for each objective were as follows:

- Increase the access, retention, completion and transitions opportunities for Aboriginal learners – Overall, out of 131 responses to this part of the question, 54.2% of respondents indicated this objective in ASPs was met significantly or completely. Over 19% indicated it had not been met at all or to a minimal degree.
- Increase the receptivity and relevance of post-secondary institutions and programs for Aboriginal learners, including providing support for initiatives that address systemic barriers – Of the 126 of respondents who answered this part of the question, 59.5% indicated it was significantly or completely achieved, while 17.4% indicated it was not achieved at all or only minimally.
- Strengthen partnerships and collaboration in Aboriginal post-secondary education – Almost sixty percent of the 131 respondents to this part of the question said the objective was met to a significant degree or completely, while almost twenty percent indicated it was not met at all or only minimally.

When asked to what extent Aboriginal communities/partners were engaged and participating in various stages of the Aboriginal Service Plans, the following proportion of respondents (all groups), indicated significant or complete engagement/participation:

- During the development or conception of an initiative or project – 62%;
- During the planning of an initiative or project – 56.6%;
- During the implementation/delivery of the initiative or project – 59.6%;

- During the reporting and evaluation of the initiative or project – 50%.

6.5 Use of Other Mechanisms to Achieve Aboriginal Service Plan Objectives

Respondents who are not part of an ASP were asked to what extent their institution or region has been able to use other mechanisms to achieve objectives similar to those set out in the Aboriginal Service Plans. For each of the ASP goals, the responses were:

- Increase the access, retention, completion and transitions opportunities for Aboriginal learners – In terms of achieving this objective, 22 or 37.3% of the respondents (n=59) indicated these have not been achieved at all or minimally; and fourteen or 23.7% indicated they have been achieved to a significant degree or completely.
- Increase the receptivity and relevance of post-secondary institutions and programs for Aboriginal learners, including providing support for initiatives that address systemic barriers – Of the 57 respondents who replied to this part of the question, 22 or 38.6% saw no or minimal progress toward this objective; while thirteen or 22.8% thought it was achieved to a significant degree or completely.
- Strengthen partnerships and collaboration in Aboriginal post-secondary education – Of the 57 who responded to this part of the question, 22 or 38.6% thought that alternatives to ASPs did not achieve the partnership/collaboration objective at all or only minimally. Eighteen or 31.6% of respondents indicated this was achieved to a significant extent or completely.

6.6 Achievement of Gathering Place Objectives

- Reflect the cultural needs and characteristics of Aboriginal students, community, and traditions – Two-thirds (66.7%) or 82 of respondents (n=123) indicated that this Gathering Place objective was achieved to a significant degree or completely. Nineteen respondents or 15.4% indicated that it was not achieved or only minimally.
- Provide a safe and nurturing environment, where Aboriginal learners can experience a spiritual and physical connection to their culture – Of 121 who responded to this part of the question, 64.5% (78) indicated that this objective was achieved to a significant extent or completely. Nineteen percent (23) said it was not achieved at all or only minimally.
- Centralize student development and support, including Elders in residence Programming – Responses to this part of the question were similar (n=119) to the previous one, with 62.2% reporting that this objective was achieved significantly or completely; while 19.3% indicated it was not achieved or only minimally.
- Developed in partnership with Aboriginal organizations, communities, bands and/or tribal councils with a demonstrated commitment to ongoing consultation and involvement – Just over half (53.9%) of the respondents (n=115) chose “significantly” or “completely” regarding this objective, while 22.6% or 26 responded that it has not been achieved or only minimally.

6.7 Achievement of Aboriginal Special Projects Fund Objectives

- Increased delivery of Aboriginal programs and Aboriginal content in programs and services – Of 84 who responded to this part of the question, 58.3% (49) indicated that

this objective was achieved to a significant extent or completely. Almost sixteen percent (13) indicated it was not achieved at all or only minimally.

- Increased development of provincial curriculum specifically designed for Aboriginal students – Of 79 who responded to this part of the question, 48.1% (38) indicated that this objective was achieved to a significant extent or completely. Twenty-four percent (19) said it was not achieved at all or only minimally.
- Increased Aboriginal-specific programming in labour market and strategic priority areas (i.e., ABE, health) – Of eighty who responded to this part of the question, 46.3% (37) indicated that this objective was achieved to a significant extent or completely. Almost 23.8% (19) believed it was not achieved at all or only minimally.
- Demonstrated use and/or sharing of products (curriculum, programs, tools, etc.) of the Aboriginal Special Projects Fund among public post-secondary institutions and Aboriginal institutes and communities – Of 78 who responded to this part of the question, a relatively low proportion of 37.2% (29) indicated that this objective was achieved to a significant extent or completely. Almost 29.5% (23) indicated it was not achieved at all or only minimally.

6.8 Achievement of the Award and Scholarship Objectives

Irving K. Barber (Aboriginal Student Award)

- Increased the number of students receiving additional financial aid from the Provincial Government – Of the 45 responses to this part of the question, 31.1% felt this objective was not achieved or only minimally achieved; while 26.7% indicated it was achieved significantly or completely.
- Addressed financial barriers to public post-secondary education that Aboriginal learners face – Of the 47 respondents in this part of the question, 38.3% did not think this objective was achieved or that it was achieved minimally. Almost thirty percent disagreed and thought it was achieved to a significant extent or completely.
- Allowed you or someone you know to attend post-secondary education that you/they otherwise would not have – Forty-five respondents answered this part of the question. Almost half (48.9%) indicated that this objective was not achieved or only minimally achieved; while 28.9% suggested it was achieved to a significant degree or completely.
- The scholarship application process was fair and easy to understand and complete – This part of the question received the lowest negative rating regarding achievement of the objective and highest positive rating. Almost 27% indicated it was not achieved or only minimally so; while one-third believed it was achieved significantly or completely.

Chief Joe Mathias Scholarship

- Increased the number of students receiving additional financial aid from the Provincial Government – Of 29 respondents to this part of the question, 58.6% indicated this objective was not achieved or only minimally achieved; whereas 13.8% said it was significantly or completely achieved.
- Addressed financial barriers to public post-secondary education that Aboriginal learners face – Of 31 responses, 58.1% indicated this objective was not achieved or only minimally achieved. Almost twenty percent indicated that it had been achieved to a significant degree or completely.

- Allowed you or someone you know to attend post-secondary education that you/they otherwise would not have – Of thirty respondents, 66.7% indicated that this objective had not been achieved or only minimally so; while 13.3% disagreed and indicated it had been achieved to a significant or complete extent.
- The scholarship application process was fair and easy to understand and complete – Of the 27 responses to this part of the question, 63% thought this objective had not been achieved or minimally achieved, and 18.5% thought it had been achieved to a significant extent or completely.

6.9 Achievement of the Aboriginal Transitions Research Fund Objectives

- Researched existing models and practices, identified evidence-based success indicators, and demonstrated ability to incorporate research into programming – Of the 37 responses to this part of the question, over half (54.3%) indicated this objective was met to a significant degree or completely; while 35.1% (13) thought it had not been met at all or only minimally.
- Developed the necessary tools and programs to assist Aboriginal learners with successful transitions along the post-secondary education spectrum – Of the 38 responses to this part of the question, 44.7% (17) agreed that this objective was achieved to a significant extent or completely. Thirteen respondents or 34.2% indicated it had not been achieved or only minimally.
- Promoted strategies that reflect the unique histories, culture, value and traditions of Aboriginal people and their learning needs – Forty-three percent (16) of the 37 respondents to this objective indicated it had been achieved significantly or completely. Eleven or 29.7% believed it was not achieved or only minimally achieved.
- Promoted partnerships and collaboration among public post-secondary institutions, Aboriginal institutes, communities/organizations, local school districts, industry and others – Over half (51.4%) of the 37 respondents to this question reported that this objective was achieved significantly or completely. Almost one-third (32.4%) of them felt the opposite, that it had not been achieved or only minimally achieved.

6.10 Other 2007 Strategy Elements

Respondents were also asked about the effectiveness of the five other program elements of the 2007 Strategy, if they had direct experience with those elements.

Strategic Investment Plan (Targeted) Seats

Of the 32 individuals that commented on this aspect of the Strategy in response to this question, several were not aware that there was such an initiative but thought it was a good idea; other respondents were obviously part of the institutions (or partners of) that received such FTE (student full-time equivalent spaces) funding.

One-Time Grants

There were only fifteen responses to this part of the question, as most respondents were not aware of this part of the Strategy. There was mixed comments about effectiveness.

Aboriginal Representation on Board of Directors

There was a strong response among the 25 respondents on this question that this is an important issue and goal. A number of respondents suggested that the provincial government's Board Resourcing and Development Office (BRDO) effects such appointments and needs to be more attuned to what is needed in this part of the Strategy. Most respondents indicated that they thought it essential that every public institution have Aboriginal representation on its governing bodies. Several respondents identified Aboriginal representatives on their institution's board of governors. A number of respondents spoke of the importance of potential board members being identified by First Nations (and other Aboriginal groups).

Agreements and Partnerships

Of the 32 responses to this part of the question, there were many emphatic comments about the importance of this objective; for example: "Greatest outcome of our ASP"; "this is the key to everything in the Strategy"; "agreements and partnerships have been created and have had a significant impact on the community of Aboriginal learners." Almost every respondent pointed to agreements and/or partnerships that had been created between their organizations and others in Aboriginal post-secondary education.

System-Wide Data Tracking and Performance Measures

Of the 22 respondents to this part of the question, they were fairly evenly divided between those who saw progress on this objective and those with concerns about a lack of progress or issues related to the objective.

6.11 Overall Impact of the 2007 Strategy

Respondents were asked to rate overall on a scale of 1 (minimal to no impact) to 5 (maximum impact) the impact that the 2007 Strategy has had on its goals of closing the educational gap for Aboriginal learners, and effective and accountable programs and services and implementation and delivery for Aboriginal learners:

- Increased access, retention, completion and transition opportunities for Aboriginal learners – Of 144 responses, 21.5% indicated that the Strategy had no or a low impact in regards to this objective, and 40.3% indicated that it had a high or very high impact.
- Increased receptivity and relevance of post-secondary institutions and programs for Aboriginal learners – Of 143 responses, 21% saw no or a low impact of the Strategy, and 42% thought the Strategy had a high or very high impact in terms of receptivity and relevance of post-secondary institutions and programs for Aboriginal learners.
- Strengthened partnerships and collaboration in Aboriginal post-secondary education – Of 143 responses, 22.4% indicated that there was no or a low impact of the Strategy in regards to strengthening partnerships and collaboration in Aboriginal post-secondary education. Forty-two percent of them saw a high or very high impact from the Strategy for this objective.
- Ensured effective measurement and progress monitoring – Of 130 responses, 36.2% thought the Strategy had no or a low impact in terms of ensuring effective measurement and progress monitoring. Just over one-fifth of respondents thought the impact was high or very high in this regard.

6.12 Funding Directed to Aboriginal Institutes or Aboriginal Communities

Respondents were asked, based on their experience, what proportion of Ministry funding to public post-secondary institutions under the following program elements was directed to Aboriginal institutes or communities?

- Aboriginal Service Plan funding – Of 57 responses to this part of the question, 52.6% indicated that zero to 25% of ASP funds were directed to Aboriginal institutes or communities. Over one-quarter (26.3%) indicated that 51% to 100% of such funds were directed to those entities.⁵
- Aboriginal Special Projects Fund funding – Of 52 respondents, 53.9% indicated that zero to 25% of ASPF funds were directed to Aboriginal institutes or communities, while 23.1% indicated 51% to 100% of such funds were directed this way.
- Aboriginal Transition Research Fund funding – Of 44 respondents, 65.9% indicated that zero to 25% of ATRF funding was directed to Aboriginal institutes or communities; 13.6% reported that 51% to 100% of these funds were directed in such a way.
- Strategic Investment Plan (Targeted) Seats funding – Of 43 responses, 67.1% indicated that zero to 25% of SIP funding was directed to Aboriginal institutions or communities; and 16.3% said that 51% to 100% of these funds went to Aboriginal institutions or communities.
- One-Time Grant funding – Of forty responses, 62.5% reported that zero to 25% of One-Time Grant funding went to Aboriginal institutions or communities; while 17.8% of respondents indicated that 51% to 100% of such funding went these entities.

6.13 Aboriginal Community/Partner Engagement/Participation by Stage

Respondents were asked about the extent to which Aboriginal communities/ partners were engaged and participating in the various stages of the 2007 Strategy program elements.

- During the development or conception of an initiative or project – Of ninety responses, 21.1% indicated they were not involved or were minimally involved during the development or conception of Strategy initiatives or projects. Almost sixty percent reported that they were involved to a significant extent or completely.
- During the planning of an initiative or project – During the planning of a Strategy initiative or project, 22.1% of the ninety respondents said they were not involved or only minimally involved, while 54.4% indicated they were significantly or completely involved.
- During the implementation/delivery of the initiative or project – Of the 91 responses, 27.4% and 50.6% indicated they were not involved or minimally involved and significantly or completely involved, respectively, during the implementation/ delivery of a Strategy initiative or project.
- During the reporting and evaluation of the initiative or project – Of 88 responses, 37.5% indicated no or minimal involvement during the reporting and evaluation of a Strategy initiative or project. A similar proportion (35.2%) reported that they were involved to a significant or complete extent.

⁵ It should be noted in the case of ASP – which will be discussed in this report – that the Ministry did not require institutions to report on how much ASP funds were transferred to Aboriginal community partners.

- In decision-making on allocation of funding – Of 87 responses to this part of the question, 48.3% said they were not involved in decision-making on allocation of funding of a Strategy initiative or project or involved minimally. One-third of respondents indicated they were involved at this stage to a significant extent or completely.

6.14 Responses to Open-Ended Questions

In the case of ASP, Gathering Places, ASPF, Award and Scholarship, and ATRF, respondents were asked to respond to an open-ended question about their rationale for how they rated the achievement of objectives for each program element. Also, the last three questions of the survey were open-ended questions about other funding programs or initiatives, other comments about the 2007 Strategy, and recommendations that respondents would like to put forth. Responses to both of these types of open-ended questions are highlighted in the detailed Appendix version. They are also drawn upon in the analysis of each program element of the 2007 Strategy (next section).

7. PROGRAM ELEMENT-SPECIFIC FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This part of the evaluation report is organized by each program element of the 2007 Strategy. In each section, the program element is described, analysis of existing and new data provided, as well as key conclusions based on the analysis and recommendations. There is not a section on the “Agreements and Partnerships” element of the Strategy as it is reflected across all other elements of the Strategy. Also, the “System-Wide Data Tracking” and “Performance Measures” elements are combined into one section because of the interrelationships between the two.

7.1 Aboriginal Service Plans

7.1.1 Background

Funding for institutional Aboriginal Service Plans (ASP) was made available as part of the Strategy to increase services to Aboriginal students and, further, to enhance engagement/partnership with Aboriginal communities and organizations. The goals of the ASP initiative were:

- To increase the access, retention, completion and transitions opportunities for Aboriginal learners;
- To increase the receptivity and relevance of post-secondary institutions and programs for Aboriginal learners, including providing support for initiatives that address systemic barriers; and
- To strengthen partnerships and collaboration in Aboriginal post-secondary education

The Ministry of Advanced Education (AVED) invited Expressions of Interest (EOI) from public institutions in December 2006, to participate in Phase 1 of the ASP initiative. Twenty-one of the Province’s public post-secondary institutions submitted EOIs and eleven of these institutions were then selected to develop and implement three-year ASP plans.

The Ministry established an Aboriginal Advisory Committee (AAC), comprised of non-government and government representatives, to provide oversight for the ASP selection process, including reviewing the selection criteria and the EOIs themselves.

Recommendations regarding the selection of ASP institutions were developed by an Adjudication Committee with representatives from the Ministry, the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation and the Ministry of Education. EOIs were evaluated on the basis of institutional readiness to implement ASPs, evidence of existing partnerships, organizational commitment to Aboriginal learners, involvement of Aboriginal people in decision-making and records of success in enrolment, retention and completion by Aboriginal students. Consideration was also given to the importance of piloting ASPs across all sectors of the public post-secondary education system (institutes, colleges, university-colleges and universities) and support for Northern institutions with higher concentrations of Aboriginal populations. The following table (Ministry of Advanced Education, 2007) outlines the criteria used to assess the submitted ASP proposals.

Criteria used in ASP Selection Process to Assess Capacity and Readiness	
Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Evidence of current collaboration with Aboriginal community, organizations and stakeholders. · Identification of Aboriginal partners with whom institutions will constitute a collaborative and mutually accountable partnership. Local community protocols and engagement processes may be factors to consider. Partners may include local First Nations, Métis groups, Friendship Centres, local Aboriginal leadership, Aboriginal organizations, Aboriginal secondary and post-secondary institutions, First Nation schools and Aboriginal students. · Demonstrated commitment and ability to engage stakeholders in the process. · Demonstrated interest and commitment of Aboriginal partners to engage in this process.
Commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Commitment to Aboriginal post-secondary education (e.g. evidence of existing efforts and investment in Aboriginal post-secondary education) · Commitment to Aboriginal decision makers and role models, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Role of an Aboriginal Advisory Council and Aboriginal Education Coordinator. ○ Aboriginal role models, Aboriginal people in decision making roles/positions. · Ability to implement a plan beginning in 07/08.
Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Current (and trend data) on enrolment of Aboriginal learners at the post-secondary institution, targets set by the institution and utilization rates. · Examples of success in areas such as recruitment, retention, completion. · Innovative practices that have demonstrated success.

Ultimately, eleven institutions were selected and approved for ASP funding by the Minister of Advanced Education.

The successful institutions included Vancouver Island University (VIU), the College of New Caledonia (CNC), North Island College (NIC), the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology (NVIT), Northwest Community College (NWCC), Thompson Rivers University (TRU), the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC) and two consortiums, one based on a partnership between Camosun College and the University of Victoria and the other, known as the Coastal Corridor Consortium or “CCC” which featured a partnership between Vancouver Community College and Capilano University, (together with participation from the Lil’wat, Musqueam, Sechelt, Tsleil-Waututh and Squamish First Nations, the United Native Nations Society the Métis Nation of BC and the Native Education College in Vancouver).

Each institution was provided with the ASP guidelines and funding to plan their ASP. Essential elements for planning and developing the ASP were identified as: partnerships, roles and responsibilities; an environmental scan including a needs assessment of the learners and communities in their region; inventory of programs and services; gap analysis; successes to date; vision, goals, objectives and priorities; action plan; performance measures; timeline; and proposed budget.

Enrolment analysis from 2006/07 indicated that over sixty percent of Aboriginal learners attended these eleven institutions. Accordingly, the ASP investment was expected to benefit over 10,000 existing Aboriginal learners as well as new students recruited during the operational period of the ASPs.

Annual allocations under the ASP initiative ranged from \$200K to \$600K per year, with a total of \$14.95 million expended over the term of this project. Although the initiative concluded on December 31, 2010 - as it was intended to be a pilot - an additional \$1 million in transition funding was made available from January 1st until March 31st, 2011, if requested, to assist institutions in transitioning ASP services and programs into base budgets.

7.1.2 Analysis

ASP Funding

The following table outlines the ASP funding over the course of the initiative. The ASP funds were usually spent within the year and, in one or two instances, surplus funds were carried into the next fiscal year. The ASP budget cycle was not aligned with some institutions' budget and reporting cycle, leading to these slight variances in proposed budgets.

Public Post-Secondary Institution	ASP Planning Funding (out of 06/07 fiscal)	ASP Implementation Y1	ASP Implementation Y2	ASP Implementation Y3	ASP Transition 10/11
Camosun College	\$175,000	\$400,000	\$400,000	\$400,000	\$100,000
Capilano University	\$175,000	\$540,000	\$540,000	\$540,000	\$135,000
College of New Caledonia	\$150,000	\$400,000	\$400,000	\$400,000	\$100,000
Vancouver Island University	\$150,000	\$420,000	\$420,000	\$420,000	\$105,000
Nicola Valley Institute of Technology	\$150,000	\$400,000	\$400,000	\$400,000	\$74,000
North Island College	\$150,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$50,000

Public Post-Secondary Institution	ASP Planning Funding (out of 06/07 fiscal)	ASP Implementation Y1	ASP Implementation Y2	ASP Implementation Y3	ASP Transition 10/11
Northwest Community College	\$150,000	\$600,000	\$600,000	\$600,000	\$145,000
Thompson Rivers University	\$150,000	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$59,000
University of Northern British Columbia	\$150,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	No funds requested
University of Victoria	\$175,000	\$400,000	\$400,000	\$400,000	\$100,000
Vancouver Community College	\$175,000	\$540,000	\$540,000	\$540,000	\$135,000
TOTAL by Year	\$1,750,000	\$4,400,000	\$4,400,000	\$4,400,000	\$1,003,000

The following table outlines the allocation of funding for ASP funding categories⁶ by year.

Funding Category	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Definitions of Categories
Indigenous Cultural Relevance	57%	55%	58%	Welcoming learning/physical environments, Aboriginal staffing, faculty professional development (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal), curriculum or programs that teach Aboriginal culture and Aboriginal student support services
Aboriginal Community Relevance	20%	21%	21%	Courses or curriculum tailored for Aboriginal learners in high demand sectors such as trades, business, health, justice, tourism, land stewardship, resource extraction, and arts/sciences fields
Improving Relationships, Partnerships and Engagement Processes	19%	17%	13%	Ongoing consultation, collaborative planning initiatives (e.g., governance or accountability policies) or contractual documents (e.g., affiliation agreements)
Miscellaneous Administrative Expenses	4%	7%	8%	These expenses are not clearly affiliated with any of the three preceding categories

⁶ Please note these funding categories were created in Year 2 of the ASP initiative to aid the Ministry in planning and reporting purposes.

From the outset, funding was provided to develop the ASPs through planning, community consultation and partnership development. As part of the planning process, each ASP institution or consortium was asked to conduct an inventory of programs, courses, services and policies available through their institution. Programs or courses included those that targeted Aboriginal learners, met the learning needs of Aboriginal learners, were developed or delivered in collaboration with Aboriginal communities, consisted of more than fifty percent Aboriginal content, or had specific admissions policies designed to increase participation by Aboriginal learners.

Annual ASP Reports

All institutions receiving ASP funding were required to prepare and submit annual reports regarding ASP progress and outcomes. Annual ASP reports were submitted to the Ministry for Years 1, 2 and 3, with the Year 3 reports being submitted in mid-January 2011. It must be noted that there was considerable variation between these materials with respect to both content and quality. The higher quality documents tended to reflect a more robust commitment to monitoring and evaluation as part of the ASP process.

Review of the institutional ASP reports revealed that several institutions implemented strategies or developed new initiatives with some common characteristics. These included improved student supports through Elders in Residence programs, increases in cultural programs and community engagement initiatives such as feasts and other cultural celebrations, speaker events, the development of Aboriginal Education Councils or Advisory Councils, enhanced interaction with Aboriginal organizations or with other entities such as the IAHLA Institutes, improved recruitment and academic planning processes, development or expansion of Aboriginal curriculum/courses and, in some cases, support for the delivery of community-based education and bridging programs.

Elder Programs

One of the programs consistently identified in the ASP reports, in the on-line surveys and in the regional sessions as highly beneficial was the creation of or, where applicable, the expansion of programs with Elders that were identified by various titles: Elders in Residence; Elders initiatives; Elders Program; and Elders' Voices. Students (both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal), instructors and administrators spoke to the high impact Elders now had in their institutions as mentors, leaders and instructors. In some instances, the expectation had been that these would be programs primarily focused on student supports – which they were – but they also proved to be much broader in their overall impact. As with other aspects of the Ministry's Strategy, this review is being conducted at an early stage in the development of some of these initiatives and, as a result, it is difficult to know what the longer-term impact will be on priorities such as transition and retention but the impression of most who were interviewed is that the preservation of these kinds of programs will be essential to achieving the longer term goals that the Ministry, public institutions and Aboriginal communities are committed to.

North Island College indicated "implementing the Elder in Residence Program has been one of the most rewarding experiences of the ASP." (Year 3 ASP report) Similar observations were made by other ASP institutions in noting the important role Elders played not only in improving the level of supports provided to students but also in ensuring that traditional cultural protocols were followed for institutional events, ceremonies and consultation with Aboriginal communities and leaders.

Cultural Events, Feasts, Celebrations and Speakers

ASP funding contributed to numerous cultural events, feasts, celebrations and Indigenous speakers series. For example, UNBC hosted the Aboriginal Story Tellers Festival and the All Nations Feast. Another example is the Successful Student Transitions Forum that was hosted in partnership with NVIT and the UVic. The significance of these events should not be underestimated. Simply getting prospective students to the campus in a welcoming and supportive context can have a profound impact upon potential transition and may also assist with helping to reduce the potential for retention pressures that tend to be particularly significant during the first term at a new institution. UNBC, NVIT and UVic had all developed some level of programming in this respect but the support available through the ASPs permitted a much more comprehensive approach and a higher degree of collaboration across institutions.

At other institutions such as VIU, these events provided opportunities for participants in community-based learning to come onto campus and gain a sense of the support services that would be available to them if they made the transition to the public post-secondary institution. Events for prospective Métis students were also held at several institutions, including the Métis Knowledge Keeper Series at UVic.

As will be noted elsewhere in this Report, the primary impediment to the success of some of these initiatives was simply a lack of insufficient capital capacity to hold such events or inadequate facilities for appropriate food preparation. The provision of resources for Gathering Places with the associated supports available through the ASPs helped to address this, at least to some extent, at a number of institutions.

Partnerships with Aboriginal Communities and Organizations

There was clear evidence that ASPs helped – in a number of cases - to generate stronger partnerships and collaboration in Aboriginal post-secondary education. Vancouver Island University is noteworthy in this regard as they, together with Aboriginal community partners, developed a five-year plan to improve student transition, support and outcomes. Another example would be NVIT where staff worked with community stakeholders to develop the Virtual Aboriginal Gathering Place. NVIT also developed partnerships (using ASP funding as the catalyst) with Douglas College (Native Adult Instructors Diploma), Seabird Island College, Vancouver Island University, Heywaynoqu Healing Society, Coastal First Nations Turning Point, North East Native Advancing Society and Camosun College. NVIT, in collaboration with UVic, also worked with IAHLA to produce the Best Practices Toolkit and Successful Transitions Forum. The Toolkit was developed for use beyond that particular partnership to assist all institutions in developing more responsive, productive and mutually respectful relations between public institutions and Aboriginal Institutes like the IAHLA institutes.

Another example is UNBC where ASP resources were utilized to build upon existing strengths by further enhancing partnerships with Lheidli T'enneh, Saik'uz First Nations, Dakelh Elders, Prince George Métis Association, Carrier Sekani Tribal Council, Prince George Friendship Centre, Lake Babine Nation, and Prince George Nechako Aboriginal Employment and Training Association.

Partnerships with Aboriginal communities and organizations were described quite differently depending on the institution and illustrated the varying degree of how one might build and interpret a genuine respectful partnership.

For example, CNC described the overview of its ASP in the following manner:

“Over the past three years, CNC has embraced a new way of working with local Aboriginal partners to deliver programs and services that increase access, participation and success for Aboriginal students. This community-driven and responsive approach has resulted in dramatically successful outcomes and a sustainable legacy of mutually respectful partnerships... ongoing recognition of the need for shared accountability by CNC, the Ministry and the Aboriginal communities will ensure that the needs of Aboriginal learners continue to be met.” (CNC Year 3 ASP Report, p. 1)

It would not be correct, however, to conclude that this aspect of the work conducted through ASPs has been entirely successful. Correspondence with FNEESC, IAHLA and a number of the comments made in regional sessions suggest that much work remains to be done on this front.

Changing Environment on Campus

In their annual reports, many ASP institutions indicated they have made headway in addressing issues related to Aboriginal awareness and further expressed the view that institutional approaches to Aboriginal education had shifted quite fundamentally during the course of the ASP initiative. For example, CNC noted what they described as a shifting paradigm on campus:

“Over the course of the ASP the importance of this relationship-building and community engagement became increasingly apparent... underlying all of these successful outcomes is a fundamental shift in the way that the College operates with respect to Aboriginal education; a shift that was associated with the internal growth occurring at both personal and organizational levels. The result is a new institutional awareness and understanding of Aboriginal education.” (CNC Year 3 ASP Report, p. 2)

There were also several ASP-supported initiatives that focused on providing better opportunities for access, recruitment and academic planning through community outreach and other programs. For example, ASP funding made it possible for CNC to hire Aboriginal advisors at each of its campuses. Similarly, accessibility coordinators were made available at all NWCC campuses.

Development of Aboriginal Curriculum and Courses

New courses were developed or modified to include more Aboriginal content and/or meet the needs of Aboriginal learners. Some of these courses also served the purpose of laddering into other programs, such as language programs, applied skills programs, etc.

A small sample of some these courses are illustrated below:

- Camosun College
 - Aboriginal Human Services Training Series
 - Band Administrator/Introduction to Organization Management
 - Indigenous Business Leadership program
 - Indigenization of English 150 and 160 courses (multimedia resources including writing excerpts from Indigenous authors, combined with student support)

- CCC
 - Aboriginal Culinary Arts
- College of New Caledonia
 - First Nations Youth Forestry Training Program, Carrier language course
- NIC
 - Essential Skills training with Homalco First Nation and Kwakiutl Band
 - Associate of Arts First Nations Courses
- NVIT
 - Aboriginal Governance Program
- TRU
 - Co-hosted Transitions workshop with School District #73

Community-based Education and Bridging Programs

For a number of institutions, ASPs also made it possible to deliver a number of community-focused initiatives at the local level. A small sample of these includes the following:

- Camosun – Residential Building Maintenance Worker Program and Trades programming
- CNC – language and culture workshops
- NIC – Residential Building Maintenance Work Program at Tseshaht First Nation in Port Alberni
- NVIT – Bridging to Trades
- UNBC – Masters in First Nations Studies program delivered in the Nass Valley (in collaboration with Wilp Wilxo’oskwhl Nisga’a).
- UVIC - Deer Island Experiential Leadership Camp (a youth outreach program delivered with the Victoria Native Friendship Centre and the Office of Indigenous Affairs, UVic).

High completion and success levels were reported in relation to these programs. However, as will be noted later in this section, the general perception of Aboriginal communities and organizations is that the level of local programming remains much lower than what they believe it should be and the sharing of resources to secure the best possible outcomes also remains sub-optimal.

Support Services for Students

Support services for students existed at many of the ASP institutions, and these services were enhanced further through ASP funding. CCC provided learning facilitators at its campuses and these facilitators were highly successful in assisting students. Similarly, at CNC, Aboriginal academic advisors assisted students in planning their academic path. Later on, at regional sessions, these advisors shared their experiences of helping students every step of the way to ensure their success. They assisted students in everything from accessing childcare or emergency funds to registering for courses.

“Retention Alert” is a tracking system that was developed at NVIT allowing administrators to monitor types of alerts (e.g., financial aid or tutoring), thus using information for operational and strategic decision-making. The Grades Database allows administrators to examine student

success rates according to criteria such as subject, term, delivery mode, location and instructor. This information provides insight into the gaps in support services, so that attention can be focused in areas of need based upon the student population.

Leveraging and Future Funding

In reviewing the financial reports from the ASPs throughout the three years, it is apparent that some of the ASP institutions took great initiative to leverage and access funds outside of ASP to build upon the services and programs that they had initiated. Furthermore, these institutions seemed to have managed to build sustainability into the delivery of these initiatives upon completion of the ASP pilot. The institutions that were able to accommodate ASP activities within their base budgets also reported a higher quantity of deliverables. In many cases, ASP funds were used as seed funding to start the initiatives but other institutional resources were used to see these initiatives through to completion. It is noteworthy, however, that most institutions receiving ASP funds sought further transitional funding at what had been projected as the end of the pilot period.

In the Year 3 reports, many of the ASP institutions recommended that future funding must be secured and targeted for Aboriginal education to ensure security that allows for long-term planning and benefits. Some also indicated that this funding should be part of annual base funding in recognition of the higher costs associated with expanded student supports and, where applicable, elevated costs associated with community-based delivery.

The ASP reports and Ministry communication documents provide evidence that several of the short and medium-term outcomes of the ASP were achieved in that several new programs and initiatives have been developed and implemented to better meet the needs of Aboriginal learners. Furthermore, additional student support services, including the hiring of Aboriginal academic advisors/community outreach coordinators, tracking systems, Elders-in-Residence programs, tutors, peer mentors, guest speakers and community feasts/events all contributed to improvements made through the ASPs.

Many public post-secondary institutions worked collaboratively over the three years to develop, draft and sign terms of references, communication plans, protocols, Memorandums of Understandings and other formal agreements to further the goals of their respective ASPs. The experience here was not uniform and there was significant variation in the level of sustained community engagement.

With some institutions there was clear and demonstrable evidence of significant improvements in the recruitment, retention and completion success of Aboriginal students. Vancouver Community College is a case in point. It must also be said, however, that increases were also observed – and, in some cases, significantly greater increases – at institutions that did not have the benefit of ASP funding through this Strategy. Whether that can be attributed to other elements of the Strategy, to existing institutional commitments and partnerships with communities, or to other factors is not clear. This is an area that would warrant closer scrutiny in the event of further program evaluation.

Analysis of Primary Data

Survey Data

Primary data was obtained from the survey, from the regional sessions and from further interviews.

Again, the overall primary data indicates that the ASP pilot was generally successful in helping institutions achieve and, in some cases, exceed program expectations. One survey respondent described some of the intangible benefits in the following terms:

“First of all, I believe that the ASP and other initiatives are part of a long term vision and plan and not all the benefits will be seen (nor were they supposed to be seen or realized) within the confines of the years of these ventures...The true measure of these programs being created, along with the many, many other initiatives that UVic and Camosun took on through their ASP have a lasting legacy that will be felt for years to come and will definitely show; in the number of Aboriginal learners who will access, enroll, complete and transition to a world of opportunities beyond the post secondary experience.”

Furthermore, it would appear that the ASP initiative has done a lot to build consensus among students, administrators, instructors and community members regarding the importance of the significant increases in opportunities and support services for Aboriginal students that they had seen over the past three years. It would further appear that ASP funding, perhaps together with other 2007 Strategy funding, has provided some institutions with the opportunity to either initiate or to accelerate strategic plans for making Aboriginal education a greater institutional priority. Funding unencumbered by competition from other academic priorities has made it possible to have access to the resources necessary to hire staff members to engage communities and to develop a greater number of collaborative education strategies (through regional advisory committees). As important, the funding also led to a direct increase in cultural curriculum content, programs and events, the benefit of which is difficult to measure in precise terms. The comments of the following three survey respondents perhaps offer some insight:

“This funding has made great impact at many levels. What would we do without the funding? [It] would require shifting of internal resources. The momentum of success would be a great shame to be compromised.”

“[This funding has had]...one of the most phenomenal impacts in 33 years of education. It has made successful strategies even stronger. Graduates are now taking on leadership roles all around the province.”

“The University of Northern British Columbia catchment area encompasses approximately 60% of British Columbia; however, we have still attained a significant impact in relation to the access, retention, completion and transition for Aboriginal learners. In the Prince George main campus we have Aboriginal students that come from over 95 different Aboriginal communities. During the Aboriginal Service Plan, we have connected with Aboriginal learners by providing the following: (1) Increase Aboriginal student leadership activities, (2) implemented Aboriginal mature student research and connection with Aboriginal community learners, (3) Increase Aboriginal student ambassadors, (4) strengthened Northern Advancement Program (1st Year transition program) student relationships and also with First year transition students, (5) conducted Aboriginal events that helped inform and develop strong relationships with Aboriginal learners, (6) and made available academic tutors, academic support and academic assistance services for Aboriginal learners. In the regional

campus, we have developed a Masters degree program for Wilp Wilxo'oskwhl Nisga'a and also created Aboriginal activities that strengthened our relationships with the Aboriginal community by raising awareness through community meetings and focus groups.”

The ASP survey analysis provided additional feedback that generally supported the documentation and the data obtained during the regional sessions. The survey did provide an opportunity for more personal, anonymous feedback. While there were many positive observations, it is also true that many respondents expressed concern that the ASPs had fallen short of what had been expected of them, particularly with respect to community engagement and delivery of educational programs at a local level.

The survey provided feedback from 91 respondents who were generally supportive of the ASP programs, services and processes. The initiatives they considered most beneficial included the Elders-in-Residence programs, better support services for students, better community outreach through Aboriginal coordinators/advisors, and change in institutional policies. On balance, they indicated that the environment at ASP institutions had improved dramatically throughout the term of the ASP initiatives.

Respondents reporting deficiencies in the implementation of ASPs pointed to a number of factors including: the modest number of Métis-specific initiatives; insufficiency of Aboriginal curriculum across campus in all academic disciplines; concern about sustainability of outreach for Aboriginal communities; and a continuing high turnover rate of people in Aboriginal support positions.

Partnerships with Aboriginal Communities and Organizations

One ASP coordinator stated that the ASP enabled their institution to develop and nurture new relationships, and this has resulted in the institution working in much more respectful and, ultimately, in more effective ways with communities and other partners. A Regional Session participant offered this concise analysis:

“Having strong relationships allows us to do other work better and makes the other processes quicker. We are miles from where we were three years ago.”

Public post-secondary institution participants at regional sessions voiced the need for true collaboration and respectful partnerships with communities. Community members reiterated the absolute necessity for true collaboration and partnership between communities and public institutions. Respondents indicated that this process does take a long time to build up the trust required for respectful relationship building. Some public institution participants who identified the long-term commitment of time, energy and resources required to build these long-term relationships also expressed concern over the conclusion of the ASP and potential reductions in funding that could adversely impact the relationships they have worked so hard to develop over the past three years. For some of these participants, it was difficult to understand how these activities could be absorbed within base budgets when those budgets were already subject to increasing pressures and potential deficits.

“As a member of FNAC [First Nations Advisory Council] at VIU I believe that the process of developing the ASP was very inclusive and as a result the buy in from the Aboriginal communities led to increased access for Aboriginal people. As a school district we have had an increased Aboriginal student enrolment as a result

of increased VIU students/parents who move to the area to attend VIU.” (Survey respondent)

“UNBC continues to strengthen our partnerships and collaboration with Aboriginal communities, students and organizations. We continue to have protocol arrangements and research protocol agreements with many Aboriginal communities. We have established protocols (either formal or research) with various Indigenous Nations that include Secwepmc, Nuxalk, Chilcotin, Dakelh, Nisga'a, Gitksan, Tsimshian, Lake Babine and Haida people. We continually work with Aboriginal students from over 95 Aboriginal communities and we make sure that our learners have excellent support.” -Survey respondent

“I feel that there is a need to continue the partnerships and collaboration with community re: Aboriginal student support. It is great to see that this University is extending out into the community for Aboriginal language programs, open learning programs. The support that TRU has offered our program is enormous. They have welcomed our program with open arms. Our students have the choice now to either head down to main campus or stay here and enter into the [Bachelor of Education] program here.” (Survey respondent)

“The ASP assisted our institution to realize core connections and relationships with community, not as a separate entity. This process informs best practice for program development and pedagogy.” (Regional session participant)

“Support services have proven time and time again how they support students in a proactive manner. Relationships with communities have gone from strength to strength. They [Aboriginal communities and partners] help direct Aboriginal education in their institutions, and are not just symbolic relationships...the power is theirs.” (Regional session participant)

At the session with the Na' Tsa' Maht Group, Salish for “Working as One,” (Vancouver Island Public Post-Secondary Indigenous Leadership Consortium), one participant noted that, in future, projects need to include a stronger focus on engagement and participation with Aboriginal communities in regards to strategy, project development and delivery of funding. At this same session, the group indicated their willingness to work with IAHLA institutes and also to share resources with them, stating, “IAHLA institutes should not just be seen as stepping stones to the publicly funded institutions.” Language almost precisely the same was used by an IAHLA leader to describe their continuing status as “stepping stones” rather than as partners.

Several Aboriginal communities have benefited directly through the ASP initiative as many communities worked together as partners in consortiums. As one survey respondent shared, “We are starting to see new and stronger working relationships within communities as a result of this work. Several different nations are now working together to share funding and resources. It is exciting to see this happen.” But this is not universally the case and there were reports to the contrary. One survey respondent indicated “There hasn't been any specific partnership or collaborative initiatives that have directly benefited our institute per se...in fact, one partnership with a public institute for an on-site training initiative was so costly to our institute that our budget ended in a deficit this past year.”

In follow up to one of the regional sessions, the Evaluators received a position paper from a First Nation outlining concerns over how funding is distributed to support Aboriginal education.

The First Nation stated its position that "...the funding given to post-secondary public institutions that are intended for First Nations students will be more effective if given to First Nation Community Education and First Nation Private Post-Secondary Institutes." That same First Nation proposed, "targeted dollars be withdrawn from the Post-Secondary Institutions and held in trust by the First Nations Education Steering Committee until the post secondary public institutions plans are approved by First Nation Communities" (Position Paper from a BC First Nation).

Clearly, there is some discrepancy in how respectful, collaborative partnerships are interpreted by both the community and public post-secondary institutions. The position paper also outlined the concerns that they had with one of the post-secondary institutions (non-ASP funded): lack of responsiveness to community needs; challenges for First Nations communities hosting programs in community (with associated financial costs); and negative results of connecting with local institutions. The paper then identified a partnership with a First Nation public institution (ASP funded) that is benefiting their community by:

"...being responsive and inclusive; being supportive to local First Nations instructors; including First Nations content; following up with concerns in a timely manner; providing programming that is specific to the community employment and education needs; understanding that each First Nations community is unique; understanding that First Nations share their resources to benefit all First Nations; and, understanding that standard programming needs to be adapted and inclusive of community resources," (Position Paper from a BC First Nation).

Changing Environment on Campus

Several institutions said it was not just that student enrolment numbers were up, but that there was now a different spirit among the students and on each campus. Several stated it was the quality of the experience that counted rather than just the numbers of students or the credentials awarded. NIC noted that Aboriginal students now stay longer, so it is not just enrolments that are up. The respondents also suggested that Aboriginal student attitudes towards school, science and study habits have all improved but it will take more time to see the full benefit of this.

One ASP coordinator at a regional session noted that ASP funding provided resources and time needed to identify the gaps in Aboriginal education at their institution. It allowed them to start changing the physical space to make it more inviting for Aboriginal students. Another participant spoke about the barriers that Aboriginal students continue to face but, increasingly, are finding ways to overcome. The legacy of residential schools and the suffering experienced by so many Aboriginal people has left its mark – the significance of which is perhaps still not adequately understood by institutional leaders and by others working within the public system. This is a challenge for some Survivors who return as mature students to pursue their post-secondary education. As parents did not receive a post-secondary education, this is an inevitable predictor of their children also not attending. Some mature students, who are Survivors of residential school, spoke about how returning to school has played an important role in their healing journey and that some of the supports available through resources allocated pursuant to the Ministry's Strategy had made this more possible.

Development of Aboriginal Curriculum and Courses and Community-based Education

Elders, students, administrators and staff members spoke to the success and value of Aboriginal courses and curriculum, both at the undergraduate and graduate levels, which had been developed through ASP initiatives. When courses were delivered in communities, the retention and completion rates were extremely high.

Some ASP institutions engaged with community members to identify community needs and develop courses relevant to Aboriginal learners.

“Through our partnership, we created the blueprint for a degree that was of the utmost relevance to our community members.” (Regional session participant)

The increase of community-based education programs and bridging programs provide an avenue for students pursuing post-secondary education, and the opportunity to ladder into other programs on campus.

“Aboriginal education at PSIs is (and needs to be) a developmental process. With a focus on access and retention in the last 3 years, I think we will begin to see the outcomes as it relates to completion. Our focus has been on supporting students in community based education programs as well as VIU's Aboriginal bridging program. What I note is that many of our students from our community-based programs now attend our VIU events, such as feasts, speaker series, etc. They appear to be more comfortable coming to the campus and when I do outreach visits to these programs, the students consistently identify their education plans as coming to VIU.” (Survey respondent)

Bridging programs have been developed or expanded to meet the needs of students.

Transfer of Funding to Communities

In planning this evaluation, a number of stakeholders indicated they were particularly interested in learning how much ASP funding was actually transferred directly to Aboriginal communities. It should be noted that ASP institutions were not required to report how much of the funds were transferred to community partners; however some of them did share this information in their annual reports or through follow up communications with the evaluation team. Further complicating this question is the fact that these transfers have not actually been defined within any parameters, so it is up to the individual institutions to determine how they would calculate this amount. For example, would hiring a community member fall under this category of transferring funds to the community?

Support Services for Students

Support services for students were developed or enhanced at ASP institutions, dependent on the needs of their student populations. Below are some examples of these services:

“One of the most successful components of the [CCC] was the development of Learning Facilitators for each partner that worked on this critical area. I think the camps were also very important in this regard as were Elders, cultural workshops, bursaries, [Professional Development] workshops, learner handbooks, etc.” (Survey respondent)

“The Service Plan enabled us to get a much better understanding of the Aboriginal student experience on our campuses, which will help us better focus initiatives to improve student success.” (Survey respondent)

“The ASP raised the profile of Aboriginal education, especially support services. There has been a real buy in from faculty and staff. They [Aboriginal support services] are now essential services like the library.” (Regional session participant)

Institutional Commitment

Senior administrators from some public post-secondary institutions attended the regional sessions and demonstrated great awareness and support for the ASP initiative and all of the outcomes for Aboriginal students. These institutions demonstrated genuine understanding and commitment to Aboriginal communities and learners that impacted policy and decision-making. The Evaluators are of the view that senior level commitment and involvement at public institutions has been an important factor in, and indicator of, the success and results of some of the ASPs regarded as the most productive and responsive.

For example, at one regional session, representatives from UNBC shared the 2010 University Plan, which states:

“...We value the contribution of indigenous peoples in British Columbia and around the world...We are building a strong reputation for our research and service in...First Nations and Indigenous Issues...Building on our successes, we will be among the best in the following areas...First Nations and Indigenous Issues, Northern Community Sustainability and Development.” (UNBC University Plan, 2010)

The CCC provides an example whereby numerous partners worked together to develop a Governance Policy Manual (2009) in which it outlines its vision, mission, values, governance policy model, representation, communication, monitoring, accountability and finances. Their vision states: “In 2015, the completion and success rates in higher learning between Aboriginal learners and non-Aboriginal learners living in the coastal corridor region are equal” (p. 3). Appointments are for the term of the ASP, with the provision that terms would be “renewed based upon new or extended funding agreements, unless the ten partners agree to continue the Consortium’s work irrespective of the ALMD funding.”

In one session the point was made that the politics and climate in regards to Aboriginal post-secondary education have changed and that “there was a political will to change and money that went with it.” Another participant noted, “Philosophically, it gave us the tools to step outside our comfort zone and it wasn’t easy, but the support made all the difference.”

One administrator spoke about the importance of targeted, dedicated funding for Aboriginal initiatives. They indicated that sometimes there is fierce fiscal competition within the institutions, and having targeted funding saved time and resources that would have otherwise been expended on “institutional in-fighting.” Furthermore, they stated, “We can now target dollars for Aboriginal students’ education in a way that we know will be successful.”

Sustainability and Accessing External Funding

When asked about sustainability of the programs that they had created, several of the ASP institutions indicated that ASP funding allowed them to accelerate the strategic plans that they had formulated to focus on Aboriginal education. They intended to continue with the implementation of related programs and services. Some institutions had managed to secure base funding, through internal reallocations, to commit ongoing finances to program continuation.

Some of the institutions clearly demonstrated a higher level of success in accessing other sources of funding and managed to multiply the number of their outcomes by using ASP funds as seed money to start programs, and then secure external (non-Framework) funding to implement and continue these programs. As noted earlier though, many institutional representatives expressed concern that other pressures on institutional budgets would make it difficult to find continuing room for ASP-like activities within more constrained base budgets.

Overcoming Systemic Barriers

Some initiatives funded through ASP attempted to address the cultural competencies of institutional staff through cultural awareness workshops. While these issues have been addressed to a certain extent at some institutions, there still exist systemic barriers within the public post-secondary system that can only be addressed through continuing, longer-term education programs.

“Systemic barriers exist in larger societal arenas along with prejudices. Deficiencies in cultural competency by faculty, staff, administration and general public, as well as compartmentalization of resources and activities, diffuse the overall efficacy of measures to improve the retention, completion, and transition results desired. Access is enhanced but the outcomes provide for employment within structures, which are deficient in respecting cultural differences. In the long run, while students may increase in numbers of enrollment, the institutional framework reflects societal values, which often are not welcoming to the Indigenous values which students may possess. Students become aware of this, which presents intense pressures on identity and cultural location, and students often feel compelled to assert their Indigeneity in an institution, which tolerates and accepts and doesn't encourage and reflect that identity.” (Survey respondent)

Non-ASP Institutions

At regional and other stakeholder meetings, non-ASP institutions questioned why they had not been selected for ASP funding and expressed a concern that funding was not distributed evenly across institutions and geographical regions.

The University of British Columbia Okanagan (UBCO), a non-ASP institution, demonstrated several initiatives that have proven successful in supporting Aboriginal students with access to post-secondary education. The Aboriginal Access Studies (AAS) program was designed to address the barrier of qualification with academic course grades for entry into post-secondary. When students enroll in the AAS program, they can take 9 to 24 post-secondary credits. They are not required to submit transcripts or academic documentation, unless they have had to withdraw from a post-secondary institute previously. Students are also supported through a

holistic model that addresses financial, motivational, cultural, family and academic needs. UBCO has also developed a revolutionary purchase for service arrangement where it shares its FTE with the En'owkin Centre for the language programs that they deliver in partnership.

“We have invited En'owkin Centre onto our campus to deliver Okanagan language courses. These courses are recognized for transfer credit. These courses are integrated into our Aboriginal Access Studies Program and we pay an FTE to En'owkin Centre for Aboriginal Access Studies students attending their courses.” -Survey respondent.”

Another example of initiatives moving forward without ASP funding is the University of British Columbia (UBC)'s Aboriginal Strategic Plan that was developed in 2008, and outlines the guiding principles and key areas of strategic engagement. The UBC Strategic Plan is impressive and perhaps reflects not only the level of institutional commitment to Aboriginal education but also the benefits of many years of work with faculty, with students and with the broader Aboriginal community. In discussing future approaches to better supporting Aboriginal students, UBC noted that initiatives like the Ministry's Strategy with envelopes of funding for particular areas (like ASPs) does not necessarily offer the best approach for improved outcomes. They would welcome discussions focused on the funding of aspects of their Strategic Plan that the Ministry could support rather than having to distort that plan to fit the envelopes of available project-based funding.

ASP/Non-ASP Comparison

While the table on the next next page does not include retention/completion/graduation data for Aboriginal students – due to time limitations – it does reflect some interesting Aboriginal enrolment trends. First, almost all institutions improved over the last three years in terms of the proportion of the student headcount that was of Aboriginal identity.

While there was not time to do an extensive analysis to compare enrollment and other indicators among ASP and non-ASP institutions, it is noted that some non-ASP institutions experienced sizeable absolute and percentage growth in Aboriginal student headcount. One that is very noticeable is Okanagan College's⁷ Aboriginal headcount growing by 800 or 152.3% over the three-year period.

Data collected at the regional sessions and through the survey indicate a strong perception that recruitment, retention and graduation rates for Aboriginal students have been increasing. This, in fact, is true as is evidenced by this table with increases indicated broadly across all sectors; and appear robust at some institutions that did not have the benefit of ASP funding. As mentioned, the performance of Okanagan College is particularly noteworthy in this regard.

In percentage terms, in addition to Okanagan College, other non-ASP institutions such as RRU (56.3%), KPU (56.3%) and Emily Carr (38.5%) were among the top in terms of Aboriginal

⁷ Note that Okanagan College underwent significant changes from 2006/07 to 2009/10. In September 2005, Okanagan University College ceased to exist and its students were divided between Okanagan College and University of British Columbia Okanagan. University of British Columbia Okanagan's headcount numbers are included with the University of British Columbia.

EVALUATION OF THE 2007 ABORIGINAL POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION STRATEGY – MARCH 2011

Aboriginal Student Headcount for B.C. Public Post-Secondary Institutions and Funding Received, Academic Year (AY) 2006-07 to 2009-10

Institution	Aboriginal Student Identity				Non-Aboriginal Student Identity				Aboriginal Students as % of All Students				Aboriginal Population within Institution's Mandate (2006 Census)			2007 Strategy Allocations to Institutions	
	06-07	07-08	08-09	09-10	06-07	07-08	08-09	09-10	06-07	07-08	08-09	09-10	Regional Mandate	% Aboriginal	Number Aboriginal	\$ Allocated (Thousands)	% of \$ Allocated
B.C. Institute of Technology	1,015	1,145	1,185	1,190	42,235	42,390	41,295	39,710	2%	3%	3%	3%	Provincial	5%	196,075	\$928	2%
Camosun College	725	805	825	890	16,655	16,875	17,240	17,595	4%	5%	5%	5%	Camosun	3%	11,370	\$3,020	7%
Capilano University	405	450	490	515	9,330	11,895	12,420	12,830	4%	4%	4%	4%	Capilano	3%	7,510	\$2,880	6%
College of New Caledonia	1,685	1,950	2,200	2,305	7,830	7,995	7,440	7,295	18%	20%	23%	24%	New Caledonia	13%	17,600	\$2,796	6%
College of the Rockies	505	485	595	650	10,400	11,595	11,385	11,660	5%	4%	5%	5%	Rockies	6%	4,160	\$935	2%
Douglas College	710	780	910	865	20,205	21,215	22,940	23,750	3%	4%	4%	4%	Douglas	2%	10,320	\$1,335	3%
Emily Carr University of Art + Design	65	70	75	90	3,740	3,710	3,865	4,160	2%	2%	2%	2%	Provincial	5%	11,805	\$797	2%
Justice Institute of B.C.	830	870	935	830	31,305	30,335	29,450	29,615	3%	3%	3%	3%	Provincial	5%	196,075	\$971	2%
Kwantlen Polytechnic University	320	375	495	500	16,160	16,510	16,415	17,110	2%	2%	3%	3%	Kwantlen	2%	14,650	\$830	2%
Langara College	285	300	295	330	17,205	17,140	17,780	18,810	2%	2%	2%	2%	Vancouver	2%	11,805	\$610	1%
Nicola Valley Institute of Technology	630	715	945	1,020	145	235	275	220	81%	75%	77%	82%	Provincial	5%	196,075	\$3,537	8%
North Island College	1,130	1,160	1,255	1,315	8,430	8,670	8,310	8,565	12%	12%	13%	13%	North Island	12%	17,225	\$1,740	4%
Northern Lights College	1,290	1,330	1,430	1,435	8,315	7,535	8,430	8,025	13%	15%	15%	15%	Northern Lights	14%	9,265	\$1,318	3%
Northwest Community College	2,540	2,525	2,795	3,075	4,035	3,940	4,170	4,515	39%	39%	40%	41%	Northwest	29%	21,165	\$2,964	7%
Okanagan College	525	930	1,115	1,325	18,565	17,475	18,000	19,120	3%	5%	6%	6%	Okanagan	5%	16,825	\$535	1%
Royal Roads University	80	100	115	125	2,370	2,880	2,960	3,165	3%	3%	4%	4%	Provincial	5%	196,075	\$218	0%
Selkirk College	460	485	475	515	11,675	11,510	11,550	10,655	4%	4%	4%	5%	Selkirk	4%	3,030	\$1,117	2%
Simon Fraser University	431	495	514	N/A	25,188	26,167	27,065	N/A	2%	2%	2%	N/A	Provincial	5%	196,075	\$1,058	2%
Thompson Rivers University	2,120	2,090	2,345	2,355	21,860	21,605	22,740	23,620	9%	9%	9%	9%	Cariboo	13%	21,280	\$3,214	7%
University of B.C.	691	691	883	N/A	44,670	45,409	46,885	N/A	2%	1%	2%	N/A	Provincial	5%	196,075	\$2,048	5%
University of Northern B.C.	586	508	575	N/A	3,535	3,516	3,449	N/A	14%	13%	14%	N/A	Provincial	5%	196,075	\$1,896	4%
University of the Fraser Valley	755	745	820	905	12,815	12,770	13,145	13,590	6%	6%	6%	6%	Fraser Valley	6%	14,535	\$1,265	3%
University of Victoria	643	647	658	N/A	17,821	17,807	17,814	N/A	3%	4%	4%	N/A	Provincial	5%	196,075	\$3,570	8%
Vancouver Community College	500	520	635	715	21,310	21,445	22,495	22,165	2%	2%	3%	3%	Vancouver	2%	11,805	\$2,609	6%
Vancouver Island University	1,760	1,780	1,940	2,035	16,245	16,135	16,210	15,335	10%	10%	11%	12%	Malaspina	7%	15,335	\$3,068	7%
Unique System Total	18,254	18,977	21,852	N/A	355,181	357,167	403,687	N/A	5%	5%	5%	N/A			\$45,258	100%	

Data Sources:

- a. **Teaching-Intensive Universities, Institutes and Colleges:** Central Data Warehouse, October 2010 Submission, Institution Demographics Pivot and System Demographics Pivot. Note data excludes international and off-shore students. Also, each number has been rounded to the nearest 5. The effects of rounding may result in totals in different reports not matching exactly when they would be expected to match.
- b. **Research Universities:** 2009/10 Accountability Framework master file. Note data excludes international and off-shore students. Please note the headcount at the research universities is not available until the Student Transitions Project data merge is complete in May 2011.
- c. **Aboriginal Population within Institution's Mandate:** Proportion - Custom tabulation, Statistics Canada, 2006 Census; Numbers - Aboriginal Profiles of BC: 2006 Census, Statistical Profiles by College Region
- d. **2007 Strategy Allocations to Institutions:** Ministry of Advanced Education, March 3, 2011. This includes Aboriginal Service Plan funding (including Transition funding in 2010/11), Aboriginal Special Projects Funds, Gathering Places (approved funding), Aboriginal targeted seats, Aboriginal Transitions Research Funds, and funding for non-ASP institutions to complete an inventory of programs and services. It excludes funding for scholarships, the Aboriginal Community Adult Literacy Program, and any other one-time funding.

Better quality data: Continuous improvement in the identification of aboriginal students each year has seen the introduction of data quality enhancements. Most significant in this regard is the adoption of the Aboriginal Administrative Data Standard by the public post-secondary institutions and the creation of the Student Transitions Project that links data from K-12 through to post-secondary. The 2008/09 numbers are the first unduplicated system-wide headcount data available using these two significant enhancements. In addition, the accuracy of submissions to the Central Data Warehouse has improved based on better data matching with the Ministry of Education. As a result, the figures are not comparable: each subsequent figure contains more robust data.

Notes:

Aboriginal Identity: Aboriginal identity is self-declared by students at their institution, or identified through Ministry of Education linkages to a declaration of Aboriginal identity at the K-12 level. The Non-Aboriginal category includes students whose Aboriginal identity is unknown.

Headcount: Headcount measures all students who were enrolled in a program at a B.C. public post-secondary institutions, including non-credit courses (developmental and continuing education) as well as those leading to a post-secondary credential. Program duration varies from, for example, under 15 days to full semester. Non-credit courses under 15 days in duration could include, for example, occupational safety, first aid courses, or summer camps for high school students looking to enroll in post-secondary.

Academic Year: Headcount enrolment figures are reported in the Academic Year, from September 1 to August 31; for example, 2006/07 headcount includes students enrolled in programs from September 2006 to August 2007.

Regional Mandate: the region in which the public institution is mandated to serve learners. Some institutions are mandated to serve within a College Region, while others have a mandate to serve learners across the entire province.

Nicola Valley Institute of Technology: In June 2007, the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology took over the Institute of Indigenous Governance.

Okanagan College and UBCO: In September 2005, Okanagan University College ceased to exist and its students were divided between Okanagan College and University of British Columbia Okanagan. University of British Columbia Okanagan's headcount numbers are included with the University of British Columbia.

Unique System Total: This number represents the number of students served by the participating institutions as a whole. It is based on Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development's 2009/10 Service Plan Report and Central Data Warehouse October 2010 submission. In any given year, some students attend more than one institution. Since these students are included in the headcount of each institution they attend, the sum of all institutions' headcounts will include some students more than once, producing an over-stated total headcount. In the unique headcount, students who are identified as attending more than one institution are only counted once. It is not available for 2009/10 as the data on headcount at the research universities is not available until May 2011.

student original growth over the last three years. However, in terms of absolute numbers (of students), after Okanagan College, ASP institutions such as CNC (620), NWCC (535), NVIT⁸ (390), VIU (275), and TRU (235) had the largest amount of growth in Aboriginal students over the last three years.

With some other ASP and non-ASP institutions, recruitment is surprisingly flat although it should be noted that anecdotal institutional data provided to Evaluators at regional sessions has indicated some very positive outcomes regarding retention and, where applicable, with graduate student growth.

Unfortunately, the Evaluators did not have ample time to more closely analyze the experiences and results of non-ASP institutions – other than a few examples above – and to compare these with ASP institutions. The Evaluators did hear from a number of non-ASP institutions on headway they were making in increasing the access to and success in post-secondary education among Aboriginal learners and increasing partnerships with Aboriginal communities. They also heard, however, concerns from Aboriginal communities and institutes that were not able to benefit from the lack of ASPs in their regions.

While readers will see later in this section on ASP that the Evaluators' recommendations are relatively support of continuing funding for some kind of ASP-like initiative in the future, it is recommended that the Ministry look more closely at how some non-ASP institutions were successful in improving their Aboriginal post-secondary education performance. Perhaps something could be learned from these experiences and used by the Ministry and other institutions.

7.1.3 Responses to Evaluation Questions

1. Has the ASP program element achieved the intended outputs and outcomes?

Yes, based on evidence reviewed by Evaluators, overall this program element has achieved the intended short/medium-term outputs and outcomes. New programs have been developed and/or modified to meet the needs of Aboriginal learners. Evidence shows that many of these programs have been developed and/or delivered in collaboration with Aboriginal communities, Elders and instructors. Support services and outreach initiatives for Aboriginal students were enhanced or developed through ASP initiatives, including hiring of Aboriginal academic advisors, community outreach coordinators, tracking systems, Elders-in-Residence programs, tutors, peer mentors, guest speakers and community feasts/events.

In many cases, public post-secondary institutions worked collaboratively over the three years to develop, draft and sign terms of references, communication plans, protocols, Memorandums of Understandings and other formal agreements as a result of these discussions.

The number of Aboriginal students enrolled and completing programs with credentials has increased substantially, but the Evaluators are of the view that the ASP initiatives are but one factor that has contributed to this and it is difficult to disaggregate the impact of the ASPs from other elements of the Strategy. Having said this, it was clear that many working within the ASP institutions felt there had been both profound improvement and real progress in the period of time covered by the ASP.

⁸ Note that in June 2007, the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology took over the Institute of Indigenous Governance (which had a headcount of 345 in 2006-07).

2. What were the costs and benefits of developing and implementing ASPs?

\$14.95M was invested into the ASP pilot over the course of this initiative. The benefits are outlined throughout this report and time will provide a greater opportunity to assess in a more tangible manner the added benefits including longer-term labour market attachment. It is premature to address that latter element at this time while many students recruited through the ASP initiative are still in the process of completing their respective programs.

3. What were non-ASP institutions able (or not able) to accomplish over the past 3 years in terms of ASP-like goals?

Several of the non-ASP institutions, such Okanagan College, UBC and UBCO have demonstrated significant successes in serving their Aboriginal student population. While determining the inputs at these institutions is beyond the scope of this review, the table and associated discussion about non-ASP institutions in the previous section is intended to stimulate dialogue and perhaps further research on this topic.

4. How has the ASP funding strengthened partnerships and collaboration in Aboriginal post-secondary education? Have these been sustainable, integrated and imbedded within respectful partnerships?

There is strong evidence of strengthened partnerships and collaboration, although it is apparent that the perception of partnership and collaboration varies between stakeholders. There are several excellent examples of long-term sustainable partnerships that will continue beyond the ASP pilot, which have been identified by both the ASP institution and community partners.

Some community members expressed concerns about how respectful, reciprocal partnerships are defined by public post-secondary institutions. They identified the need to involve Aboriginal communities in the development, implementation and reporting of the ASPs, and also transparency in how these funds are dispersed.

Evaluators also heard from First Nations and other Aboriginal communities that public institutions had, in some cases, not maintained respectful, collaborative and productive partnerships with Aboriginal communities and Aboriginal institutes. Two kinds of situations were described. In some cases, the Aboriginal stakeholders' concerns may have been related to the fact that they were in a region that had no ASP and therefore had less access, if any, to resources for outreach and community-based programs and services. In other cases, Aboriginal communities who were in ASP regions expressed concerns that, if they were engaged, it was more modest than what they had expected or had been led to believe would be the case. Many felt that what engagement did happen took place during the development and implementation of ASPs with less involvement thereafter.

5. How has the process of developing and implementing the ASP affected faculty, staff, students and Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community members?

In many cases, ASP funding provided the resources required to accelerate strategies that had already been initiated. In others, institutions and community stakeholders indicated that the ASP initiative had profoundly positive impacts at both the institution and community level through outreach, academic counseling, bridging programs and community-based delivery. Faculty and staff at several ASP institutions participated in cultural awareness training and consequently, there are many facilitators trained around the province in delivery of cultural awareness training.

6. How much of the funding was transferred directly to the Aboriginal institutes and communities to support the delivery of these projects? Were there any other resources (aside from funding) that were shared in this project?

The annual ASP financial reports do not explicitly differentiate how the funds were transferred to Aboriginal institutes and communities. One complicating factor is that the criteria for how these funds might be categorized was never identified, so it is up to each institution to interpret how they would identify these funds.

While this transfer of funding was not an explicit goal of the ASP initiative, Aboriginal members of the Evaluation Steering Committee identified this as an important matter. Therefore, when the question was asked of public post-secondary institutions, many could not answer it because it was not part of the institutional reporting requirements. The Evaluators' estimate is that overall a very small proportion of ASP funds and other funding under the Strategy was transferred directly to Aboriginal institutes and communities. There are, however, examples of significant exceptions to this overall picture.

7. How has the ASP funding increased access, retention, completion and transition success for Aboriginal learners?

There are numerous examples of ASP programs that have improved access support, retention, completion and transition success from the 11 institutions. For example, some of the programs and services are: Elders programs; bridging programs; Aboriginal curriculum and courses; tutoring and mentoring services; Aboriginal student support services; Successful Student Transition Forum; mini-University; Week of Welcome; community harvest and feasts; Graduate Student Symposium; and academic advising.

However, while there are many good examples in ASPs of programs and services that appear to be working, the Evaluators believe it will take several more years to develop the empirical evidence necessary to support a definitive conclusion on what the longer-term outcomes might be.

8. How has the ASP funding increased the receptivity and relevance of post-secondary education for learners?

There are also several examples of ASP programs that have increased the receptivity and relevance of post-secondary education for Aboriginal learners. For example, some of the successful programs and services are: adaptation and/or development of culturally relevant curricula; welcome feasts; Gathering Places; recruitment and advising in the community; and delivery of programs in the community. It was acknowledged by many that the progress of these initiatives was, at minimum, accelerated by the availability of ASP funding.

9. To what extent did projects address systemic barriers for Aboriginal students?

Workshops that addressed cultural awareness and protocols helped to deal with systemic barriers such as racism and the legacy of residential schools. Through greater understanding, there is evidence of a shifting paradigm towards Aboriginal education and supporting cultural support services for Aboriginal learners at ASP institutions but there is a consistent view that considerably more work will continue to be required in this regard.

10. To what extent do Aboriginal partners (institutes, communities) actually have and perceive they have influence and reciprocal roles in partnerships with institutions, including recognition of intellectual property rights in their ASP partnerships?

There is some evidence that some communities have strong influence and reciprocal roles in partnerships but they would view themselves more as the exception rather than the norm. Through survey analysis and regional sessions, it is apparent that there is some disparity between the perception of public institutions and Aboriginal community members as to the understanding of components of a respectful, reciprocal partnership and this was amplified in correspondence jointly provided to the Evaluators by FNEESC and by IAHLA. There are some institutions that have worked with communities to create new Intellectual Property Protocols but once again, this would be considered more the exception than the norm. The issues associated with this are complex and it would be another area that would warrant later-term analysis.

7.1.4 Conclusions

Overall, the ASP initiative was generally successful in achieving its goals. There were increases in access, retention, completion and transitions opportunities for Aboriginal learners; increases in the receptivity and relevance of post-secondary institutions and programs for Aboriginal learners; and increased levels of strengthened partnerships and collaboration in Aboriginal post-secondary education.

The annual ASP reports, survey analysis and regional sessions reviewed in this evaluation provided qualitative and quantitative data, documenting the successful strategies and also identifying some of the gaps in implementation and evaluation throughout the course of the pilot.

The monitoring and evaluation process for the ASP initiative improved over the three years of the project; however, there is a marked difference in the quality of the annual reports among institutions. This may indicate a weakness in their monitoring/evaluation reporting and expectations; or it may be a function of less rigour in documenting results and preparing reports.

Some of the most successful components of the ASP pilot were identified as: Elders-in-Residence programs; cultural events, feasts, celebrations and Aboriginal speakers; partnerships with Aboriginal communities and organizations; changing environment on campus; recruitment process and academic planning; development of Aboriginal curriculum and courses; community-based education and bridging programs; support services for communities; increased retention and graduation rates; accessing external funding; and institutional commitment.

The ASPs contributed significantly to raising the profile of institutional commitment to the importance of Aboriginal post-secondary education; they facilitated an acceleration of programs to support community outreach/engagement, curricular reform to increase cultural content and the expansion of bridging and other supports to students to improve transition and retention. The level of engagement between institutions and communities appears to have increased, but the degree of engagement varied widely across institutions. There were a number of institutions that worked with communities and with Aboriginal-controlled institutes to improve transition success and to collaborate more closely around priority areas like language programs, but the reporting regarding the level of resources transferred to communities in this regard is imprecise and falls short of the kind of transparency desired at the community level.

There is significant evidence of improved engagement between communities and institutions when compared to the pre-2007 period, but institutions may be more comfortable with the

quality of that interaction than are community representatives who continue to express the need for further progress in the development of what they would regard as more respectful, collaborative and reciprocal partnerships.

Several institutions participating in ASPs report robust improvements in retention and completion rates, although it remains a central concern that too many students continue to “drop out”, particularly at the first year level. Some institutions have uneven numbers on retention and completion, which, in part, may be attributable to other factors. And, once again, it must be observed that the performance of non-ASP institutions was impressive.

High degrees of institutional leadership in participating in, or advocating the importance of the goals of the ASPs appear to have a material impact on outcomes and certainly have a positive impact on institutional orientation. To truly “commit to improving the lives of Aboriginal learners and ‘closing the gap’ with respect to higher education and employment,” senior management at public post-secondary institutions needs to support programs and services for Aboriginal learners. This level of support from senior management was demonstrated at many of the regional sessions in regards to the ASP; however, some staff and administrators did express their concern that the true paradigm shift cannot occur at public institutions without the support coming from the “top-down.” ASP documentation and participation of senior management from public post-secondary institutions at regional sessions indicated tremendous success strategies at all levels of governance and community engagement.

Access to ASP resources made it possible for program coordinators to “get on with building capacity” without the distraction of having to compete for scarce academic resources. The importance of this should not be underestimated.

The extent to which institutions have transitioned ASP activities from “pilot” to “steady state” varies across institutions and there may be reason for concern regarding the capacity/commitment of some ASP institutions to maintain service levels beyond the pilot phase. It also must be said that, in some cases, the problem isn’t an absence of institutional commitment as much as it is the inflexibility generated by excess constraints on limited base budget capacity. The nature and extent of these pressures may vary significantly across institutions and institutional sectors.

Many expressed the view (both within institutions and beyond) that the ASPs had helped to establish better foundations upon which further progress could be made but that it would be premature to end ASP support. The Evaluators share this view but note that any extension/expansion should be accompanied by more rigorous evaluation/reporting/transparency requirements. In addition, institutions that have shouldered the responsibility of moving support for activities into base budgets should have the opportunity to secure Ministry support for further innovations or service expansions that could build upon success levels achieved during the pilot phase.

Overall, the ASP initiative has been successful and the resources made available have had a material impact on accelerating progress with the core objectives of the Strategy. This is not to say that all ASPs have been as successful as they could have been. There is evidence from Aboriginal communities and institutes that have not been engaged with or with whom respectful, collaborative partnerships and relationships have not been pursued or achieved. Further, this overall success should not ignore the fact that if an ASP-like initiative is implemented by the Ministry in the future, there are a number of measures that could be included to enhance the short and longer-term impacts of such an initiative.

A last point is that with regard to future ASP-like initiatives and the following recommendations, real engagement of and partnerships with Aboriginal “communities” must include a broad definition and include off-reserve, urban Aboriginal populations and Métis people.

7.1.5 Recommendations

1. Comprehensive, Consistent Monitoring and Evaluation Process – For any future such initiatives, it is recommended that comprehensive and consistent evaluation and reporting processes and expectations are identified from the very outset and monitored more closely throughout the duration of the project. Ongoing analysis should be built into the process so that funding is directed to institutions that are demonstrating success and accountability. Also, there should be a review done each year by the Ministry with an Aboriginal advisory committee or perhaps with the MOU Partners Group to determine what changes may be needed.

Reporting should include documentation of resources shared with Aboriginal partners and more detailed evidence of respectful, collaborative and productive partnerships and relationship-building with Aboriginal communities – including urban Aboriginal populations – and Aboriginal institutes.

2. Provincial Policy Identifying Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education as a Priority for Public Post-Secondary Institutions – When institutional commitment was evident at senior management level, there were stronger indications of success factors across the entire campus(es). The Ministry could encourage public post-secondary institutions to identify Aboriginal education as a priority through institutional leadership and policy development and by making it a consistent point of discussion between institutions and the Ministry.
3. Continued, Targeted, Sustainable Funding – Significant progress has been made with ASP funding and it is essential that this progress be maintained. The Ministry should be engaging with the institutions to consider the success of the ASP program, and to consider, where successful, what action can be taken to make the necessary resources available for ongoing, sustainable funding. An important consideration is that if this funding were to fall under base funding, would the Ministry forego engagement with the institutions? Would the Ministry reduce control, ongoing evaluation and accountability of funding?

Notwithstanding the base funding issue, the Ministry should review any future ASP-like funding to try to extend it to all public post-secondary institutions, perhaps to varying degrees based on Aboriginal population, regional needs and other factors. Evaluators heard from many Aboriginal communities – including urban Aboriginal populations – that essentially “lost out” on the benefits of ASPs because there was not one in their region.

There are a number of options for the Ministry to further extend any ASP-like funding. It could provide funding to all institutions based on some type of formula related to Aboriginal population, institutional capacity, proposed results, etc.

Finally, given the timelines and uncertainty about future funding, the Ministry may want to consider 2011/12 as a “transition” year and roll forward status quo funding from the previous year, and introduce a new “improved” ASP-like initiative in the subsequent year.

4. Respectful, Reciprocal Partnerships – First it is important to identify key components of genuine, respectful partnerships between public post-secondary institutions, Aboriginal communities, IAHLA and Aboriginal-controlled institutes. These partnerships were discussed throughout the documentation, survey and regional sessions and there is a marked disparity in how some institutions and Aboriginal stakeholders interpreted these “successful” partnerships. This needs to be a clear criterion in being eligible for and reporting on in any future ASP-like funding.

It is vital to recognize the power imbalance that exists between Aboriginal communities – including urban Aboriginal groups – and Aboriginal institutes and public post-secondary institutions. Public institutions need to ask the question: *What do our partners offer us?* In honouring and recognizing these community assets, Aboriginal learners will be better served.

When community stakeholders indicate that these partnerships are not working, the Ministry could re-evaluate the ASP and determine whether or not it is appropriate to continue funding.

Another aspect of this question is that the Aboriginal community voice should play a more direct and substantive role in any future ASP-like initiative. At a provincial level and regionally, First Nations and urban Aboriginal communities should be (more) involved from the start during development of an ASP-like initiative and during planning and throughout implementation. The Ministry should require assurances of Aboriginal community material involvement in all stages.

5. Development of Partnerships with IAHLA and Aboriginal-Controlled Institutes – Effective partnerships with IAHLA institutes and/or Aboriginal-controlled institutes have proven highly successful in community-based delivery programs and bridging programs. Furthermore, these programs provide an opportunity for learners to ladder into other public post-secondary programs, through bridging programs.

The Ministry should consider this within any future funding structures developed for Aboriginal post-secondary education and look at ways of ensuring the inclusion of IAHLA/Aboriginal-controlled institutes within it. Suggestions include:

- Requiring that public post-secondary institutions partner with IAHLA/Aboriginal-controlled institutes for certain funding programs.
- Allowing IAHLA/Aboriginal-controlled institutes to apply for the same funding opportunities as public post-secondary institutions either in partnership with a public institution or not (thus allowing funds to flow directly into the IAHLA/Aboriginal-controlled institute if their bid is successful).
- Related to the above, the Ministry might consider including in any future ASP-like funding to institutions an envelope of funds specifically for Aboriginal communities, institutes and urban Aboriginal populations.
- Providing a voice to IAHLA/Aboriginal-controlled institutes by including appropriate representation on future advisory group for the selection of successful proposals for funding.

6. Ongoing Engagement with Aboriginal Communities (broadly defined) – It is vital to continue providing venues for Aboriginal learners, community members and leaders to share their voices, concerns and success stories. These discussions need to result in some form of action that addresses the concerns, in order to maintain the trust and relationships that have been built in good faith over the past three years through ASP initiatives.

These successful strategies should be shared so that Aboriginal post-secondary education in BC will continue to develop and meet the needs of the learners. Funding to support these types of programs should be continued and/or expanded to include non-ASP institutions to help build provincial capacity. Ongoing evaluation and monitoring of the implementation of these initiatives is imperative for accountability to not only the Ministry, but to Aboriginal communities.

7.2 Gathering Places

7.2.1 Background

Another key element of the Ministry's 2007 Strategy included provision for funding to facilitate the development of Aboriginal "Gathering Places" on the campuses of public post-secondary institutions to "better reflect the cultural needs and characteristics of Aboriginal students, community, and traditions."

The purpose of this aspect of the Ministry's initiative – informed, in part, by the outcomes of the Annual Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education Forums sponsored by the Ministry in 2004, 2005 and 2006 – was to "make the post-secondary institutional environment more supportive by increasing the number of welcoming and gathering places."⁹

A total of \$13.6 million dollars in provincial capital funding was targeted towards the development of new facilities, or to modifications of existing infrastructure, that would be designed to facilitate a more welcoming and supportive learning environment for Aboriginal students. In addition, the resources made available for Gathering Places were also intended to build a better bridge between public institutions and the Aboriginal communities they serve.

It should be noted that the development of gathering spaces started before it became a formal initiative under the 2007 Strategy. A number of public institutions had already made significant commitments to this kind of capital infrastructure. The University of British Columbia, for example, had made a major capital commitment – with the support of donors large and small – to the development of the First Nations Longhouse that opened in May of 1993 as part of an effort to make the campus of the province's largest institution more responsive to the needs/expectations of Aboriginal students. The purpose of the Longhouse, which was operated by UBC's House of Learning, was to provide focus for the university's interest in engaging more directly with First Nations and other Aboriginal communities beyond the four corners of the institution.¹⁰

⁹ The importance of having access to this kind of infrastructure had emerged as a priority at each of the forums, all of which were held at the First Nations Longhouse on the campus of UBC – Vancouver.

¹⁰ Dr. Verna Kirkness, the first Director of the House of Learning and a leading force behind the development of the Longhouse noted that "With successful precedents set from prior programs, with an infrastructure designed to create stronger links between UBC and First Nations communities, the building of the Longhouse on campus served as a visible and undeniable statement that First Nations peoples had moved into UBC." (see: "The First Nation House of Learning: A Continuity of Transformation" Ethel Gardner, "Aboriginal Education: Fulfilling the Promise" edited by Marlene Brandt Castellano, Lynne Davis and Louise Lahache)

Several other institutions had also put in place, or were in the process of establishing, some form of gathering space for Aboriginal students, generally co-located with student support services. Thompson Rivers University had dedicated an on-campus house as a gathering space, the University of Northern BC in Prince George had allocated space for Aboriginal student support services in the planning for the development of the institution and others, like the University of Victoria, were well-advanced in developing capital plans for the implementation of gathering spaces and ancillary support services intended to make a bold statement to Aboriginal communities regarding institutional commitment to the importance of Aboriginal post-secondary education.

Other institutions had set aside space for Aboriginal students and for associated support services but in most cases, this was achieved informally using space allocated from other purposes. The space available was often small and not compatible with providing the kind of capacity necessary to support a higher degree of community engagement.

The purpose of the Gathering Place initiative announced by the Ministry in the 2007 Strategy was to assist in making it more possible for a greater number of institutions to deepen the extent to which they could offer more supportive facilities for their students and more welcoming environments to promote increased engagement with, and partnership between, post-secondary institutions and Aboriginal communities. In communicating with public post-secondary institutions regarding the opportunity available through the Gathering Places Capital Funding (GPCF) program it was made clear that the following key criteria would guide the selection of successful proposals:

- The “primary purpose” of the program was “to aid institutions in providing an appropriate space for the ceremonies and celebrations of the Aboriginal community and to increase student retention”; and,
- The GPCF program was intended to encourage partnership between institutions and Aboriginal communities and to also provide a resource for students and the community.

Following the announcement of the Strategy it soon became clear that there was a robust level of interest in developing Gathering Place infrastructure on the campuses of public institutions. With one exception, every public post-secondary institution in BC made application to the Ministry seeking support for the deployment of new, revitalized or expanded Gathering Places. More than \$70 million of capital construction was proposed in these submissions, with in excess of \$50 million of that amount sought from the Province of British Columbia.

While Ministry documents disclose that proposals were being closely examined for compliance with the criteria, it is evident from the table that follows that decisions were ultimately made to allocate substantially similar amounts to all institutions that sought funding. In many cases, the level of funding provided by the Ministry represented only a small part of institutional plans for much more ambitious projects.

Institution	Funding Approved ¹¹	Campus	Construction Status
British Columbia Institute of Technology	\$600,000	Burnaby	Under construction
Camosun College	\$610,400	Lansdowne	December 2010
Capilano University	\$600,000	North Vancouver	Under construction
College of New Caledonia	\$627,000	Fort St. James Prince George	February 2009 January 2009
College of the Rockies	\$450,000	Cranbrook	March 2011
Douglas College	\$770,000	New Westminster	Under construction
Emily Carr University of Art and Design	\$600,000	Granville Island, Vancouver	October 2010
Kwantlen Polytechnic University	\$600,000	Surrey	May 2010
Langara College	\$304,000	Vancouver	September 2009
Nicola Valley Institute of Technology ¹²	\$600,000	Merritt	September 2010
Northern Lights College	\$661,523	Fort Nelson Fort St. John Dawson Creek	August 2009 Under construction Under construction
North Island College	\$606,000	Port Alberni Campbell River	September 2010 Under construction
Northwest Community College	\$600,000	Terrace	June 2010
Okanagan College	\$253,000	Salmon Arm	September 2010
Royal Roads University	Pending	Victoria	Under development
Selkirk College	\$600,000	Castlegar	December 2010
Simon Fraser University	\$600,000	Burnaby	March 2009
Thompson Rivers University	\$600,000	Kamloops Williams Lake	May 2010 July 2009
University of British Columbia – Okanagan	\$600,000	North Kelowna	October 2009
University of Northern British Columbia	\$600,000	Prince George	Under construction
University of the Fraser Valley	\$600,000	Chilliwack	Under construction
University of Victoria	\$600,000	Victoria	August 2009
Vancouver Community College	\$611,000	Vancouver	February 2009
Vancouver Island University	\$600,000	Nanaimo	July 2010
TOTAL	\$13,292,923		

¹¹ This table represents Ministry cash flow to institutions as of March 2011.

¹² Funding provided through the Knowledge Infrastructure Program.

7.2.2 Analysis

As with other elements of the strategy, the provision of resources for Gathering Places was linked with the broader objective of improving the transition, retention, completion rates and credentialing success of Aboriginal students. More specifically, this initiative was particularly focused on increasing the “receptivity and relevance” of post-secondary institutions and programs for Aboriginal learners. Furthermore, and as mentioned above, the funding was intended to provide spaces that would also help to enhance engagement with, and partnerships between, public institutions and Aboriginal communities.

In setting out the expectations associated with the initiative the Ministry stated that some of the outcomes they sought included an increase in the number of institutions developing proposals for Gathering Places and a corresponding increase in the number of institutions with such facilities. If those are the appropriate metrics, the initiative has been a substantial success. Essentially all institutions, save one, sought funding and all but one have either completed – or are about to complete – their GPCF facilities.¹³

In some instances, institutions were able to secure private funding and other sources of public funding (most notably through the Federal Infrastructure Program) to establish facilities beyond the scope of what otherwise would have been possible if limited only to the level of funding available through the Province. The projects of UVic and of Vancouver Island University are notable in this regard, not only for the level of capital commitment but also for the “prominence of place” made available for these facilities.

For some of the smaller institutions with less access to external sources of revenue there are several examples where relatively modest resources were used effectively to have a material and significant impact on institutional infrastructure and with respect to the consolidation of student support resources. Vancouver Community College, Camosun College and the Salmon Arm campus of Okanagan College are encouraging in this regard.

Generally speaking, the establishment of Gathering Places on the campuses of BC’s post-secondary institutions has been a very positive development. Although there are some exceptions, most respondents to the survey and participants in the regional sessions consistently identified the development of Gathering Places as one of the most important symbols of positive change at public post-secondary institutions.

Examination of the applicable project files discloses that there was a significant degree of variance between institutions on the nature and extent of community engagement both in the developmental and in the early stage of the operational aspects of Gathering Places. In some cases there was a high degree of community involvement in design and in the formulation of plans for how the facility would be operated while, in some others, the level of outreach to the broader Aboriginal community was, at best, rather modest. The decision by government to allocate the resources broadly across all institutions may have been effective in achieving the goal of increasing the *number* of Gathering Places, but the consequence of this decision may have been a sharp reduction in the capacity of the Ministry to be satisfied that an appropriate – and sustainable – threshold of partnership with Aboriginal communities or organizations had been achieved before the capital project was approved to proceed. Survey data and the interviews conducted during regional sessions, while generally quite positive, tend to support

¹³ There is one institution that received funding but, as of February 2010, had not moved to deploy the capital funding allocated to them.

this perspective.

Before answering the specific evaluation questions, it is important first to offer the caveat that, as evidenced by the table on allocation of capital funding for Gathering Places, many of the projects that were funded by this initiative have only recently been completed or are in the process of being constructed. In one case the project remains at the pre-construction development phase. Accordingly, it is a very early point in the experience with Gathering Places to be drawing any definitive conclusions regarding the impact that the availability of these facilities will have on the retention and completion levels of Aboriginal students. Similarly, it would also be prudent to be cautious about what impact the process of developing such facilities has had on the relationships between post-secondary institutions and the Aboriginal communities they serve. Having said this, the information secured during the course of this evaluation does provide a measure of insight regarding what the longer-term outcomes might be.

7.2.3 Responses to Evaluation Questions

1. Have Gathering Places achieved the intended outputs and outcomes?

As noted above, the GPCF program – when measured on the basis of the tangible outputs expected by the Ministry – has been successful. Given that the goal articulated by government was to increase the number of such facilities, there has certainly been a positive outcome in this regard. All post-secondary institutions, with one exception, sought some form of funding support to put a Gathering Place on campus or to improve/expand the space that had been available prior to the 2007 Strategy. In several instances, institutions were creative in securing additional resources to develop projects that went well beyond the scope of what would have been possible with the level of resources available through the Province. There were, however, some concerns expressed about the institutional commitment to Gathering Places at a smaller number of institutions including one where the space is only available during very limited hours and where the capacity to engage the broader community beyond the student population really doesn't exist.

2. To what extent has the process of developing a Gathering Place had a material impact on the whole institutional community and on the nature of the engagement among institutions, students (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) and Aboriginal institutes and communities?

Not surprisingly, the experience here is mixed. With some institutions, the experience of developing and implementing the Gathering Place has had a profoundly positive impact. Where the level of community engagement was high from the outset, and particularly where action was taken to implement Elder-In-Residence programs in conjunction with the development of the capital space, the results were very positive and suggest the likelihood of longer-term sustainability.

With some of the smaller institutions serving communities with high concentrations of First Nations and other Aboriginal people, access to some form of Gathering Place has been a very welcome development. Space continues to be an issue with some of these institutions and it appears that many are limited in their capacity to engage communities because of the physical constraints of the available space. Adequate access to appropriate areas for food preparation to support larger interactions with community came up as a consistent theme.

With some of the larger institutions where there was greater capacity to leverage funding from other sources, the capital infrastructure has proven to be a powerful and important “beacon” regarding the importance that the institution attaches to Aboriginal education and to interaction with the community. The experience, however, has not been the same with all institutions. With some, the level of meaningful community engagement – both internally and externally – was modest. In at least one significant case, this appears to have resulted in the development of an impressive atrium and courtyard filled with Aboriginal art and artifacts but the extent to which that space is used by Aboriginal students and by the community in pursuit of the core objectives of the Ministry’s Strategy is modest.

3. How effectively are Gathering Places being utilized to assist in meeting the objectives of improving levels of transition, retention, completion and success?

This is another area where it would be premature to endeavour to offer a definitive conclusion about what the impact will be but there are encouraging signs that the availability of Gathering Places, both those that existed before the 2007 Strategy and those that have been put in place as a result of it, are generating positive results.

It is useful here to consider the example of some of the institutions where Gathering Places have been in place for a longer period of time. The UBC House of Learning and the associated First Nation Longhouse that was opened in 1993 provide some insight as to what can be achieved. Interviews conducted at UBC included discussions with several members of the professoriate who had, during their time as graduate and undergraduate students, been the beneficiaries of the supportive environment established through the House of Learning. It was striking just how many of these individuals recognized just how important the facility and the support available to them were in sustaining their ability to complete demanding programs when they were a long way from home. Even in some of the smaller institutions that had a small space when compared to what is now available at UBC, the same theme about the importance of a “home away from home” and “a place of refuge” came through very strongly.

With some of the newer infrastructure there is evidence that similar trends are beginning to develop. Students report that they are much more likely to stay attached to an institution if they feel properly supported and there is little question that, in most cases, the Gathering Places have made an important contribution in this regard. Reference should also be made to the improved “quality” of the educational experience of Aboriginal students. It was clear from the survey results and from interviews conducted in the regional sessions that both the symbol and the reality of enhanced support, recognition and respect has had a positive impact in this regard.

4. What is the evidence that Gathering Places have increased the awareness and sensitivity regarding Aboriginal people, culture and history?

In many cases, the very presence and – in some cases – the prominence of Gathering Places has helped to elevate the level of understanding about Aboriginal populations and culture. Several of the capital projects were constructed in areas adjacent to broader student services and, as a result, other students were more likely to come into contact with Aboriginal culture to a greater extent than what otherwise might have been the case.

The development of the facilities was also, of itself, a valuable opportunity for institutions to become more aware of such matters. The process of engagement, community consultation and the development of longer-term strategies to improve levels of transition, retention and cultural relevance were very useful in advancing higher levels of understanding. Unfortunately, there

were some institutions where the potential benefit of this level of engagement was not realized to the full extent that it could have – and should have – been.

5. How does the existence of the Gathering Place assist in the provision of more comprehensive supports and services to Aboriginal students?

The most important element here was simply the capacity to bring the resources together in a common space which, of itself, did a great deal to elevate ease of access for students. This is considered as particularly valuable for new students making the often-difficult transition to new communities and to institutions that, at times, can seem rather intimidating.

It should also be noted that the Gathering Places themselves did not come with operating funding to support the activities conducted within these facilities. In many cases, the availability of resources available through Aboriginal Service Plans contributed to providing enhanced levels of support. In addition, the role played by Aboriginal students in providing mentoring support to new students and the support for students from Aboriginal communities should not be underestimated.

A related factor that should be considered is the positive impact that having a Gathering Place has had on support workers, mentors and advisors who provide assistance to students. One mentor working at Kwantlen Polytechnic University indicated that having the Gathering Place made her job “feel like a new one”. The positive impact that having appropriate space has had on highly dedicated staff trying to offer students the kind of support they know they need to succeed has been extremely positive.

6. What is the evidence that there has been an improvement in the level of student/faculty engagement generated by the deployment of a Gathering Place on campus?

It is simply too early to know the answer to this question and it ought to be identified as an aspect that should be examined more closely as Gathering Places gain more experience. The pre-existing (pre-2007) infrastructure does offer some reason for encouragement in this regard. Engagement levels certainly appear to be enhanced on those campuses with the benefit of larger facilities that then have the capacity for a greater number of events and academic programming more likely to increase the level of student/faculty interaction at Gathering Places.

7. If Aboriginal communities were significantly engaged in the development of proposals for Gathering Places, what is the evidence that this level of engagement has been sustained, or otherwise built upon, during the implementation and operational phases?

The experience across institutions in this regard is quite mixed. Some institutions have either sustained or even broadened the level of engagement but it is difficult to determine whether that results from the Gathering Place or from other related programs that have been implemented with a view towards expanding the nature and scope of partnerships between communities and institutions.

It would be fair to say that concerns were raised by a number of communities about what they perceive as a decline in the level of interaction and engagement following the approval of funding for the Gathering Places and the subsequent completion of the facilities. When asked about this, some institutions indicated that there was – given the nature of the capital development process – a much greater degree of involvement at the earlier stages and that there would be an inevitable reduction in the volume of contact in the post-construction phase. Others acknowledged that there was a need to invest continuing commitment and resources

into sustaining and building on these relationships.

The concern about the quality of continuing interaction was articulated most strongly by representatives of many of the Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association (IAHLA) institutes, some of whom felt that they “had to fight their way back in to being involved in the Gathering Place” after the infrastructure was in place.

While there is a lot of support for the importance of making Gathering Places available for students, for communities and, indeed, for the institutions themselves, it ought to be a matter of some concern that IAHLA, the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) and others are – together with several communities – signaling some concern that the level of commitment to on-going engagement may not be up to the standard they believe to be essential if institutions are to deliver on the full potential of these investments.

8. To what extent are the broader institutional community and Aboriginal communities involved in using the Gathering Place?

The experience here also varies from institution to institution and this may be another area where it is likely too early to draw definitive conclusions. There is certainly evidence of positive trends at several of the institutions and particularly those where the size of the capital space constructed is sufficient to facilitate larger community gatherings or the mounting of academic programs.

7.2.4 Conclusions

Generally speaking, the development and deployment of Gathering Places on the campuses of the public institutions have been successful and, although it is still an early stage in the experience with these facilities and with the services made available to students within them, the results so far are, for the most part, encouraging. Interviews conducted at some of the institutions that have had the benefit of Gathering Places and student support programming for some time offered room for optimism that the longer-term benefits could prove to be very positive.

Having said this, there are some aspects that will warrant continued monitoring and evaluation. The sustainability of programming may be challenged if operating resources are diminished.

Adapting the facilities – or institutional capital use policies – to accommodate relevant cultural practices or to facilitate adequate food preparation to meet the needs of engaging the broader community, will also continue to present challenges but several institutions have demonstrated creativity and flexibility in this regard.

On balance, it would be reasonable to conclude that Gathering Places are proving to be an important and positive aspect of the Ministry’s Strategy and, further, that they may be essential to achieving longer-term improvements in transition, retention, completion and overall student satisfaction with their educational experience

7.2.5 Recommendations

1. Given that many of the Gathering Places established through the Ministry’s Strategy have only recently been, or soon will be, completed, it is premature to draw definitive conclusions regarding the level of their success. While the results to date are generally

positive, it would be appropriate for further evaluation to be conducted after a further three to five years of operational experience with these facilities.

2. The Ministry could – and should – continue to follow up with public post-secondary institutions to assess the alignment between the goals of the Strategy and the operational experience at each of the Gathering Places. Early attention should be focused on those institutions where the level of the use of Gathering Places appears to be less robust than what had been anticipated.
3. Post-secondary institutions with Gathering Places, or with other associated student support areas, should be encouraged to ensure that those facilities are not encumbered by restrictive access policies that operate to undermine the intended purposes of Gathering Places.
4. While most institutions receiving Gathering Place funding acted with reasonable diligence to consult, plan and implement capital changes, this cannot be said of all institutions. Given the level of unmet demand at some of the institutions that have been effective in developing Gathering Places – and particularly those with multiple campuses where there is disparity in the level of access to such facilities – the Ministry may wish to consider the re-allocation of under-utilized resources.
5. In the event that further Gathering Place funding is made available, closer attention should be focused on making certain that planning has addressed the need for sustainable partnerships with the broader Aboriginal community in pursuing the shared goal of improving the educational experience of, and outcomes for, Aboriginal students.

7.3 Aboriginal Special Projects Fund (ASPF)

7.3.1 Background

The Aboriginal Special Projects Fund was begun in 2001 and thus predates the 2007 Strategy but was continued as an integral part of the Strategy for three years from 2006/07 to 2008/09. From 2001/02 to 2005/06 the ASPF funded 188 projects for a budget of approximately \$9 million, averaging about \$59,000 per project. Under the 2007 Strategy, the ASPF funded 117 projects for \$8.98 million (including small expenditures for conferences) with an average of approximately \$76,000 per project over three fiscal years.

The purpose of the ASPF was “to support the development and pilot of new programs and courses, cultural education support and transition programs, student recruitment activities and student support services”. Subject to Ministry guidelines, projects were applied for by the institutions, evaluated by the Ministry (with assistance) and awarded for each of the three funding years of the Strategy. The projects funded cover a wide range of programs for the Aboriginal post-secondary education system including bridging and student preparation, trades training, institutional Indigenization, curriculum development, cultural and arts training, health care training, Aboriginal teacher training, business training and many others.

In 2006/07, the ASPF Application Guidelines gave a stated preference for “Aboriginal language/culture/history, adult basic education, teacher training, health, sciences (particularly physical), business and trades.” In 2007/08, the ASPF Application Guidelines emphasized “capacity-building projects as they relate to the treaty process.” As well, an additional 1.15million was made available for Aboriginal language-specific projects in 2007/08, fourteen of which were approved. In 2008/09 the ASPF Guidelines stressed a preference for “collaboration, on-line

learning programs, transition projects, language projects and capacity building projects (re: Treaty Process)” and seventeen projects were funded matching the Guidelines’ preference.

The Ministry issued comprehensive reporting requirements (in summary form, below):

- Description to which project was successful in achieving its objectives
- Statistics related to the project, number of registrants, etc.
- Description of benefits and impacts on individuals, community, institution or the province
- Financial statements showing revenue received, funding sources, and actual expenditure
- Copies of any affiliation or partnership agreements
- Evidence of networking and consulting with other post-secondary institutions, Aboriginal community partners, Band or Tribal Councils and Aboriginal-controlled agencies
- Employment or further educational opportunities accessed by students completing the program
- Summary of internal evaluation of the program and any external evaluation conducted
- Identification of institution’s long-term plan for the program
- Recommendations that this program has for similar work
- Copies of the final product, materials of interest, or curriculum

ASPF Funding

Year	Projects Submitted	Projects Approved	Budget (\$ millions) (approx.)	Budget per Project Approved \$000 (approx.)	No. of Students (Estimate) ¹⁴
2001/02-2005/06		188	\$9	\$76	
2006/07	50	30	\$1.92	\$64	500
2007/08 General	58	36	\$3	\$83	800
Language	19	14	\$1.15	\$82	
2008/09	60	37	\$2.42	\$65	1861

¹⁴ This is based on a Ministry ASPF note (undated). This is a Ministry estimate based on submissions of different institutions with differing interpretations. In some cases, the numbers may be larger as projects will be ongoing and continue to serve students.

ASPF Program Preference 2006/07 to 2007/08

Year	Project Terms	Guideline Project Preference	Project Preference # (and percent of number of projects funded)
2006/07	Cap of \$75,000 for all projects	Aboriginal language/culture/history, adult basic education, teacher training, health, sciences (particularly physical), business and trades	13 (43%)
2007/08	Cap of \$100,000 for all projects; \$1.15 million for Aboriginal Language projects	Language-specific projects Capacity-building projects as they relate to the treaty process	14 (28%)
2008/09	Cap of \$100,000. Only 2 projects at \$100,000 per institution and max. of two language projects	Collaboration, on-line learning programs, transition projects, language projects, capacity building projects (re: Treaty Process)	17 (46%)

7.3.2 Analysis

Due to the scale of evaluating 117 independent projects for 25 institutions, several regions, many project purposes and over three different years, it was proposed to take a sample of eighteen projects, based upon coverage of as many institutions as possible, all regions, all three funding years and a variety of program types. Once the final report of each project was received it appears that each of the 117 projects reports was committed to a review with a checklist based upon the interim and/or final reports filed by each institution. However there was no overall meta-analysis of the 117 projects. No critique or follow-up questions appear to have been undertaken. There was no ASPF project review that could offer an evaluation-ready set of initiatives to the reviewer and it is difficult to say whether an institution's performance in one year affected the award of other projects in subsequent years.

Sample of 18 ASPF Projects

Year	Project	Institute	Budget
2006-2007	#20 Career and College Entrance	NWCC	\$72,710
2006-2007	#22 Transitions to Success	TRU	\$75,000
2006-2007	#21 Bridging to a Better Future	SFU	\$66,000
2006-2007	#11 First Nations Bridging	VIU	\$75,000
2007-2008	#44 Aboriginal Peoples' Knowledge	UNBC	\$99,987
2007-2008	#26 Environmental Management Programming	Okanagan College	\$65,000
2007-2008	#30 Land Stewardship/Green Certificate	Selkirk	\$94,245
2007-2008	#1 Aboriginal Welding	BCIT	\$100,000
2007-2008	#5 Home Support Resident Care	Capilano U	\$100,000

Year	Project	Institute	Budget
2007-2008	#39 Alternative Delivery Language Immersion	UBC	\$98,650
2007-2008	#4 Intro Speaking and Listening Indigenous Languages	UFV	\$100,000
2008-2009	#6 Office Worker Certificate	CNC	\$99,669
2008-2009	#17 Aboriginal Language Teachers	NVIT	\$63,000
2008-2009	#7 Revitalize Strength Through Education	CoR	\$100,000
2008-2009	#12 Indigenization of Justice institute	JIBC	\$100,000
2008-2009	#32 Indigenous Business and Entrepreneurship	UFV	\$100,000
2008-2009	#19 Building Aquatic Science in N Isles	NIC	\$80,965
2008-2009	#36 Aboriginal STEM	UVic	\$96,000

Sample Project Budgets as Percent of Total ASPF Budget by Year

Year	Total Sample (18) Budget		Total ASPF Budget		Sample as Percent of Total ASPF Budget by Year
	\$	#	\$	#	
2006-07	\$288,710	4	\$2,040,085	30	14.2%
2007-08	\$657,882	7	\$3,900,304	50	16.9%
2008-09	\$639,634	7	\$2,872,521	37	22.3%

As part of this evaluation, an overview of the eighteen-project sample was undertaken prior to having the benefit of the Survey results and the minutes of the regional meetings. The sample projects varied widely in size, scope, program types, over three different fiscal years, and most importantly were reported to the Ministry in reports that varied from three pages to thirty pages (plus Appendices). Since the projects were chosen to portray the wide range of choices, it is difficult to make tight and meaningful comparisons. The reports are very inconsistent in the information they convey. Some offered cursory financial information as to project expenditure. A few focused mainly on the budget issues.

Despite Ministry guidelines for the reports, in terms of the quality (and quantity) of information supplied, there is some inconsistency in the quality and quantity of data supplied in the interim/final project reports. As well, institutional staff turnover created deficits in de facto project knowledge, especially when reports were submitted beyond the due date. About one-third of the reports focused on how the project fit into the institutional offerings and took a (long-term), somewhat strategic, institutional approach (e.g., Indigenizing projects). Another group focused on the student as a consumer and attempted to show how the student fared under this project (e.g., bridging projects, mentoring projects, student retention projects); a final group focused on the wider impact of the project on the Aboriginal community at large, often language, cultural and environmental projects.

Not every report gave easy access to quantitative information and this has something to do with the fact that the ASPF funding and activity was intended to last for one year, hence an institution cannot be faulted for not supplying a contiguous year-by-year tracking of the progress of Aboriginal students for following years. Nonetheless, it would be interesting to know how many

students started the year and how many finished. Most importantly, what happened to those who did not complete the program; did they drop out and why?

It is suggested that the Ministry consider paying more attention to the timing, composition and evaluation of these institutional reports. Receiving a report marked “Final” should not be the end of the Ministry’s obligation to the students, institutions or Aboriginal community. If this ASPF program or a variant of it is continued, it is suggested that more attention be paid to monitoring, analyzing and reporting outcomes from the projects as well as encouraging communication among project deliverers. Once the ASPF grants are awarded for a year, the management of the ASPF must move into an interactive and analytical management mode with these important investments in Aboriginal human capital. These key investments must be monitored, measured and sometimes nudged forward. At the end of each tranche of grants it would be imperative to ask: “What have we learned?”, “What more information do we need?” and “Can another project be performed more efficiently and effectively?”

In terms of the evaluation of the eighteen ASPF sample projects, the large majority appear to have been delivered to the specifications of the project proposals and Ministry guidelines. In a few cases, there was not enough data to adequately judge this. The projects ranged from supporting and encouraging Aboriginal language and culture to teaching a trade aimed at immediate employment. It is clear that while the institutions certainly “do talk to one another”, there is the clear impression that many could benefit from even more focused discussion with each other where similar projects are undertaken. Despite the fact that inter-institutional discussion was not a condition of the ASPF granting process, it is apparent that some could have benefited from a sharing of ideas and best practices. This is consistent with the input from the survey and the regional meetings that are cited below as giving a low rank for the sharing of information among public post-secondary institutions and Aboriginal institutes and communities.

Of the projects sampled, there were several groupings that had much in common. The obvious categories were: bridging and college preparation; Aboriginal languages and culture, including arts and music; business and entrepreneurial training; trades training; specialized training in health care, nursing and home support; and Indigenizing the institution. In many cases for each grouping, the projects began with a literature survey. It would appear that with more communication among project holders, past and present, the efforts devoted to this step could be condensed and money and time saved if more information were available. All projects are different, but there could be some valuable commonality that could help. The Ministry could play a valuable role in coordinating and pooling ASPF information and experience with the institutions in the future, even with the wide range of projects likely forthcoming.

For commonality and comparison purposes, a sample group of seven projects was chosen from the larger sample of eighteen projects. This is the largest group of “like projects” within the sample and comprises a general grouping described as “bridging”, “transition”, “adult education” and “science/math introduction”. The total budget for these projects was \$493,000 for an average of approximately \$70,000 each, consistent with the average budget of all 117 projects (approximately \$76,000) for all three years. The seven projects were funded within 2006/07 (four of the seven projects) and 2008/09 (three of the seven projects). All these projects had goals of transitioning students into post-secondary education and two projects stated that the programs provided enough adult education background that students could seek employment directly from the program and could also ladder into both high school and college programs.

In at least two of the seven projects examined, the projects could not be completed within the original timeframe due to late starts, difficulty in attracting students, and the program design

taking longer than expected. Of the seven bridging projects, two took place in an urban setting and four of the seven took place largely on a post-secondary campus, one explicitly using a Gathering Place. Of the seven bridging projects, two projects charged for overheads and one project successfully leveraged its Ministry grant to achieve a larger budget by adding industry partners and endowment funds.

The programs evaluated ranged from a “one-day science celebration” to summer camps, workshops, two-day fairs and regular courses with class time, mentoring sessions, advisory sessions, Elder accessibility, access to Gathering Places and sometimes access to Aboriginal communities. In terms of numbers of students served by the project, student contact ranged from a high of 500 students (celebrations) to a low of nine students (trades training) per project. In terms of costs per student contact, while certainly not directly comparable, costs could range from over \$10,000 per student (involving trades courses and chances for employment) and a low of perhaps \$50 per head (celebration, two-day theme access) with a median value of perhaps \$9,000 for each successful student (over five courses). These projects potentially involved 683 students in total.

These bridging programs offer an accepted way of providing an added boost to the Aboriginal academic student retention rate. If the student contact points still hold, it would be a valuable exercise to track these participants and compare retention rates over time of these students with non-participant Aboriginal students and non-Aboriginal students.

Analysis of Primary Data

Survey Data

As indicated the online survey conducted as part of this evaluation included both open-ended and close-ended questions. Each survey method exhibits different strengths and weaknesses. The open-ended questions allow for more written information but rely on more interpretation as well. The close-ended ones are more unambiguous with the findings but give little additional information or reasoning.

1. To what extent do you think the Aboriginal Special Projects Fund project(s) in which you have been involved has/have met the objectives below to date?

a) Increased delivery of Aboriginal programs and Aboriginal content in programs and services

- More than fifty percent of the respondents gave strong support for ASPF funding and cited impacts on bridging, Elders, curriculum, trades, indigenization, community involvement, remote areas, small groups, new relationships, etc. Among the quotes were: “Remarkable impact”; “Without this funding, nothing would have happened...”; “...life-changing”.
- Another ten to fifteen percent offered support for the ASPF program but contended that the program “lacked sustainability”, was short-term in nature, and “funding dried up too soon”.
- Approximately eight percent were openly critical of the program citing “lacked strategy”, “lacked predictable funding” and that a “dearth of accounting measures precludes analysis”. In no case did any survey criticism state that ASPF did not achieve its stated Strategy goals.

- There was a bit of confusion between the ASP initiative and the ASPF element (perhaps five percent).
- Using data from the close-ended questions (quantitative) , the largest group who felt that that the goal was not achieved or achieved only minimally was that of Aboriginal community members. However, public post-secondary respondents and union/faculty members had a much higher proportion citing the objectives had been significantly obtained and a much lower percentage arguing non-effectiveness of the initiative (see Survey Findings, below).

b) Increased development of provincial curriculum specifically designed for Aboriginal students

- More than half of the survey respondents were generally favourable toward ASPF regarding curriculum development and mentioned fields such as health, addictions, justice, science, languages, spread effects, even “leading edge (curriculum) research”. Comments such as “did a lot”, “Tons.”, “increased a number of funded projects” were common.
- About fifteen percent stated that they did not know enough to comment on this item.
- Less than five percent were negative about this aspect of ASPF due to short-term funding and uncertainty over intellectual property ownership.
- Data from the close-ended questions (quantitative) generated similar results with about one half (48%) indicating that the results had been achieved to a significant extent or completely. Again Aboriginal community members as a group were less positive (23% of respondents felt objectives were not achieved or only minimally).

c) Increased Aboriginal-specific programming in labour market and strategic priority areas (i.e., ABE, health)

- In the survey between fifty and sixty percent believe ASPF to have been effective here, citing health care, trades and bridging. Types of statements include: “without ASPF funding, it would have been impossible to have responded to the community’s need for qualified health care assistants”, First Nations’ carpentry program (relative to design of campus longhouse) “is a fine example of a coordinated labour market strategy”.
- Approximately seven percent of respondents felt that the ASPF program was not effective: “First Nations overlooked”, “too expensive”, “evidence lacking”.
- Using data from the close-ended questions, nearly one-half (46%) felt that the objective was achieved either significantly or completely.

d) Demonstrated use and/or sharing of products (curriculum, programs, tools, etc.) of the ASPF among public post-secondary institutions and communities

- Results of the open-ended questions showed a variety of differing thoughts. Approximately one-quarter of respondents were positive about sharing of curricula, programs and tools while pointing out that much of the sharing was informal. A further ten percent felt that some sharing was taking place but hard to do with one-time funding. Less than twenty percent felt that more needed to be done in terms of sharing: “no central repository”, intellectual property ownership issues, “evidence lacking” and approximately ten percent of respondents were not aware of any sharing at all.
- Of the close-ended respondents, slightly more than only one-third of the respondents indicated that the objective was achieved.

Regional Sessions and Other Meetings

Data derived from the survey and regional meetings suggest that some knowledge of ASPF was widespread, particularly within institutions. Students had limited knowledge of the Fund and some specific knowledge of projects within their parent institution. Reactions from students to ASPF were mixed. Usually, students were aware that there was “government funding”; they generally knew it was sourced from the Province but often did not have knowledge of either the Strategy or the ASPF but were always eager to learn more. Dialogue with the Aboriginal community and individuals indicate that there was always a segment that was aware of the Strategy and its expenditure. Some were aware of projects but rarely saw the totality of ASPF spending except where it coincided with a local institute or their community.

Certainly, among the larger institutional representatives attending the regional meetings there was great interest in ASPF funding and specific knowledge of projects funded at each respective institute. From time to time, due to personnel changes, the Evaluators were met with some institutions asking for copies of their own ASPF final reports. In some cases institutional representatives were not familiar with their own submissions.

There were rare reports that implied that ASPF funding could have been used by institutions to offset other Aboriginal program funding that was then cut back. These assertions were not verified. It was also asserted in at least two regional sessions that ASPF money had been “doled out as consolation prizes to institutions that had not received ASP funding”. A survey of the ASPF awards and budgets does not bear this out. There were institutions that received ASP funding that also received significant ASPF grants, just as there were institutions that did not receive ASP funding and had low ASPF awards. For example, the college that received the highest share over three years (its ASPF funds divided by the total ASPF budgeted over three years) was also an ASP recipient. It is difficult to see any pattern; there certainly is not a negative correlation between ASP awards and the size of ASPF awards. The issue was made more confusing by a note in each of the 2007/08 and 2008/09 ASPF Project Guidelines that stated: “preference may be given to proposals from those institutions not selected for the Ministry’s Aboriginal Service Plan initiative”. No indication was given in the Guidelines as to how “preference” would be shown or to how such projects would be evaluated.

Overall, there was strong support for ASPF projects at every level of enquiry. The major criticism that arose focused on the short-term nature of the awards and the lack of funding in 2009/10 (see below in Findings and Conclusions).

7.3.3 Responses to Evaluation Questions

1. How has this program element achieved the intended outputs and outcomes?

There was a positive response from those connected with the ASPF individual projects, from the Aboriginal community at large, from students, faculty and senior institutional staff. It should be noted that since ASPF funding existed before the Strategy, attributing all outcomes to the ASPF component of the Strategy would be misleading. Nonetheless, it is important to note that in every regional session, people at all levels applauded the success of ASPF funding.

2. How many of these projects (particularly education programs and services) are still in existence today?

There are few of these projects, per se, in existence today. It was estimated by senior member of an institution that only approximately seven percent of the projects continue in their original

form when funding ceases. On the other hand, many institutions have argued that portions of the projects are embodied in the day-to-day institutional human capital of the institutions. An important purpose of the ASPF projects was to provide testing and piloting of innovative projects. Its success has paved the way with saving and teaching Aboriginal language, involving Elders in institutions and bridging programs whose students are still in post-secondary institutions.

3. How well was the ASPF administered (e.g., communication, proposal process, project management, reporting requirements, follow-up, etc.)?

This project was, by nature, difficult to administer and very staff-intensive with 117 projects. Although there was similarity among the projects, all the projects were different, except for a few that spanned more than one fiscal year. The proposal qualification and selection process was well accepted by the institutions. Indeed, non-ASP institutions were clear that their Aboriginal progress could not have survived without the ASPF funding. It was also expressed by some institutions that some ASPF grants were awarded to make up on occasion for the lack of ASP funding awards. The project management aspect of the ASPF was difficult given the scale and keeping track of various progress rates of the institutions at stake. It is evident that the Ministry could not be entirely sure of outcomes for one year's project(s) when called upon to make awards for the next year. The Ministry might have done more to establish a best practices regimen within the 117 projects and work together with groups providing like projects to ensure that they learn from each other. While it is abundantly clear that each institution learned a great deal from its own project(s), it is not as clear what they learned from each others' projects.

4. How have these projects impacted students' lives and communities' ability to forward their goals?

It was the majority opinion in both the email survey and the regional meetings that ASPF had made positive impacts on students' lives in giving them access to a variety of programs including bridging from the K-12 environment into the post-secondary system. Students have benefited from curriculum development including specialized trades programs, cultural and language programs and administration courses. Mentoring, tutoring and access to all the surroundings of a new academic life have expanded their opportunities and horizons. Communities have also benefited from ASPF programming in the demonstration that their young adults can survive and develop their interests and skills in a post-secondary system. In addition, communities have derived benefits from direct programming for language and heritage renewal, as well as from health, nursing, governance and homecare provision of the post-secondary system.

5. What has been the impact of suspending ASPF for the year 2009/10?

While both the results of the survey and all the regional meetings have strongly endorsed the Aboriginal Special Project Fund and its constituent projects as a whole, the one persistent criticism has been that the funding was stopped. A small group has reiterated that this "start-stop" funding falls into the pattern of governments' traditional dealings with Aboriginal issues. Overlying all however is the recognition of the merits of the Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education Strategy thus far and the hope that this stoppage of funding is temporary. Although some impacts of the 2009/10 ASPF cessation are obvious, it must be remembered that a few projects have continued, embodied within curricula, programs and the human capital of Aboriginal students.

6. Were there other resources (aside from funding) that were shared in these projects?

In the survey, the regional meetings and the interim and final reports of institutions receiving ASPF funding, there was not a lot of attention paid to the mutual sharing of knowledge. Given the nature of institutions with respect to bidding for a finite budget, this should not be surprising. As well, given budgets and manpower issues, the Ministry does not appear to have made a concerted effort to promote sharing of knowledge or resources, and to be fair, this was never a stated goal of the Strategy for ASPF. On the other hand, there seems to have been some sharing with/in communities for language, culture and bridging projects, in particular.

7.3.4 Conclusions

The wide variety of projects and sampling size (eighteen) precludes analysis of all 117 projects. Moreover, the information disclosed within both interim and final reports varies dramatically among projects and even among type of project. In many cases the projects were slow in getting started and institutional discussions with Aboriginal communities were felt to be slow: discussions were “much more deliberate than expected”, “proceeded unhurriedly” and “many more meetings were required than forecast”.

Based on the sample, by and large, student bridging and upgrading projects provided more information and appeared to convey the most direct and quantitative information of the ASPF projects consulted. Data and statistics of many sorts (including student numbers, focus, remedies, partners, retentions, completions, curriculum, hours of contact, type of contact, and integration into institutions) are more forthcoming, particularly in the larger bridging and upgrading programs and sometimes from the larger institutions. In at least two bridging-type projects it is clear that the projects will be adopted into the base programming of the respective institutions.

Other specific trades or training programs are also capable of providing a variety of data and some projects are more successful than others in doing so. Specific trades training, health training, and business skills training all provide reasonable data of skills taught, numbers affected and sometimes of employment gained by the students after the projects were complete.

Language and cultural projects make a compelling case for their subject matter and often draw strong connections into the Aboriginal institutions and communities (e.g., Elders) and speak to the qualitative aspects of how the project will affect future student lives. In 2007/08 an additional \$1.5 million was allocated to ASPF to go towards language curriculum development. Thus, of the fifty ASPF projects funded in 2007/08, fourteen were language-specific.

It has been noted that several projects were slow in getting started and institutional discussions with Aboriginal communities were slow. Due to delayed approvals, many projects that did attempt to start in September had start-up problems and needed to carry on beyond the original deadline. For example, of the thirty projects approved in 2006/07, nine projects and reports were delayed or failed to make report deadlines until 2008. It should also be noted that this late report component rate appears to improve (get smaller) in 2008 and 2009. The project guidelines state that it is a requirement that at least interim reports reach the Ministry by March 31 of the fiscal year in which funded, “to ensure participation in the subsequent year ASPF”. However, among the 2006/07 cohort it appears that at least four institutions’ ASPF projects were late, did not file reports on time (waiting until 2008) but were awarded ASPF funds in the 2007/08 fiscal year. Perhaps the Ministry should reconsider this rule as there are many legitimate reasons for an institution to not meet its deadline.

In some cases, “the Aboriginal partners” who signed off on the projects were often partners of the institution thus not always at arm’s length from the institution and were sometimes members of the advisory council for the respective institution. It is difficult to ascertain from the ASPF project proposal guidelines what degree of separation is desired for this Aboriginal endorsement and why.

Based upon the survey and the regional meetings it was difficult to tell how Aboriginal partners of the universities really feel about the sharing of resources with the institutions. It certainly raises the question as to whether in future rounds of ASPF funding, eligibility should be confined to only public post-secondary institutions.

In some ASPF projects there is an explicit charge against the funding for institutional or project overheads. The explicit sample rate ran from a high of ten percent to a low of one to three percent. In some cases as well, the charge may be masked within other project costs. Admittedly, this issue is unclear since the margin of project revenues minus costs (when positive) will stay with the institution for future Aboriginal purposes.

It is apparent that ASPF was, and is, very well-received by the post-secondary education sector as well as by large groups of the Aboriginal community (Elders, students, Band leaders, etc.). Despite the concerns about its short-term nature and the cessation of funding, it appears to have made a significant impact as one of the major elements within the 2007 Strategy. Due to its one-off nature, it complemented the other elements of the Strategy and contributed to the apparent acceleration of Aboriginal student numbers, participation, and increased longevity in the BC post-secondary education system. The fact that the funding demise of ASPF is so noticeable and a large variety of groups is so vocal about this loss illustrates its importance and the increased reliance on it by students, institutions and communities.

7.3.5 Recommendations

1. In consultation with post-secondary institutions and Aboriginal communities, it is recommended that the Ministry consider an ASPF-type of program as part of any renewal of an Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education Strategy. One option to consider could be for ASPF to be a component within a renewed ASP. Considering the support for ASPF projects and its long tenure as a program, it could also be left to stand on its own in any future new funding strategy.
2. It is recommended that the Ministry consider the “short-term” nature of these ASPF projects (which has some good features) by requesting the post-secondary institutions, in conjunction with their Aboriginal partners to devise long-term strategies with individual component parts. These parts, or annual projects – consistent with the longer-term institutional strategies – can then be funded by the Ministry based on its evaluation on an as-needed basis subject to Ministry budgeting capabilities. Such a thrust will allow each institution to develop its long-term plans or strategy, yet allow the Ministry, if it agrees, to fund elements of the strategy on a piece-by-piece basis subject to budget availability.
3. The Ministry should consider a more thorough and formal monitoring and evaluation process to be established for funding of all ASPF projects. Funding of future projects should be seen as more closely aligned with past program performance once a cohort of projects has been funded. It should also be clear that some projects will take longer to bear fruit, some will be very difficult to measure effectiveness, some will be experimental

in nature, and some projects possibly may not attain their goals. As part of this evaluation process attention should be paid to “lessons learned”.

4. The Ministry could consider playing a stronger role in coordinating the ASPF projects to ensure that benefits and best practices are readily available amongst institutions. Perhaps a regional or provincial forum could be held to ensure that best practices and plans are available to all institutions.
5. The Ministry might consider a small fund that could be held back for supplemental funding of projects that show promise of enhanced performance. A small sum of dollars invested here could result in improving ASPF project effectiveness throughout the year.
6. If ASPF project funding continues in the future, the case for some pilot projects initiated through the Aboriginal communities and institutions might be considered in partnership with public post-secondary institutions. In these pilot cases, communities could choose how they would partner with public post-secondary institutions to achieve community aims within the post-secondary system.
7. The Ministry could consider awarding one larger budget to two or more institutions that are pursuing similar programming in order to stimulate institutional cooperation. This also might be helpful where there is a shortage of instructors (e.g. unique Indigenous languages).
8. It is recommended that if overhead costs to an institution are to be paid, that they be made explicit in any guidelines developed and an explicit maximum rate be established for the project to contribute.

7.4 Aboriginal Awards and Scholarships

7.4.1 Background

Aboriginal learners face a number of financial barriers that impede their access to post-secondary education. The lack of reliable and sufficient student financial support adversely affects participation and retention of learners across the post-secondary education continuum. In a 2005 survey of First Nations living on reserve, lack of funding was the single largest barrier to post-secondary education for 27% of those surveyed.¹⁵

In Ministry material, the goal of the Aboriginal Student Award and the Chief Joe Mathias Scholarships for Aboriginal Learners in the 2007 Strategy is to assist in decreasing financial barriers facing Aboriginal British Columbians who wish to pursue post-secondary education in BC.

After consultation with Aboriginal and post-secondary organizations, the Ministry – as part of the 2007 Strategy – contributed \$100,000 to the Chief Joe Mathias BC Aboriginal Scholarship Fund Society in 2006/07 to expand the Society’s support to BC First Nations students to pursue post-secondary education. The scholarship provides up to \$15,000 per student and recipients must be members or citizens of a BC First Nation (i.e., a “band” as per the *Indian Act*) and enrolled in full-time or part-time studies in certificate, diploma, degree or post-graduate studies at a public

¹⁵ Assembly of First Nations. *Fact Sheet: First Nations Post-Secondary Education*. <http://www.afn.ca/index.php/en/news-media/events/virtual-summit-for-first-nation-students-on-post-secondary-education>

post-secondary institution or a private post-secondary educational institution (determined eligible by the Society's Board).

The Chief Joe Mathias BC Scholarship has provided 133 scholarships to 99 students from 62 First Nations since 2002. This included 26, 27 and 17 student recipients in 2008, 2009 and 2010, respectively. The students have graduated in a diversity disciplines with Doctorate, Masters, Baccalaureate and Diploma credentials.

Also as part of the 2007 Strategy, the Ministry provided funding for a \$10 million Aboriginal endowment to the Irving K. Barber BC Scholarship Society to establish the BC Aboriginal Student Award. The Award is administered by the Victoria Foundation and provides \$1,000 to \$3,500 annually to Aboriginal students pursuing post-secondary education in BC. A further \$500,000 was provided by the Ministry in 2008/09 for the express purpose of funding awards, since there had not been enough time yet for the endowment to generate revenue for this purpose. The plan was to provide up to \$250,000 in awards in 2009/10 and 2010/11.

The BC Aboriginal Student Award has provided two annual rounds of awards to BC Aboriginal students to date. In 2009/10, the Irving K. Barber BC Scholarship Society awarded \$256,000 (\$1,000-\$3,500 each) to 94 BC Aboriginal students. In 2010/2011, the Society recently announced it has provided \$259,000 in awards to 87 BC Aboriginal students.

7.4.2 Analysis

The documentation provided on the Chief Joe Mathias BC Aboriginal Scholarship consists of a grant letter, briefing note, news release, guidelines on the scholarship application, and a list of student recipient each year (including their credential, institution and First Nation). The Evaluators did not receive any information on the process and administration regarding this scholarship. The Evaluators were unable to analyse scholarship recipients by discipline, credential, First Nation, region, because the information was received late and is incomplete..

There was extensive documentation provided on the BC Aboriginal Student Award by the Ministry, including the following: Ministry and Irving K. Barber BC Scholarship Society news releases on the launch of the Award and subsequent awards to students; Society Board and Ministry briefing and decision notes (options and decisions); backgrounders; list of awards by student name, institution and hometown/city; Award Statement of Principles; proposal for adjudication process; recommendations for consideration proposed by S. Ladyman; "AVED" (Ministry) concerns and alternate suggestions on recommendations; grant letters; 21 sample letters from students on the impact of the Irving K. Barber Scholarship (not the Aboriginal Award); and documented feedback from the BC Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Partners ("PSE Partners").

Information was provided on: how the BC Aboriginal Student Award was designed; who was involved in the consultation; and options and subsequent decisions on eligibility criteria and other aspects of the Award. The consultation included feedback from the PSE Partners, input from Aboriginal organizations such as FNESC, Métis Nation BC and United Native Nations; as well as from other organizations such as Indian and Northern Affairs Canada and the Ministry of Education. The application adjudication process and results are well-documented.

The results of the BC Aboriginal Student Award in terms of scholarships awarded to students are summarized in the two tables below. Table 1 shows the distribution of awards by the region in which the student's "hometown/city" is. Table 2 provides a breakdown of the awards by the

institution the student is attending. For both tables, to the extent possible, the Aboriginal population aged 18-24 as a percentage of the total region's 18-24 population is noted.

According to the table on the next page, the top regions from where Award recipients (Aboriginal students) over the two years originated were the Lower Mainland (46), Vancouver Island (42), the Interior (CNC and TRU regions) (31), the Okanagan (18), and the Northwest (17). From the documentation provided, the adjudication process appeared systematic, methodical and transparent.

The second table shows that the institutions with most Award recipients over the last two years have been UBC (32), UVic (14), VIU (13), the University of the Fraser Valley (11), and Camosun College (9). This represents 43.6% of all Awards over the two years.

Without having data on the students' field of study, it is difficult to tell, but with the top four institutions being two research universities and two teaching universities, a reasonable question is, does this mean the Award was weighted towards Aboriginal students in degree programs during this two-year period?

BC Aboriginal Student Awards by Region (Hometown/City) – 2009/10 & 2010/11

Region	Aboriginal Population Age 18-24 as % of Total Region's 18-24 Population ¹⁶	2009/10		2010/11	
		Number of Students/Awards	% of Total Students/Awards	Number of Students/Awards	% of Total Students/Awards
Central Coast (NIC)	24%	2	2.1%	2	2.3%
Fraser Valley	7%	4	4.3%	10	11.5%
Interior (CNC & TRU)	18%	19	20.2%	12	13.8%
Kootenays	7-9%	5	5.3%	1	1.1%
Lower Mainland	2-4%	24	25.5%	21	24.1%
Northeast	19%	1	1.1%	2	2.3%
Northwest	58%	12	12.8%	5	5.7%
Okanagan	8%	7	7.4%	11	12.6%
Vancouver Island	4-24%	19	20.2%	23	26.4%
Northwest Territories	n/a	1	1.1%	-	-
Total		94	100.0%	87	100.0%

Other than these institutions with the most Award students, most of the other institutions had a small number (one to five recipients) over the two years. Sixteen of the institutions in the table below, or 59% of all those listed, hosted one to five Award students over these two years.

Lastly, four Aboriginal institutes had a total of nine Aboriginal Award recipients enrolled during this two-year period.

¹⁶ Aboriginal Peoples by College Region, Age 18-24, 2006 Census, Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development.

The following are additional observations or questions based on the Ministry's and Societies' implementation of the award/scholarship initiatives of the 2007 Strategy:

- Without more data on both initiatives, it is impossible to assess the extent to which they contributed to achieving the intended output and outcomes (i.e., increasing participation, completion and transition rates).
- The Evaluator did not receive any reports on the outcomes or financial distribution (i.e. per applicant, per recipient, per region, etc.) of the Award or Scholarship, other than an annual report that refers to aggregate total expenditure data for the Award and a list of students receiving one of the scholarships and the overall (total) dollar value.
- A comprehensive analysis of Award and Scholarship was difficult without sufficient documentation. For example, it was unclear regarding some of the decisions on the final design of the BC Aboriginal Student Award by looking at various versions (e.g., grade point average in eligibility criteria) of Society Board, Ministry and consultant documents regarding various recommendations and options. Some of these could be inferred by reviewing the published criteria and guidelines on the Society website.

BC Aboriginal Student Awards by Institution – 2009/10 & 2010/11

Institution	Aboriginal Population Age 18-24 as % of Total Region's 18-24 Population ¹⁷	2009/10		2010/11	
		Number of Students/ Awards	% of Total Students/ Awards	Number of Students/ Awards	% of Total Students/ Awards
BCIT	n/a	4	4.3%	4	4.6%
Camosun College	4%	4	4.3%	5	5.7%
Capilano University	4%	2	2.1%	5	5.7%
College of New Caledonia	18%	1	1.1%	2	2.3%
College of the Rockies	9%	3	3.2%	1	1.1%
Douglas College	2%	3	3.2%	2	2.3%
Emily Carr University of Arts + Design	n/a	1	1.1%	3	3.4%
Justice Institute	n/a	1	1.1%	0	0%
Kwantlen Polytechnic University	2%	3	3.2%	4	4.6%
Langara College	2%	1	1.1%	4	4.6%
Native Education College	n/a	0	0%	1	1.1%
Nicola Valley Institute of Technology	n/a	3	3.2%	2	2.3%
Northern Lights College	19%	0	0%	1	1.1%
North Island College	24%	3	3.2%	3	3.4%
Northwest Community College	58%	4	4.3%	1	1.1%
Okanagan College	8%	3	3.2%	3	3.4%
Royal Roads University	n/a	0	0%	1	1.1%
Selkirk College	7%	1	1.1%	0	0%
Simon Fraser University	n/a	0	0%	2	2.3%
Tillicum Lelum Friendship Centre (Nanaimo)	n/a	1	1.1%	0	0%
University of BC	n/a	20	21.3%	12	13.8%
University of Northern BC	18%	6	6.4%	5	5.7%
University of the Fraser Valley	7%	1	1.1%	5	5.7%
University of Victoria	4%	6	6.4%	8	9.2%

¹⁷ *Aboriginal Peoples by College Region, Age 18-24, 2006 Census*, Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development.

Vancouver Community College	2%	2	2.1%	1	1.1%
Vancouver Island University	11%	7	7.4%	6	6.9%
Wilp Wilxo'oskwhl Nisga'a Institute	n/a	0	0%	2	2.3%
Total		94	100.0	87	100.0

- A minor point on the \$500,000 supplement is the awards for the two-year period totalled \$515,000. Where did the additional \$15,000 come from?
- A general evaluation question is, regardless of what results and outcomes these scholarships have achieved, could the \$10.6 million investment have been better used to achieve the intended outcomes (i.e., through initiatives not involving awards or scholarships)? Further analysis and review of best practices that address Aboriginal student financial barriers through initiatives other than financial aid is required to answer this and similar questions.
- Since this is an evaluation of a provincial strategy, a big part of or gap in the issue of Aboriginal student financial barriers is Federal Government policies and funding this area. The Province will not be able to bridge the Aboriginal student financial barriers to post-secondary education without concomitant reform and action at the federal level.

Analysis of Primary Data

Survey Data

Overall, there was a relatively low level of awareness of and experience with the Award and Scholarship. Almost 60% of respondents were not aware or minimally aware of the Chief Joe Mathias Scholarship and 45.4% were not or only minimally aware of the Aboriginal Student Award. In terms of experience, almost 80% and 71% of respondents had no experience with the Scholarship and Award, respectively.

BC Aboriginal Student Award

1. To what extent did the Irving K. Barber Scholarship (Endowment for Aboriginal Student Award) achieve the following objectives?

The sample size of respondents to this question is relatively small (n=45 to 47), and in three of the four parts of the responses, the single largest response was “moderate” (in the middle). As with a few other questions in the survey, it is challenging to do respondent group comparisons with a smaller sample size. In the case of this question, it is only large enough to compare responses of First Nations, public post-secondary institutions and Aboriginal communities. Also, it is interesting that a small number (6) of students were among the respondents to this question.

Each of the four objectives is provided below with a summary of responses regarding each objective.

a) Increased the number of students receiving additional financial aid from the Provincial Government

Of the 45 responses to this part of the question, 31.1% felt this objective was not achieved or only minimally achieved; while 26.7% indicated it was achieved significantly or completely.

In looking at the three respondent groups large enough to compare, the most significant differences were that 43.1% of Aboriginal community members indicated this objective had not been met at all or to a minimal degree, compared with the overall average for groups of 28.8%. On the other end, First Nations had a much smaller proportion of responses (21.7%) than average (28.1%) that indicated the objective was met significantly or completely. Groups not mentioned in each case hovered around the overall average.

When respondents were asked to provide a rationale for their ratings of the Award (n=38), most respondents were positive about the Award and its impact; many indicated it did increase the number of Aboriginal students receiving financial aid.

Some recipients of the Award were among the respondents and others knew of students who received it – in both cases, the respondents indicated the Award made a very positive contribution to Aboriginal students' education. Other respondents, while positive about the Award, indicated the numbers of students needing such financial assistance is huge and the number of students who were able to access this Award represents a very small portion – more assistance is needed, they said.

A small number of respondents were not aware of the Award, and a few suggested this needs to be addressed, for example: "I don't think it is just this scholarship; I think we need to do a better job overall in getting the information out to the Aboriginal students."

b) Addressed financial barriers to public post-secondary education that Aboriginal learners face

Of the 47 respondents in this part of the question, 38.3% did not think this objective was achieved or that it was achieved minimally. Almost thirty percent disagreed and thought it was achieved to a significant extent or completely.

Overall, respondent groups were equally divided with 33.8% indicating this objective was not met or only minimally met and 33.8% reported that it was met significantly or completely. The significant differences were that 39.1% and 42.9% of First Nations and Aboriginal community members indicated the objective was not met or only minimally attained; and only 26.1% of First Nations respondents thought it was met significantly or completely. Groups not mentioned in both cases were near the overall average.

Among the 32 open-ended responses regarding their rationale, most of those who were aware of it indicated "yes", the Award did address Aboriginal learner financial barriers. Some, again, referenced a large number of scholarships, awards, etc. for Aboriginal students and that they and educators need help to navigate this information.

Some respondents indicated that this Award is *part* of the solution; for example: "For those students who qualified for the program, yes, the scholarship does address some financial barriers; but it is not the silver bullet; additional programs need to be created that will build from this program as well as other special bursaries or scholarships."

c) Allowed you or someone you know to attend post-secondary education that you/they otherwise would not have

Forty-five respondents answered this part of the question. Almost half (48.9%) indicated that this objective was not achieved or only minimally achieved; while 28.9% suggested it was achieved to a significant degree or completely.

This objective has an overall higher negative rating, with 43.1% indicating it had not been met at all or only minimally – First Nations and Aboriginal community members negative ratings were higher than average, at 55.5% and 47.6%, respectively. Both public post-secondary institutions and Aboriginal community members gave a higher than average positive rating with 33.3% of each group indicating this objective was met to a significant extent or completely.

Approximately half of the open-ended responses on their rationale indicated the Award made a difference between attending and not attending post-secondary education, or they may have still attended but this Award gave them a better chance of succeeding because they were less likely to have to worry about funding.

d) The scholarship application process was fair and easy to understand and complete

This part of the question received the lowest negative rating regarding achievement of the objective and highest positive rating. Almost 27% indicated it was not achieved or only minimally so; while one-third believed it was achieved significantly or completely.

Overall, 28.9% of all respondent groups indicated that this objective was not achieved at all or only minimally; and 33.6% reported it was achieved to a significant degree or completely. The variances from this were that public post-secondary institutions and Aboriginal community members gave this a significantly lower and higher negative rating at 20.7% and 38.1%, respectively. Further, a higher proportion than the average of public post-secondary institutions and Aboriginal community members indicated this objective has been achieved significantly or completely, at 37.9% and 38.1%, respectively.

Most of the 35 open-ended responses were affirmative, that the Award process was fair and easy to understand. Again, a small number of respondents expressed a lack of an awareness of the Award. One respondent pointed out that her only issue was that the Award was not available for those entering her final year, a year that can be very difficult.

Chief Joe Mathias Scholarship for Aboriginal Learners

2. To what extent did the Chief Joe Mathias Scholarship for Aboriginal Learners achieve the following objectives?

As with the questions on the Award, the sample size of respondents to this question was relatively small (e.g. n=27 to 31 for the quantitative part). Overall, the responses to this scholarship were more negative than the responses to questions about Aboriginal Student Award.

a) Increased the number of students receiving additional financial aid from the Provincial Government

Of 29 respondents to this part of the question, 58.6% of respondents indicated this objective was not achieved or only minimally achieved; whereas 13.8% said it was significantly or completely achieved.

The sample size for individual respondent groups is even smaller than for other questions. The largest sizes are for First Nations (16), public post-secondary institutions (20), and Aboriginal community members (16). The responses of these groups were not significantly different from the overall averages (above).

Of the twenty respondents who provided a rationale for their rating, almost half provided no substantive indication of attainment of this objective and/or were not aware of it. Of those that were aware of the Scholarship and commented on it, some were positive about its value, and others indicated, while helpful, it only benefits a small number of Aboriginal students.

While it was not apparent that any Scholarship recipients were among the respondents, one person indicated, "This scholarship has permitted a student to attend college when Band funding was not in place."

b) Addressed financial barriers to public post-secondary education that Aboriginal learners face

Of 31 responses, 58.1% indicated this objective was not achieved or only minimally achieved. Almost twenty percent indicated that it had been achieved to a significant degree or completely.

While First Nations and Aboriginal community members had ratings similar to the overall average, public post-secondary institutions had a significantly higher negative rating for this objective, with 66.7% of those respondents indicating the objective was not achieved or only minimally achieved. Conversely, Aboriginal community members had a much higher than average positive rating of attainment of this objective, with 25% of such respondents indicating the objective was achieved significantly or completely.

Of the fourteen respondents to the open-ended question about their rationale, there were not many substantive comments; of those that were, they were mostly positive. For example:

- "It was definitely another source of funding that helped address barriers for some students."
- "Any financial assistance helps to reduce the financial stress of Aboriginal students."

c) Allowed you or someone you know to attend post-secondary education that you/they otherwise would not have

Of thirty respondents, 66.7% indicated that this objective had not been achieved or only minimally so; while 13.3% disagreed and indicated it had been achieved to a significant or complete extent.

For this objective, it was interesting that public post-secondary institution respondents had a higher negative rating of the attainment of it. Over 71% of such respondents indicated that this objective was not met or only minimally met; compared with 58.8% and 56.3% of First Nations and Aboriginal community respondents.

Half of the twelve open-ended respondents had no knowledge of the Scholarship and/or of anyone who received it. The other comments were either very brief or repetitive of comments in responses to other parts of this question.

d) The scholarship application process was fair and easy to understand and complete

Of the 27 responses to this part of the question, 63% thought this objective had not been achieved or minimally achieved, and 18.5% thought it had been achieved to a significant extent or completely.

The only significant variance among respondent groups from the overall averages for this objective was the higher than average positive rating by public post-secondary institution and Aboriginal community respondents: 21.1% of them indicated that this objective has been achieved to a significant degree or completely.

Half of the twelve open-ended responses to this part of the question either had no experience with the Scholarship or anyone who received it, or otherwise could not comment on it. A few respondents indicated that the Scholarship was helpful and not onerous to apply for. One individual indicated that the application was “way too long” and “asked for so [much] financial information.” Another respondent “did not think it was fair that Métis students were prevented from applying for this scholarship.”

Regional Sessions and Other Meetings

There were few if any comments specifically on the Aboriginal Student Award and Chief Joe Mathias Scholarship at the regional sessions and other meetings. This may have partly been due to a relatively low awareness/experience level with these two initiatives by most meeting participants.

However, financial support for Aboriginal post-secondary students was a frequent topic at many of the meetings held by the Evaluators. Comments revolved around the following themes:

- Scholarships are good, but tuition should be lowered and more support for living costs, child care and transportation should be provided.
- Students and staff at institutions and in Bands need help in navigating the many scholarships and awards.
- There needs to be more financial support to Aboriginal students in academic upgrading and ABE and related programs.
- There is a need to make awards and scholarships more accessible to fill gaps such as in trades and technology programs and among students in IAHLA institutes and Métis students.
- There is a low profile on campuses and among Bands about scholarships and awards and this should be promoted more.
- Emergency bursary funding is often more important to Aboriginal students – “scholarships don’t deal with survival.”

There were a few anecdotes provided by stakeholders about scholarships and awards through a “mini-survey” that Evaluators handed out at meetings. For example, a Kwantlen Polytechnic University Aboriginal Coordinator provided an example of how she established a “Tireless Runner Endowment” and how through fundraisers it has raised \$58,000 and provides three awards annually. The Coastal Corridor Consortium provides some awards, which it says has made a huge difference for a few students being able to stay in school.

These examples reinforce earlier comments that while more financial support is needed for Aboriginal post-secondary students, there are many regional-specific awards and scholarships that students and their advisors and communities need help keeping track of.

Regarding the last point, the importance of increasing awareness about financial awards was borne out in a recent Queen’s University news release that indicated that through a concerted

strategy on the part of its Aboriginal student centre and student awards office, the total value of scholarships and bursaries among Aboriginal students increased this year by 97% over last year: "Putting the information out there, following up and keeping in touch is vital. Many Aboriginal students at Queen's attend part-time and have family and work commitments. And some students are not sponsored by a band so they have to seek OSAP or alternate funding."¹⁸

7.3.3 Responses to Evaluation Questions

Based on these observations the following represents preliminary high-level answers regarding the two Scholarship initiatives to the initial evaluation questions approved by the Evaluation Steering Committee.

1. Has this program element achieved the intended outputs and outcomes?

BC Aboriginal Student Award

It appears that this Award has increased the number of Aboriginal people participating in post-secondary education, as it is assumed many or most of the recipients would otherwise not have been able to participate in post-secondary education during this period, at least to the extent they did.

Chief Joe Mathias Scholarship

The Scholarship appeared to result in several scholarships for First Nations students throughout the province over the last three years. Since the Ministry contribution was only one of several donors, one cannot assess to what extent its funding contributed to the overall number of students who benefited from this Scholarship.

2. How many scholarships have been provided?

BC Aboriginal Student Award

There were 181 Awards provided over two years.

Chief Joe Mathias Scholarship

The Scholarship benefited 70 First Nations over the three years of the Strategy. It is not clear what proportion of the provincial contribution went towards these scholarships.

3. Is there a pattern of distribution across the system?

BC Aboriginal Student Award

Yes, as described in the analysis. However, further data on the application process and the demographics of the Award recipients is needed.

¹⁸ Queen's University, "Increasing awareness of Aboriginal awards and bursaries proves beneficial." News Release. March 3, 2011.

Chief Joe Mathias Scholarship

Scholarships were received mostly by students in a diversity graduate and baccalaureate degrees, including in professions.

4. What is the profile of scholarship recipients (including urban/rural, etc.)?

BC Aboriginal Student Award

More demographic data is required to answer this question.

Chief Joe Mathias Scholarship

The Scholarship supported a diversity of Aboriginal students in terms of First Nations and community locations throughout the province.

5. How have the criteria and selection/approval process worked?

BC Aboriginal Student Award

The criteria and selection process appear to be rigorous, transparent and comprehensive. The Evaluators would need to delve into additional data on the process (if made available) to more completely ascertain this.

Chief Joe Mathias Scholarship

No specific criteria were provided for selection of scholarship recipients. One can infer that generally, the recipients and their First Nation and region generally met the intent of the Chief Joe Mathias Scholarship.

6. Qualitative information: Anecdotal/ narrative information about how the Award and Scholarship have impacted recipients' lives, including completing their PSE and their propensity to complete further PSE.

BC Aboriginal Student Award

Yes, several positive comments about the impact of the Award were provided in survey responses among Award recipients and those who knew or taught recipients.

Chief Joe Mathias Scholarship

Some anecdotal positive comments were provided in the documentation from the Scholarship Fund and by survey respondents who knew of recipients and of the impacts of the Scholarship.

7. What is the impact of providing the Mathias scholarship exclusively to members of BC First Nations?

BC Aboriginal Student Award

Not applicable.

Chief Joe Mathias Scholarship

This is not answered in the Scholarship Fund documentation because its focus was First Nations. There were a few comments in the survey about a concern of Métis and non-status students not being eligible.

7.4.4 Conclusions

1. The BC Aboriginal Student Award provided substantial documentation on the process, criteria and decision-making around funding for Aboriginal post-secondary students in its first two years of operation. It appears to provide support for such students in a diversity of regions, institutions and programs, although it may not support students as much in certain non-baccalaureate programs (e.g., trades, technologies, basic education).
2. The Award and Scholarship have definitely helped a number of Aboriginal post-secondary students with the costs associated with participating in post-secondary education.
3. There are certain limitations of the Award and Scholarship (e.g., Award eligibility requirements, and limitation of the Chief Joe Mathias Scholarship to First Nations students) that narrow the scope of who they support.
4. The Ministry received minimal reporting from the Award administrators and the Scholarship administrators.
5. Beyond the BC Aboriginal Student Award and the Chief Joe Mathias Scholarship, there is a large financial pressure and burden on Aboriginal post-secondary students that is not being addressed by federal and provincial governments through existing programs. This is a huge issue that goes way beyond the Awards and Scholarship element of the Strategy and yet needs to be addressed by all levels of government. While the Evaluators' focus is on the evaluation of the provincial Strategy, this is only part of the funding challenge.
6. Aboriginal post-secondary students and their advisors and Aboriginal communities need support to sustain an awareness of all relevant financial assistance and in navigating the various sources of funding.

7.4.5 Recommendations

1. The Ministry should require and enforce more reporting and data from the Award and Scholarship administrators and do the same for any future Aboriginal student financial assistance initiatives as part of a future Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education Framework Policy. This information should include a profile (while maintaining anonymity) of applicants and recipients by Aboriginal status, region, type of program/discipline, value of award/scholarship/financial aid, whether they are a new or repeat applicant/recipient, etc.
2. The Ministry should undertake – in combination with the findings and recommendations of this section of this evaluation – an analysis of Aboriginal student participation in the BC Student Financial Assistance Program, of other ancillary financial assistance programs such as the Adult Basic Education Student Assistance Program, and of federal government sources of financial assistance to identify how these are working, to identify gaps, and to determine what more action and funding is needed.
3. The Ministry should work with the Award administrators to see how its funding can be used to benefit a broader range of Aboriginal students in terms of type of programs, types of institutions (including IAHLA institutes), Aboriginal status, and regions of the province.

4. The Ministry should work closely with institutions, IAHLA institutes, Aboriginal communities and others to promote awareness of a) the Award; b) the Scholarship; and c) other financial assistance.
5. The Ministry should consider working on an on-going basis with an Aboriginal student and advisor committee and/or an existing body such as the Unified Aboriginal Youth Collective to develop a concerted strategy around promoting awareness of and access to Aboriginal post-secondary student financial assistance.
6. As part of other program funding or as a distinct grant, the Ministry should consider modest grants to institutions and Aboriginal communities to support staff to promote awareness about and help students navigate and access various sources of post-secondary financial assistance.

7.5 Aboriginal Transitions Research Fund

7.5.1 Background

A goal of the 2007 Strategy was to close the educational gap for Aboriginal learners. One of the strategies to achieve that goal was to “increase transition and completion rates for Aboriginal learners throughout the post-secondary education system”. The Aboriginal Transition Research Fund (ATRF) was created to support institutions to address specific transition areas in hopes of translating their experience to the broader system. The stated objectives of the ATRF are to:

- Provide evidence-based research in support of transitions programming with province-wide applicability (as recommended in Campus 2020 report).
- Research existing models and practices; identify evidence-based success indicators; and, demonstrate ability to incorporate research into programming.
- Test and validate seven new transition model frameworks.
- Develop the necessary tools and programs to assist Aboriginal learners with successful transitions along the post-secondary education spectrum.
- Promote strategies that reflect the unique histories, culture, value and traditions of Aboriginal people and their learning needs.
- Support the development of evidence-based strategies/initiatives to help Aboriginal learners succeed in transitioning within key program areas (e.g., math, science, trades, health and English).
- Promote partnerships and collaboration among public post-secondary institutions, Aboriginal institutions, communities/organizations, local school districts, industry and others.

The Ministry of Advanced Education (the Ministry) established program criteria, including: capacity and a research design for one of seven key transitions points; indicates a framework that will be tested and provides innovative or enhanced educational programming and delivery options for Aboriginal learners; demonstrates research design that addresses province-wide applicability/implementation; budget; demonstrates partnership support and collaboration among a combination of the aforementioned partners; includes an evaluation tool based on indicators of success that are provincially validated among stakeholder groups. The Ministry then issued a Request for Proposals in an attempt to address the following seven key transition

points:

1. K-12 to post-secondary education, including skills and trades training
2. Adult Basic Education/Developmental to post-secondary
3. Aboriginal private institution to public post-secondary institution
4. College to university
5. First year to second year
6. Undergraduate to graduate
7. Post-secondary education to workforce

The Ministry assessed the proposals through an internal process and determined that only three of 21 proposals met the criteria for the program as follows:

1. University of British Columbia: Undergraduate to Graduate
2. University of Victoria: Aboriginal Institute to Public Institution
3. Thompson Rivers University: Adult Basic Education to Post-Secondary Education

This reduction in planned projects resulted in a corresponding reduction in budget as follows:

Year	Original Budget	Expended
2007/08	2,000,000	\$771,047
2008/09	1,500,000	\$895,710
TOTAL	3,500,000	\$1,666,757

7.5.2 Analysis

The Ministry used an internal process to short-list 21 applications down to three approved projects. All methodology and analysis are available for review. The Evaluator's analysis of the proposals and rationale indicates that the Ministry applied the methodology and analysis equitably.

All three successful projects have completed Phase One (information collection and developing approaches) and are into Phase Two (implementation of pilots). Phase Two reports have been received for two of the three projects, and initial discussions with project proponents indicate that there are many valuable lessons that should be applicable system-wide in the near to medium-term.

Phase One results regarding barriers are remarkably similar between the three projects. Each project found that Aboriginal student success and transition were significantly lower than comparable non-Aboriginal students. As well the barriers that each project found were similar as illustrated in the table that follows.

Barriers to Aboriginal Transition		
UBC (Undergrad to Grad)	TRU (ABE to PSE)	UVic (Aboriginal institute to PPSI)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Mentoring and supportive relationships make a difference · Individual responsibility to plan and to prepare for graduate school makes a difference 	Institutional Factors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Student readiness · Curriculum, assessment tools · Support staff and instructors · Eurocentric bias 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Dilemma of balancing their culture/home responsibilities and education requirements · Inadequate funding support impacts students in relation to housing, transportation, child care and education supplies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Sharing Aboriginal Knowledge and Aboriginal methodology for graduate education is necessary 	Financial & Geographic Factors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Inadequate finances for daycare, transportation, housing, food and family expenses, and relocation costs · Separation leads to isolation and loneliness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Many students still feel a lack of cultural support and disconnect from their home communities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · People make institutions user and Aboriginal friendly, and relevant · Depersonalized and colonial institutional barriers still exist · Navigating different learning expectations in graduate studies is challenging · Navigating racism is a critical challenge 	Cultural Factors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Culturally relevant approaches to education · Contradiction between Indigenous & western world view (oral verses written) · More holistic approach to education · Different learning styles · Altered sense of time · Time to grieve · Food gathering rituals · Important role of family in the learners' life · Role of Elders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Lack of readiness for post secondary study · Transition to new employment opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Working with and providing communication about university student services are important 	Power and Control Factors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Aboriginal control over programs and institutions 	

Given similar findings on barriers it would logically follow that each of these projects are proposing similar approaches to addressing those barriers for Phase Two. The following table illustrates some of the parallels between each project's proposed Phase Two approaches to address the barriers within their key transition point.

Strategies to Improve Aboriginal Transition		
UBC (Undergrad to Grad)	TRU (ABE to PSE)	UVic (Aboriginal institute to PPSI)
Relationships: mentoring from senior graduate students and faculty members, support from peers, and support/encouragement from family and community members	Touchstone I: Holistic Adult Basic Education Program	Post Secondary Survival Skills Project: curriculum and handbook launched provincially
Access: provide a variety of scholarly and research based experiential programs or activities that introduce Aboriginal undergraduate students to a range of graduate programs, research knowledge and skills	Touchstone II: Comprehensive On-Campus Orientation	Reciprocal Institute Orientation Program: exchange and shadow of all key individuals in sister institutions
Digital Technology: development, implementation and sustainability of the transitional framework	Touchstone III: Aboriginal Peer Mentorship	Pilot Projects: Aboriginal-controlled institutes to test transition strategies culminating with the production and launch of a Best Practices booklet
	Touchstone IV: Professional Faculty Development	

Analysis of Primary Data

Very little additional data was collected through surveys and regional sessions and other meetings with respect to the ATRF. This is likely because very few of the participants and survey respondents were familiar with the ATRF. Almost forty percent of the survey respondents had no knowledge of ATRF and less than fifteen percent of total respondents responded to the more detailed questions: these were all either directly involved with one of the three projects or associated with an institution that has a direct interest in monitoring the outcomes of these projects, e.g., an IAHLA institute. While the reviews did not provide information on the reasons for the lack of knowledge (outside of the project participants), the Evaluators speculate that most logical reason is that there were relatively few projects, and those projects were engaged on achieving their own results with their partners and there was very little engagement outside of that sphere.

However the additional information provided the following new insights and opinions on the ATRF:

- Fifty-four percent of survey respondents felt that ATRF researched existing models and practices, identified evidence-based success indicators, and demonstrated ability to incorporate research into programming. It appears that respondents from First Nations were more supportive of this view, since 55% responded favourably as compared to only 47% of post-secondary institution and Aboriginal community respondents.
- Forty-four percent of survey respondents felt that ATRF developed the necessary tools and programs to assist Aboriginal learners with successful transitions along the post-

secondary education spectrum. Specific tools that were identified included handbooks and booklets for students, administrators and faculty, a website, and other informational tools. One respondent indicated ATRF helped expand projects and initiatives that IAHLA institutes had already started.

- Forty-three percent of survey respondents felt that ATRF has significantly promoted strategies that reflect the unique histories, culture, value and traditions of Aboriginal people and their learning needs, while thirty percent felt that this was not done. Again, 52.4% of First Nation respondents supported this view versus 36.4% of public post-secondary institution respondents.
- Fifty-one percent of survey respondents felt that ATRF has significantly or completely promoted partnerships and collaboration among public post-secondary institutions, Aboriginal institutes, communities/organizations, local school districts, industry and others. Again, more First Nation respondents supported this view, with 55% agreeing versus 45.5% for post-secondary institution respondents.
- Most respondents observed that these projects appear to have made a significant contribution to knowledge in three areas of Aboriginal learner transitions. This is with the recognition that very little research was done on these questions beforehand.
- A number of survey respondents and regional session participants indicated that there were a variety of issues with the K-12 system. Many of these issues centered on Aboriginal students receiving credit without meeting the academic requirements of their program. This creates a number of problems for the community, post-secondary education funders and post-secondary institutions. Various participants voiced their concern about how many times they had encountered Aboriginal students who did not have the required pre-requisite knowledge for the program that they were entering in spite of their transcripts saying that they had completed the required pre-requisites. Many felt that this would be captured by doing a specific ATRF project on the K-12 to post-secondary education transition.
- Another area that was noted as a potential area that requires some focus is the transition from post-secondary education to the labour market.
- There was some uncertainty among respondents around how the tools and techniques developed in the ATRF would be translated into the broader system. They reported it would be easier to see with web-based tools, handbooks, etc. but were less certain about processes, procedures and behaviours.
- The primary challenge in implementing the three projects was formalizing effective community partnerships, particularly for the projects with widespread geographic regions and communities.

7.5.3 Responses to Evaluation Questions

These questions were designed for individual projects but have been answered from the perspective of all three projects.

1. Has this program element achieved the intended outputs and outcomes?

Yes. All projects appear to have met the desired program criteria for Phase One and indications are that Phase Two will yield similar results. However, one project was delayed and the final report is not expected until early May.

2. What type of improvements are you seeing in Aboriginal student transition?

The information suggests that there are improvements in Aboriginal student transition, however the programs are still at a very young stage. As illustrated in the previous tables outlining ATRF strategies, many initiatives such as the Student Orientation Handbook, Aboriginal Peer Mentorship, Transitions Best Practises Handbook and others were developed based on enhancing methods that have already been proven at partners' institutions.

3. What types of measures have you implemented to track transition?

Each project has simple tracking systems to determine how each initiative is achieving its desired results. The measures are essentially the standards that center around number of students achieving effective transition within the project's transition area.

4. What are the best practices and critical success factors for Aboriginal transition from these projects?

The barriers and the corresponding success factors are outlined in the tables earlier in this document. They are remarkably similar between the three projects.

5. How would you define an effective transition?

The projects did not create a formal definition of effective transition however each was structured around student support and success in terms of achieving an effective transition in each project's transition area.

6. What types of partnerships have you established?

Each project was based on a wide range of successful partnerships including all key players.

7. How will your model be replicable across the province?

Each initiative from each project and resulting pilot projects were designed to have direct use within the project and potential applicability across the province after the ATRF projects are completed. Some products such as the SAGE from UBC and many others have been presented in various forums and made available for other post-secondary institutions' use. How these products are adopted will depend on other post-secondary institutions' interest and many also depend upon how much effort and associated resources are dedicated to technology transfer.

8. What have you learned that can help the remaining transition models?

Achieving success for Aboriginal learners in public post-secondary institutions and their partners in each project is attained by remaining grounded in academic principles and maintaining effective partnerships (especially with the Aboriginal community). If this is done with a view to creating an enduring product of wide-spread value, then those entities directly engaged end up being the largest beneficiaries because of their experience at working through the process and the quality of the final product. When working in areas with widespread communities (typical in rural regions), it is important to ensure that the project allocates significant resources to foster effective partnerships.

9. What transition gaps remain?

K-12 to post-secondary is the primary key transition point that was not included in the ATRF projects. Post-secondary education to the labour force was also identified as a gap.

7.5.4 Conclusions

Based on the available information and input received through this evaluation’s regional sessions, other meetings and the survey, this component of the 2007 Strategy’s goal of implementing a full ATRF was successful in terms of selecting projects that met the program criteria and each project meeting its objectives. However it is also important to state that key areas such as the K-12 to post-secondary and labor force transitions were not captured.

The program criteria and program call appear to be relatively specific and easy to understand; however, many of the proposals dealt with specific Aboriginal priorities (e.g., language, internal capacity building) as opposed to systemic transitional needs. The rationale for this disparity between the proposal call and the number of successful proposals may be because of the relatively new and complex nature of the program. The concept of conducting research to understand how to achieve effective Aboriginal student transition at key transition points and the essential requirements of research rigour, academic excellence, community partnerships and provincial applicability all contribute to this complexity. However as stated these elements are essential to success and could be addressed in potential future versions of the program through increased pre-education, demonstration of what is desired using the research project results and reviewing the request for proposals to see if it can be improved for clarity.

The following summarizes additional comments that support and provide additional context to this general finding:

1. The ATRF program established program criteria that each proponent was expected to meet. This preliminary review finds that each of the three ATRF projects met these criteria as summarized in the following table:

Criteria	Project Attributes
Capacity & Research design	Each project provided a high number of very qualified and varied expertise to the project team.
Testable & Innovative or Enhanced Delivery Options	While each project used similar approaches and yielded similar results, the Phase Two initiatives should all take the field of Aboriginal transition to another level.
Province-Wide Applicability	All initiatives in Phase Two of each project are all designed for direct use throughout the post-secondary system (e.g., student handbook) or are designed to be replicated throughout the system (e.g., instructor training).
Partnership Support & Collaboration	Each of these projects involved a wide range of partners, at a minimum including the primary-post secondary institution, Aboriginal partners (almost all educational organizations) and research experts. This is with the exception that the delayed project contained a number of lessons learned around the difficulties of establishing effective partnerships with wide-spread community partners.
Widely Validated Evaluation Tool	Initial results for each project were based on sound and verifiable methodology and analysis. Each project used a combination of quantitative and qualitative information and sophisticated methodologies to yield replicable results. Similar approaches are proposed for all Phase Two initiatives.

2. The number of qualified proponents and the associated program budget were reduced because very few applicants met the program criteria. In spite of this shortfall, the ATRF program appears to be on track and is producing very useful results consistent with the program goals.
3. The three successful ATRF proponents have all tackled key transition points generally relating to some aspect of post-secondary transition and have yielded very similar findings, recommendations and initiatives.
4. The direction may not have been purposeful but the “learn as you go” approach on the ATRF program has been very effective. Proponents have the right foundational ingredients to ensure that they remain focussed and that their products are useful and grounded in the target community. Each project appears to have learned things and have benefited from that learning as it has evolved. This is particularly true of the project that was delayed due to the difficulties in working with wide-spread geographic and skill levels inherent in interior Aboriginal communities.
5. Projects have been well documented and could be used by others to replicate the results.
6. The inclusive nature of each project has yielded broad ownership of the project and its results within those who participated as part of the overall project team. These properties are making the likelihood of wider application of the results of the pilot projects much more probable.
7. There was a notable difference between Aboriginal and public post-secondary institutions with respect to their views around the translation of research into programming, the integration of culture, traditions and community views and the quality of partnerships created. Ratings on these elements were relatively; 44% to 55% of survey respondents to this question indicated that these objectives were significantly or completely met (a majority had an indifferent opinion). Aboriginal respondents averaged approximately ten percent higher than post-secondary institutions in their ratings. It is difficult to speculate on the reasons for this difference without additional research.
8. Each of the public post-secondary institutions that participated in the ATRF built capacity around this initiative that is now in threat of being lost. While this was never intended to be a long-term initiative, it does create issues for at least one of the post-secondary institutions that does not have other sources of funds to carry on this good work.

7.5.5 Recommendations

1. The ATRF program should be considered as a key component of any future Strategy. This future program should:
 - Utilize the large volume of valuable information to inform the next phase
 - Review the program call to ensure that it is much clearer on the desired results and types of projects that will and will not be considered
 - Continue to ensure that there is a strong emphasis and associated resources on developing and maintaining effective institution/Aboriginal community partnerships, particularly for projects with large geographic areas and wide-ranging partner communities
 - Translate the information and products generated in these pilots to the full post-secondary education system

- Capture areas that were not done in the first phase, most notable are the K-12 to post-secondary education transition and secondarily the post-secondary education to labour market transition
- 2. Even if a future ATRF program is not established, additional work is required to support research on the K-12 to post-secondary and the post-secondary to work transition areas.
- 3. A cross-analysis of the three pilot projects' results should be considered. The findings, recommendations and initiatives were very similar and there may be synergies that may yield even better results. Note that this is underway but will not be completed in time for this review.
- 4. The Ministry should facilitate widespread dissemination and communication of the results and tools from the three ATRF projects.

7.6 Strategic Investment Plan (Targeted Aboriginal Seats)

7.6.1 Background

The Ministry's Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education Strategy also provided resources for the Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) through the Targeted Aboriginal Seats initiative, specifically intended to assist with increasing access, participation and completion rates for Aboriginal learners.

In seeking proposals from public post-secondary institutions regarding the allocation of the available resources, the Ministry indicated that the student full-time equivalents (FTEs) (100 per year for each of three years with follow-up base funding) were intended to address areas of what were described as "labour market shortages". With this in mind, the Ministry expressed the position that preference would be focused on such priority areas as nursing/allied health positions, Aboriginal business/commerce, public administration, teacher education programs (including language instruction), early childhood education/development, law and justice studies and tourism management.

It is noteworthy that the Ministry's call for proposals for FTE allocations contemplated an elevated FTE value of \$9,200.¹⁹ The rationale for this was that an expectation regarding a higher degree of community-based delivery would lead to a higher cost level per FTE. Furthermore, the Ministry made reference to encouraging increased level of partnerships between public institutions and Aboriginal-controlled institutes.

As noted above, the primary outcome expected by the Ministry – and the key organizing principle associated with the decision by government to make the investment in targeted seats – was the expectation that there would be a corresponding increase in the level of post-secondary participation by Aboriginal learners. The FTE resources were then allocated to what were described as "priority areas", as per above.

¹⁹ This amount was approximately \$2,000 more per FTE than the general FTE amount allocated to access seats made available as part of the Ministry's Strategic Investment Plan (SIP). It had been understood for some time that elevated student support requirements, together with other factors, generated higher institutional costs. In some cases, new FTEs were made available to institutions that had expressed interest in targeted seats while, at some others, institutions were given access to "top-ups" that would convert the value of general SIP FTEs to targeted seats at the \$9,200 level.

While “closing the gap” in participation levels between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal learners was the most prominent aspect of the Ministry’s policy initiative, it is also clear from Ministry documents that significant importance was also attached to the value of both increasing the level of “community-based delivery throughout the province” and to widening the nature and extent of partnerships between public institutions and Aboriginal communities and Aboriginal-controlled institutes. The expectation of government was that these additional resources, together with the emphasis on the importance attached to enhanced community-based delivery, would help to bring about more sustainable relationships between public post-secondary institutions and the Aboriginal-controlled institutes that operate at the community level.

7.6.2 Analysis

The examination of outcomes resulting from the Ministry’s investments in this area suggests that the results of the Targeted Seats initiative were, at best, rather mixed. Some institutions performed well in excess of funding levels made available to them while others fell very short of the level of performance they had committed to when seeking access to the allocation of the relatively modest number of seats that were made available by government for this purpose. It must be said that it is clear from Ministry documents that it was clearly understood that institutions taking the benefit of these Targeted Seats were expected to deliver those seats in the year for which funding was allocated. Institutions, in effect, made that commitment but it is evident from the outcomes that several did not deliver on those commitments. A greater degree of transparency between the Ministry and these institutions as to what would be realistically achievable – particularly in the ramp-up phase – would have been appropriate. Given the nature of the expectations associated with FTE allocations, the relative non-performance by some institutions is a matter for continuing concern particularly since continuing resources were made available to institutional base budgets.

There also appears to have been a wide degree of variance on the extent to which efforts were made by the public institutions to engage the Aboriginal-controlled institutes in the kinds of partnerships that had been contemplated by the Ministry’s call for proposals. An examination of the Ministry’s 1995 policy and the subsequent Strategy in 2007 indicates that increasing this level of engagement has been a policy objective for many years but it is not clear that this has been adequately communicated to, or understood by, the public post-secondary institutions.

The Targeted Seats initiative was also cut short. Resources were made available in the 2007/08 fiscal year either with new FTEs or through the “top-up” of general seats allocated through the earlier Strategic Investment Plan. One hundred additional seats were planned for Year Two and for Year Three with the expectation that the funds allocated would remain within base allocations to institutions thereafter. Over the two years (2007/08 and 2008/09), the actual number of seats assigned to institutions was 192. Given the fiscal pressures associated with the 2009/10 budget, government elected to not allocate the planned additional 100 FTEs for the third year of the plan, despite the fact that there were – by then – several other institutions expressing interest in access to targeted seats.

As noted above, some public institutions appear to have more than met the challenge expected of them. For example, Vancouver Island University (VIU) was funded for seventeen new FTEs in each of 2007/08 and for 2008/09 but delivered 49 FTEs in the first year and 44 in the second. This appears to have resulted from a number of factors including institutional leadership where the importance of engagement and innovation was emphasized as a key university priority, higher degrees of sustained engagement with local communities and with Aboriginal institutes

and, to some extent, linkages with both other components of the broader Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education Strategy and compatibility with other institutional priorities.

As is evident from the tables that follow, there were several institutions that performed well below expectations in Year 1 of the initiative with four of the seven institutions funded that year coming in with performance levels of less than forty percent of what they had committed to. This, in part, may have been attributable to start-up issues associated with mounting new programs and it does appear that several of the under-performing institutions had made material progress in the subsequent year. For example, both the Justice Institute and the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology had achieved significant improvements by Year 2 with performance levels well in excess of funded FTE levels. There were, however, other institutions that continued to underachieve. In at least one of these cases the institution had already been performing well below funded FTE levels allocated through the SIP and, as a result, the subsequent under-delivery of Targeted Seats should have been anticipated.

2007/08 Final Audited FTE Reports for Aboriginal Access

Institution	Aboriginal Targeted Spaces		
	Funded FTE	Actual FTE	Utilization
Institutes			
Justice Institute	19.0	4.6	24.3%
Nicola Valley (NVIT)	22.0	15.0	68.0%
University Colleges			
Malaspina (Vancouver Island University)	17.0	49.0	288.4%
Urban Colleges			
Camosun	18.0	6.2	34.4%
Rural Colleges			
Northern Lights	8.0	0.6	8.0%
Selkirk	4.0	4.0	100.0%
Sub-total	88.0	79.4	90.3%
Universities			
TRU	12.0	1.9	16.1%
Sub-total	12.0	1.9	16.1%
Ministry Total	100.0	81.4	81.4%

Source: Ministry of Advanced Education, 2010

2008/09 Final Audited FTE Reports for Aboriginal Access

Institution	Aboriginal Targeted Spaces		
	Funded FTE	Actual FTEs	Utilization
Colleges			
Camosun	24.0	20.9	87.1%
CNC	15.0	10.9	72.7%
College of the Rockies			
Douglas	19.0	12.9	67.9%
NIC			
NLC	8.0	-	0.0%

Institution	Aboriginal Targeted Spaces		
	Funded FTE	Actual FTEs	Utilization
NWCC			
Okanagan			
Selkirk	4.0	4.0	100.0%
VCC			
<i>Sub-total</i>	70.0	48.7	69.6%
<i>Institutes</i>			
BCIT			
JIBC	19.0	24.5	128.9%
NVIT	37.0	53.2	143.9%
<i>Sub-total</i>	56.0	77.7	138.8%
<i>Universities</i>			
TRU	12.0	3.3	27.2%
UFV	10.0	10.0	100.0%
VIU	17.0	44.1	259.5%
<i>Sub-total</i>	39.0	57.4	147.1%
<i>Research Universities</i>			
UBC	18.0	9.2	51.1%
UVic	9.0	10.0	111.1%
<i>Sub-total</i>	27.0	19.2	71.1%
Ministry Total	192.0	203.0	105.7%

Source: Ministry of Advanced Education, 2010

The outcomes regarding the level of engagement with – and partnerships between – public post-secondary institutions and Aboriginal communities and institutes was also mixed. It is interesting to note that, for some of the institutions that demonstrated a high level of success with the deployment of Targeted Seats there was also substantial evidence of much higher degrees of engagement with community-based resources including the Aboriginal institutes. This was certainly the case with Vancouver Island University, with the University of Victoria and with the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology. The UBC numbers may also require closer examination as there is an indication that some seats were delivered to/by En'owkin but this may not have been adequately reflected in reports to the Ministry which ought to have disclosed a much higher level of performance against funded FTE levels. Similarly, there are indications from Ministry staff that may suggest a measure of under-reporting at TRU.

Analysis of Primary Data

Survey data revealed that Targeted Seats was one of the lower profile elements of the Strategy which is perhaps not surprising given the relatively modest number of seats made available and, further, because the program essentially came to an end at the close of the second year of the Strategy. It should be noted though that the low levels of awareness may also reflect that knowledge regarding the availability of the opportunity was perhaps too often confined to the administrative elements of the public institutions with less emphasis given to utilizing these resources as a vehicle to achieve the increased level of community engagement and community-based delivery that had been articulated as a goal by the Ministry when the program

was announced. Several of the individuals who responded to this aspect of the Survey indicated that they really didn't have knowledge of the program, although they thought the concept was a useful one. Others, who appear to be linked to some of the institutions that were allocated resources, reported that program implementation was hampered by start-up impediments and the need to provide higher levels of student supports and bridging before students could move fully into the program areas to which these FTEs were assigned.

Regional sessions also confirmed that this aspect of the Strategy had a low profile, although it was interesting to hear from some regions where other resources had been deployed essentially as Targeted Seats but through funding sources beyond this component of the Strategy. There were also some cases where there was clear frustration with the fact that FTEs allocated to institutions had gone unused when, by contrast, the strains on the scarce resources of community-based entities limit the capacity to respond to a pressing level of unmet need for transitional support for students or other elements of educational development. An interesting insight was offered by representatives of one community that has program relationships with two public post-secondary institutions: with one there was a high degree of engagement and discussion about how targeted seats could be used to expand partnerships regarding community-based delivery. With the other, the availability of this opportunity was never mentioned. Both institutions were recipients of funding for Targeted Seats. The first was in the high performing group of institutions. The other was at the opposite end of the spectrum.

7.6.3 Responses to Evaluation Questions

1. What were the Ministry processes and criteria for funding these seats?

Overall, while the available documents make it clear that the Ministry hoped to see greater levels of partnership between public post-secondary institutions and Aboriginal-controlled institutes or, at minimum, a higher degree of community-based delivery, it is not clear that these goals were adequately and consistently communicated to the public institutions both when they were invited to submit proposals for FTE allocations and during the course of the subsequent roll out of the available resources. The objective was not clearly included as part of the Ministry overview of the funding opportunity and – to the extent that community delivery and engagement with Aboriginal institutes was addressed – it was expressed as a cost factor the Ministry had considered in assigning a higher FTE value for the 07/08 and 08/09 targeted allocations.

The targeted seats – although small in number – could have been utilized to help build a much more effective bridge between public institutions and local entities including the IAHLA institutes. This did not occur to the extent contemplated by the Ministry perhaps because of the absence of criteria that would have required an acceptable level of evidence regarding either community-based partnerships, community-based delivery, or both.

It would also appear that broader funding pressures may have taken some precedence over more rigid application of the program criteria otherwise applicable to the allocation of these resources.

2. How were funded seats strategically important? Were they directly tied to unmet demand?

The Targeted Seats were intended, in part, to meet the strategic importance of increased partnerships between Aboriginal communities and institutes and public post-secondary institutions; and, in several cases, those objectives were achieved. This is particularly evident

from the performance associated with some of the institutions that delivered capacity well beyond the levels they had been funded at. In those cases it has to be understood that the public institution played an important role but the community-based component was equally important in supporting the partnership, the importance of the initiative and in helping to sustain progress.

In some cases, documentation clearly showed that SIP FTEs were deployed to address unmet demand in areas that the Ministry had identified as strategic priorities; in other cases this link was either less apparent or insufficient success had been achieved in deploying the FTE resources made available by the Ministry.

3. Was the selection process reasonably compatible with the original objectives of the initiative?

As noted above, more could have been done to ensure a greater degree of linkage in this regard. While there is merit to the concern expressed by some institutions about the time it took to bring programs to a “steady state” level, the selection process might have benefitted from attaching greater weight to the factor of institutional readiness before allocating scarce resources.

4. To what extent was success achieved in the establishment of the new Targeted Seats in priority areas?

The experience in this regard was mixed. With some institutions, the level of performance was impressive and this included some of the areas specifically identified as priorities for seat allocation. That, however, was not the experience with all institutions with some falling well short of what they indicated to the Ministry they had the capacity to implement. Transitional support required to achieve readiness to enter some priority areas within the fiscal years contemplated by the funding was a factor.

5. Did the process for allocating new seats facilitate an opportunity for new or improved relationships with Aboriginal-controlled educational institutes?

In a number of cases, this question can be answered in the affirmative. The seats were seen primarily as a mechanism through which stronger and more effective relationships could be developed with communities and with the Aboriginal-controlled institutes. The success achieved in this regard varied across institutions but there were some impressive results from which some important lessons can be drawn. In some cases, including some where the Evaluators had expected to find evidence of deeper linkages with community, the results were disappointing. Lastly, it must be said that the Ministry was perhaps more subtle than they ought to have been about government’s interest in building institutional-community partnerships. The capacity of the Ministry to further assert that interest was made more difficult by the decision of government to not continue with the third year of funding that had been contemplated by the Strategy, as first announced.

In some of those instances where stronger partnerships with communities were established and sustained there are emerging pressures that result from that success. The consequence of over-performance against funded FTE levels inevitably generates other budget pressures. Accordingly, it may be necessary for the Ministry to consider what options are available to help sustain the trajectory of those partnerships, perhaps through the reallocation of resources that have not been adequately utilized by institutions performing at comparatively lower levels.

6. What were the outcomes on retention, completion and credentialing?

Once again, the results were mixed. Where stronger community-based linkages were established there were indications of positive results, particularly with respect to retention. This also tends to support some reason for optimism that this will also lead to improved outcomes with respect to completion and credentialing. Some of the participating institutions are already seeing evidence of positive growth in this regard.

7. To what extent were funded seats utilized?

As noted throughout, the experience in this regard varied greatly across the participating institutions from over-performance against funded levels of more than 250% down to levels that were tantamount to material non-performance.

It is important to again observe that, in most of the circumstances where there was evidence of exceptional performance there was corresponding evidence of more robust levels of direct community engagement and, where applicable, relationships with Aboriginal-controlled institutes.

7.6.4 Conclusions

This aspect of the Strategy had mixed results, in part because the goals and objectives – particularly with respect to the desired level of community engagement and partnership – were not adequately communicated and monitored.

Having said this, it is also clear that Targeted Seats were used very effectively with some institutions, often together with resources available through other parts of the Strategy, to significantly improve both the nature and the quality of the educational experience of Aboriginal students.

It is clear that there remains considerable work to be done in both expanding educational opportunities at the post-secondary level for Aboriginal students and with respect to building better partnerships between public post-secondary institutions and Aboriginal-controlled institutes. Targeted Seats may continue to be a useful tool to help facilitate this goal, but consideration should be given to the following recommendations.

7.6.5 Recommendations

1. Where the use of Targeted Seats is being considered, there ought to be a much greater degree of demonstrable partnership between public institutions and community-based entities before such resources are allocated. Furthermore, the Ministry should continue to monitor progress to assist with sustainability and to help disseminate knowledge regarding the outcomes of successful partnerships. A much higher degree of transparency between the Ministry and institutions regarding the expectations during the start-up phase would be beneficial.
2. Given that Targeted Seats were allocated as base funding – and given the relative non-performance of some institutions – the Ministry should review funding allocations with a view towards redistributing resources either to institutions that have over-performed (and now face resulting budget pressures from that success), or to better support some of the more promising institution/community partnerships that have emerged during the course of the first three years of the strategy.

3. In the event that the Ministry carries out a funding review of Targeted Seats with a view towards the redistribution of unused resources, some consideration should also be given to making at least a portion of those funds available to Aboriginal-controlled institutes to support aspects of their work including the important transitional support work necessary to sustain longer-term student success.
4. While demand clearly exists to support the deployment of further Targeted Seats, some consideration should be given to resourcing broader institutional Aboriginal education plans that show evidence of success, partnership and potential for growth. There appears to be some institutional interest in performance-based approaches that may hold greater potential for improved results.

7.7 One-Time Grants

7.7.1 Background

The 2007 Strategy included “One-Time Grants” totaling \$2.695 million provided by the Ministry to public institutions and organizations (including Aboriginal organizations and communities) to increase access, retention, completion and transition opportunities, as well as to strengthen partnerships and collaboration.

The goals and objectives of the One-Time Grants are inferred from documentation and descriptions of the program element provided by the Ministry.

Grants were awarded to fourteen recipients/activities during 2007-2010; an average of \$192,500 per grant. Ministry grant letters were provided to the Evaluators for all fourteen of the grants. In most cases, grants were provided to public post-secondary institutions, and in some cases these funds were transferred to Aboriginal and other non-institutional organizations (e.g., Pacific Institute for the Mathematical Sciences, Native Brotherhood of BC, L’heidli Tenneh Band). In other cases, the grants were provided directly to non-institutional organizations (e.g., BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres, Shad Valley Program, Minerva Foundation for BC Women, First Nations Education Steering Committee).

All grants appeared to be “one-time” except for an annual grant of \$100,000 that has been provided to the First Nations Education Steering Committee during a four-year period.

The grants ranged from \$5,000 to support the first phase of the Yekooche First Nation Community Governance and Employment Readiness Training, to \$650,000 to support research and review of existing family literacy, essential skills and Aboriginal adult literacy programs and curriculum. The complete list of One-Time Grants from the Ministry follows:

- **Nicola Valley Institute of Technology Literacy curriculum, assessment, and resources:** \$650,000 to NVIT to support Research and review of existing programs and curriculum in Aboriginal Family Literacy, Aboriginal Workplace/Essential Skills, and general Aboriginal Adult Literacy.
- **First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC):** \$100,000/year over four years to support the development and pilot of new programs and courses, cultural education support and transition programs, student recruitment activities, and student support services.

It should be noted that FNEESC provided an update to this description of its annual grant: “FNEESC actually uses annual funding from the Ministry to provide broad support for Aboriginal PSE in BC, including supporting the ongoing activities of the BC Aboriginal PSE and Training Partners, maintaining the relationship between IAHLA and the provincial government, and supporting relevant collaboration between the Ministry and FNEESC through the Post-Secondary Sub-Committee and the Indian Studies Support Committee.”

- **Non-Aboriginal Service Plan Institutions (Aboriginal Program Review):** \$375,000 to non-ASP public institutions for the Aboriginal Program Inventory.
- **Vancouver Community College/Native Education College portfolio:** \$355,000 to support the development of a portfolio process that will validate NEC students’ learning towards a VCC approved Adult Dogwood Certificate.
- **Lheidli T’enneh:** \$250,000 to support capacity building for the Lheidli T’enneh Band. This included training in adult basic education, administrative training and management and leadership training.
- **Chinook:** \$175,000 to the Chinook Aboriginal Business program at UBC to support activities that will increase access and success for Aboriginal learners in Chinook programs at partner colleges including learner transitions and support.
- **Pacific Institute for the Mathematical Sciences:** \$130,000 for the Pacific Institute for the Mathematical Sciences which pilots teacher training and mentorship programs to address the needs for increased participation and success of Aboriginal learners in math and science in BC.
- **Minerva Foundation:** \$100,000 to the Minerva Foundation to support the Combining Our Strength: A Partnership of Aboriginal Women and non-Aboriginal Women, leadership and mentorship programming, in partnership with BC’s public post-secondary institutions.
- **Nicola Valley Institute of Technology Indigenization Framework:** \$100,000 to NVIT to develop an Indigenization framework.
- **Friendship Centre Youth Conference:** \$90,000 for the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres Youth Conference, March 18-20, 2007.
- **Native Brotherhood of British Columbia:** \$25,000 to the Native Brotherhood of BC to cover the costs of a research initiative, specifically a needs assessment of coastal communities and the identification of training and literacy opportunities for Aboriginal adults in these communities.
- **Shad Valley:** \$20,000 to support the Pesk’a Aboriginal Shad Valley Program which encourages participants to complete high school and successfully make the transition into their post-secondary education.
- **Supporting Aboriginal Graduate Enhancement (SAGE):** \$20,000 to Supporting Aboriginal Graduate Enhancement to support salaries, supplies/expenses and program delivery in the amount of \$15,000, as well as an additional \$5,000 towards an Indigenous graduate symposium.
- **Yekooche:** \$5,000 to support the first phase of the Yekooche First Nation Community Governance and Employment Readiness Training. The report for this initiative indicates

that a new Community Computer Access Lab was finished and 8 community members completed the 12-week life skills and employment readiness training program.

The \$2.965 million for One-Time Grants represents 4.6% of the total 2007 Strategy expenditures and commitments of \$58.622 million (as per Ministry note).

The One-Time Grant funding supported a miscellany of various types of programs and initiatives targeted at a number of Aboriginal post-secondary education and training issues. It is difficult to find a pattern or themes across the fourteen grants. They range from research and needs assessment, to a conference and training programs, basic education, to literacy and readiness training, transition, to Indigenization, and to programs targeted at women, youth and Aboriginal business students.

7.7.2 Analysis

The data provided by the Ministry for One-Time Grants consisted of:

- A spreadsheet and list of One-Time Grants, with a short paragraph description on each;
- Ministry grant letters for all projects;
- A January 2004 list of notes for each potential One-Time Grant project;
- Three versions of an internal Ministry “One-Time Project Opportunities Chart” used for reviewing and rating prospective projects; and,
- Documentation on most of the projects, including final reports and/or other indications of results for most of the projects.

The Ministry internal documentation identifies the following criteria with its “One-Time Project Opportunities Chart”:

The following criteria will be applied in accepting and evaluating a proposal:

- Degree to which it will assist in achieving the goals and objectives identified in the Learning Programs Branch;
- Degree to which it would assist in achieving imminent priorities and issues identified by provincial government;
- Will result in specific actions or new developments and have clear outcomes;
- One-time financial support, not on-going;
- Preference would be given to proposals that show plans towards self-sustainability;
- The proposal is not eligible for funding through existing provincial programs;
- There are no other similar programs ...or the relationship with other programs is clear to ensure no duplication; and,
- The proposal is strongly supported by key stakeholders.

Unless there are exceptional circumstances, will not fund:

- General running costs or day-to-day administration expenses, such as salaries or office equipment (including computers)
- Retrospective projects (projects or events that have already been completed or have taken place)

Most grant letters requested a final report from the organization receiving the One-Time Grant. In the case of four of the letters (i.e., March 21, 2007 to NVIT, UBC, VCC and BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres), such a report was not asked for; however, final reports were received in all of these cases except for one.

Regarding receipt of documentation on each project's results or outcomes, below is a summary:

- Nicola Valley Institute of Technology Literacy curriculum, assessment, and resources: A July 16, 2009 project update from NVIT; reference to web URL for additional documents, including a literature review/research report, curriculum, practitioner resources, etc.
- First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC): FNESC Final Report to the Ministry for 2007/08, 2008/09 and 2009/10; and a proposal for 2010/11.
- Non-Aboriginal Service Plan Institutions (Aboriginal Program Review): A communication to institutions about a \$25,000 grant to support completion of a provincial Aboriginal programs and services inventory template (and assist with proposal development for "the expanded ASPF in 2007/08"; an inventory responses from all institutions; and some analysis of inventory responses.
- Vancouver Community College/Native Education College portfolio: The E-Portfolio Project in the Native Education College Aboriginal Adult Basic Education Program, Nym Hughes, April 30, 2010; Aboriginal Adult Basic Education (AABE) Dogwood Learning ePortfolio Project Final Report, Wendy Seale-Bakes and Karen Belfer, Vancouver Community College, June 30, 2010.
- L'heidli T'enneh: A project budget, a completed ASPF Application Form, and an email note with a June 22, 2007 newspaper clipping announcing the funding; Governance Capacity Renewal Projects - Lessons Learned Exchange, L'heidli T'enneh/College of New Caledonia, Yekooche First Nation/Royal Roads University, Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation, Ministry of Advanced Education, March 19, 2008; An Interim Report of the Collaborative Evaluation of Lheidli T'enneh and Yekooche Governance Capacity Renewal Projects, Sarah L. Cunningham Consulting for the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation, March 2009.
- Chinook: Ch'nook Aboriginal Business Education Donor Update, January 2009; and other ancillary documentation, including a January 9, 2009 letter from the Sauder School of Business indicating the impact of the initiative.
- Pacific Institute for the Mathematical Sciences: A June 21, 2007 Ministry news release announcing the funding, an internal email background note, and a letter of support from the Research Universities' Council of BC.
- Minerva Foundation: Various documents (e.g. Education Awards Status Report 2007) with a letter dated January 31, 2008.

- Nicola Valley Institute of Technology Indigenization Framework: Primary Research Report: The Road Not Yet Taken..., Eric Ostrowidzki and Marla Pryce, NVIT, 2008/09; and Indigenization Framework for Aboriginal Literacy: An Integrated Program for a Holistic Ecology of Aboriginal Literacy, Eric Ostrowidzki, Marla Pryce and Kristian Urstand, 2008/09.
- Friendship Centre Youth Conference: Gathering Our Voices 2007: Provincial Aboriginal Youth Conference, Final Report.
- Native Brotherhood of British Columbia: A Native Brotherhood backgrounder dated October 2, 2006, an update and draft of “A Vision Regarding the Training and Education of New Entrants into the West Coast Fishery” dated October 25, 2007.
- Shad Valley: Receipt of documentation pending.
- Supporting Aboriginal Graduate Enhancement (SAGE): Receipt of documentation pending.
- Yekooche: Yekooche Learning Centre Project 2006/08: Case Study, Wendy Drummond, Royal Roads University, July 29, 2008; Yekooche First Nation Comprehensive Community Development Plan, 2008; Governance Capacity Renewal Projects - Lessons Learned Exchange, L’heidli T’enneh/College of New Caledonia, Yekooche First Nation/Royal Roads University, Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation, Ministry of Advanced Education, March 19, 2008; An Interim Report of the Collaborative Evaluation of Lheidli T’enneh and Yekooche Governance Capacity Renewal Projects, Sarah L. Cunningham Consulting for the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation, March 2009.

While final reports and indications of outputs and outcomes of most One-Time Grant projects have been received, this is not the case for four of them (i.e. Pacific Institute for the Mathematical Sciences, Native Brotherhood of British Columbia, Shad Valley, and Supporting Aboriginal Graduate Enhancement).

While all of these projects may have yielded valuable results and each may have significant merit in their own right, the Evaluators are not in a position to comment on these five projects.

Despite this gap in information on One-Time Grant outputs and outcomes, collectively, the fourteen projects funding under this Strategy element produced many positive results:

- Each annual FNEESC final report identified several important activities and results. The cumulative affect of this One-Time Grant funding has been the capacity it has created in support of FNEESC and IAHLA Aboriginal post-secondary activities, and of the BC Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Partners. It is difficult to envisage such work being achieved in the past four years without such support.
- One-Time Grant funding helped UBC’s Sauder School of Business initiate the Ch’nook Scholars Program and expand it twelve colleges and universities. In 2009, the program increased to twenty students in each of twelve institutions.
- This Ministry funding contributed to a major provincial Aboriginal Youth conference in Prince George in 2007, which include almost 800 participants from around the province, focusing on the theme of “Education, Literacy and Lifelong Learning.”

- In 2007, One-Time Grant funding was used by the Minerva Foundation to provide 25 Education Awards (of \$1,250 to \$2,500 each) to Aboriginal women students throughout BC, through relationships established with thirteen public post-secondary institutions.
- One-Time Grant funding helped Royal Roads University leverage other funding to work with the Yekooche First Nation to develop and implement a Community Access Computer Lab/Learning Centre, and that will increase this remotely-located First Nation's capacity to offer flexible, individualized learning in upgrading and advanced training programs.
- While the Vancouver Community College/Native Education College e-Portfolio project did not necessarily yield all the positive results expected, the two reports provide a good base of information on which to further pursue the use of e-Portfolios with which to assess Aboriginal learners in terms of the BC Adult Graduation Diploma and other basic or essential skills.
- The One-Time Grant funding to NVIT for literacy research and curriculum and its Indigenization Framework for Aboriginal Literacy has created a body of research findings, a literature review, a practitioner's training and resource package, a set of Elders' stories on literacy, a Fundamental English curriculum, and the Indigenization Framework itself.

The following are key observations based on the Ministry's implementation of the One-Time Grants element of the 2007 Strategy:

- The internal Ministry documentation suggests some degree of a systematic process was used for assessing and approving One-Time Grant project funding. It is also assumed that the Ministry would have followed due process and the usual procedures regarding approvals and financial accountability.
- While the Evaluators received evidence that many One-Time Grant projects yielded positive results for Aboriginal post-secondary education, they cannot provide a complete assessment of the value of the projects since they have not received evidence of outputs and outcomes for four of the projects.
- Based on the documentation, it is assumed that this 2007 Strategy element provided the Ministry with the flexibility to fund, on a one-time basis, valuable projects that could not otherwise be funded through other elements of the Strategy and that showed promise in achieving outputs and outcomes consistent with the "access, completion, retention and transition" objective of this element and of the overall 2007 Strategy.
- It is interesting that unlike some of the other elements of the 2007 Strategy, a significant portion of the One-Time Grants was provided directly to Aboriginal organizations and institutions.
- The One-Time Grant expenditures (\$2.695 million) was the sixth largest investment within the 2007 Strategy, after Aboriginal Service Plans, Gathering Places, Scholarships, Aboriginal Special Projects Fund, and Strategic Investment Plan (Targeted Seats).

Analysis of Primary Data

Survey Data

The survey results show a very low awareness of the One-Time Grant funding among respondents. Almost sixty percent of them were not aware of it or had minimal awareness of it; while over three-quarters (76.6%) had no or minimal experience with it.

There were only fifteen responses to an open-ended question about it, as most respondents were not aware of this part of the Strategy. One person provided examples of one-time grants at an institution that lacked evidence of results. Another person suggested this initiative provided flexibility with which institutions and partners could meet emerging needs that could not be resourced through other means; conversely, another respondent said, “This was a catch-all for some year-end funding that was provided to support specific projects; it is likely this funding, if given more lead and development time, could have been spent more effectively.”

Also, respondents were asked, “From your experience with various 2007 Strategy program elements and projects, what proportion of Ministry funding to public post-secondary institutions under the following program elements was directed to Aboriginal institutes or communities?” Of forty responses, 62.5% of respondents reported that zero to 25% of One-Time Grant funding went to Aboriginal institutes or communities; while 17.8% of respondents indicated that 51% to 100% of such funding went to these entities.

There was not much difference among the three largest respondent groups – more than sixty percent in each case indicated that zero to 25% of One-Time Grant funding was directed to Aboriginal institutes and communities; and 8.7% of respondents from First Nations and Aboriginal communities and twenty percent of respondents from public post-secondary institutions reported that 51% to 100% of this funding was passed onto those entities.

Regional Sessions and Other Meetings

There was virtually no mention of One-Time Grant funding at the regional sessions and other meetings held by the Evaluators, since the participants focused on what they considered higher priority elements and issues of the Strategy.

7.7.3 Responses to Evaluation Questions

Based on these observations the following represents preliminary high-level answers to the initial evaluation questions approved by the Evaluation Steering Committee.

1. Has this program element achieved the intended outputs and outcomes?

In most cases, the intended results were stated as outputs and not outcomes. In the case of those One-Time Grant projects for which there is output/outcome documentation, most of the intended outputs were achieved.

2. What were the process and criteria for awarding these grants?

The process and criteria the Ministry used are reflected in the “One-Time Project Opportunities Chart” documentation and described earlier in this section. It is not clear how proposals were solicited (i.e. whether there was ever a “call” for such proposals); and the Evaluators have not seen a final decision-making document that describes the rationale for the fourteen projects funded.

3. To what extent was this element perceived by institutions and Aboriginal stakeholders as fair and transparent in its criteria, application approval and allocation of funds?

Informally, from initial discussions with Aboriginal stakeholders, other than the direct recipients of One-Time Grant funding, stakeholders know very little about this element of the 2007 Strategy. The subsequent online survey corroborated this relative lack of awareness. While the documentation shows a fair process undertaken by the Ministry, it is not known how project applications came about – whether there was a “call” for proposals and how institutions and Aboriginal partners were involved in the process.

4. What were the outputs of each grant?

The outputs are generally described earlier in this section. Evidence of outputs was not received by the Evaluators for four of the projects. A more extensive analysis of outputs of the other nine projects was not possible since the Evaluators received some of the associated documentation during the final drafting of the final version of this report.

5. Were there evaluations and/or reporting on results for programs/ services/projects funded?

Reports on One-Time Grant projects were requested by the Evaluators for all projects. As indicated, various degrees of evidence of project outputs were provided for nine of the projects. This documentation was reviewed for each of these nine to the extent possible, given the timelines and when documentation was received.

6. What portion of grant funding was provided directly to Aboriginal institutes and other Aboriginal community partners?

At least 46% or \$1.24 million (including 27.8% or \$0.75 million to NVIT) of One-Time Grants went directly to Aboriginal institutes and other Aboriginal community partners. A further 23.6% or \$0.635 million is unknown (e.g., did the \$25,000 to SFU for the Native Brotherhood of BC go towards SFU preparing a research report or was some or all of it transferred to NBBC?). The balance of 30.4% or \$0.82 million did not go directly to Aboriginal institutes or other Aboriginal partners. Also, see survey results in previous section.

7. To what extent did the grants provide funding for programs/ services/projects that could not otherwise be funded?

The Evaluators cannot ascertain this from documents received. The Ministry’s criteria included “the proposal is not eligible for funding through existing provincial programs”; however, there are several other criteria in its list.

8. Did this element provide flexibility for and enable the Ministry to respond to a priority need that would not otherwise be funded?

While this may be the case, responding to a “priority need” is a relative question. While all of the One-Time Grant activities may be valuable, were they higher priority than other potential activities that could be funded, particularly if institutions and Aboriginal partners were fully aware of this program element? Again, more information is needed to answer this question.

7.7.4 Conclusions

1. The Ministry went through a methodical process with clear criteria to adjudicate the proposed projects funded under the One-Time Grant initiative.
2. Project reports for five of the One-Time Grant projects under the Strategy either did not submit a report of project results to the Ministry or the Ministry is unable to submit these to the Evaluators.
3. There was inadequate follow up on One-Time Grant results and accountability by the Ministry.
4. The One-Time Grants appeared to provide funding for activities that would or could not be funded under other elements of the Strategy or other government funding programs.
5. The One-Time Grant funding appeared to provide flexibility with which the Ministry could fund emerging needs that would/could not otherwise be funded.
6. For the One-Time Grant projects for which reporting of results was received, they appear to have been valuable activities that have lead to important results consistent with the Strategy goals and objectives.

7.7.5 Recommendations

1. The Ministry should follow up on all outstanding One-Time Grant projects and obtain reports of the results on each, including a financial accounting.
2. If a similar program is funded under a new Strategy, there should be a clear logic model at the start, and the Ministry should require and enforce reporting of results. This should include clear guidelines and criteria that are published in advance of receiving applications.
3. If a similar program is funded in the future, the Ministry should provide more definition around priorities for this funding, perhaps focusing it on meeting needs that relate to gaps in Aboriginal post-secondary education support that would not otherwise be funded.

7.8 Aboriginal Representation on Institutional Governance Bodies

7.8.1 Background

The composition of public post-secondary institution's Boards of Governors is defined in legislation.²⁰ While some of the members are elected, such as student and faculty representatives, others are appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. The appointment process is determined by the Board Resourcing Development Office (BRDO).²¹ Current BRDO policy requires all potential candidates for Board vacancies to be routed through the BRDO, either as a direct application to the BRDO website or via identification and recommendation by an institution nominating committee. All applicant expressions of interest are evaluated by the BRDO. The BRDO then makes recommendations for Order-in-Council appointments which proceed to Cabinet for final review and approval

²⁰ For example, please see *College and Institute Act*, section 9; *University Act*, section 19.

²¹ The BRDO operates under the Ministry of Finance and makes board appointments for over 300 public agencies.

7.8.2 Analysis

The following table lists the post-secondary institutions that have Aboriginal representation on their governing bodies (e.g., board of governors, senate, education council) as of June 2005. This is the only information that the Evaluators found that provided a full picture of Aboriginal representation on governing bodies. Senate and Education Council appointments are typically not tracked by the Ministry.

Institution	Senate (Univ.)/Ed. Council (Col. And Inst.)	Board of Governors	Other (Added by Institution)
BCIT	No	No	
CAM	Yes (1) (*)	No	
CAP	No	No	
CNC	Yes (1) (*)	No	
COTR	No	No	
DGC	No	No	
ECIAD	No	Yes (*) (1)	
IIG	Yes (++)	Yes (++)	President, Chief Financial Officer, Registrar, Full time faculty, and the majority of staff.
JIBC	No	No	
KUC	No	No	
LGC	Yes (?) (1)	No	
MUC	No	No	
NIC	No	Yes (*) (1)	
NLC	Yes (?)	Yes (?)	
NVIT	Yes (*)	Yes (+)	Elders Council, Program Advisory Committee, and Standards Advisory Committee
NWCC	Yes (*) (2)	Yes (+) (4)	
OUC	No	No	
RRU	No	No	
SEL	No	No	
SFU	No	Yes (*)	
UBC	No	No ²²	Graduate Student Society
UCC	No	Yes (+) (1)	Executive recruiting committees
UCFV	No	No	
UNBC	No	YES (+) (1)	President's council
UVic	No	No	President's Advisory Council on Indigenous Education
VCC	Yes (*) (1)	No	

Source: Review of Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education Programs, Services and Strategies/Best Practices & Aboriginal Special Projects Funding (ASPF) Program, Human Capital Strategies, June 30, 2005 (provided by the Ministry).

- * Faculty, student, or other representative who is also Aboriginal.
- + A designated Aboriginal position through legislation/policy.
- ++ Majority of positions held by Aboriginals.
- ? Unknown/unstated whether position(s) are designated Aboriginal.

²² The UBC Board of Governors included a First Nations member (Chief Robert Louie) in 2006/07.

As indicated earlier, the data in this table was obtained through a special project and the Ministry does not track senate or education council appointments, therefore nothing comparable has been produced since this time. The Ministry was able to provide the following information illustrating Orders-in-Council (Cabinet) appointments to public post-secondary institution boards. This represents only those Aboriginal board members appointed by the Lieutenant Governor-in-Council and does not include data for university senates, college/institute education councils, or elected board members. Tracking Aboriginal participation in these other governing positions would provide information for assessing participation broadly.

Institution	2009 (est.)	Oct 2010	Notes
1. British Columbia Institute of Technology	0	0	
2. Douglas College	0	0	
3. Justice Institute of British Columbia	0	0	
4. Selkirk College	0	0	
5. Vancouver Community College	0	0	
6. Kwantlen Polytechnic University	0	0	
7. Simon Fraser University	0	0	
8. University of Victoria	0	0	
9. The University of British Columbia	0	0	
10. Camosun College	1	1	Same member
11. College of New Caledonia	2	2	Same member
12. College of the Rockies	1	1	Same member
13. Langara College	1	1	Same member
14. Northern Lights College	1	1	Same member
15. Okanagan College	1	1	Same member
16. Emily Carr University of Art & Design	1	1	Same member
17. University of the Fraser Valley	1	1	Same member
18. Vancouver Island University	1	1	Same member
19. Royal Roads University	1	1	Same member
20. Thompson Rivers University	1	1	Same member
21. University of Northern British Columbia	1	1	Same member
22. North Island College	0	1	
23. Capilano University	0	1	
24. Nicola Valley Institute of Technology	5	8	All Aboriginal
25. Northwest Community College	4	3	Same members
Total	24	26	

While the preceding table represents the period immediately following the Minister's letter encouraging post-secondary institutions to consider Aboriginal board appointees, it is important to realize that this information only represents a short snapshot in time and additional time series would provide a better sense of trends. As well because of the relatively short time frame most of these individuals would be the same persons in the comparisons given the government established six-year term limit for board members.

The following are key observations based on the Ministry's implementation of the governance goal and the subsequent information that tracks progress towards Ministry goals:

- The Minister sent a letter to all post-secondary education Board Chairs in April 2008 to communicate the importance of Aboriginal representation on boards as future vacancies arise. Since that letter was sent there have been a number of changes in boards, board chairs and senior management at many post-secondary institutions, however there has been no reminder to successive board chairs to continue to identify Aboriginal candidates.
- The Ministry was to work with the Board Resourcing Development Office (BDRO) to alter the Request for Appointment (RFA) templates that the BRDO provides to post-secondary institutions to reflect a preference for an Aboriginal perspective on the board. As of 2009 BDRO had not implemented this practice.
- Current Aboriginal board appointments represent approximately 13% of the total board post-secondary institute members in the system. This has grown from 11.5% in 2006.
- Nine post-secondary institutions continue to have no Aboriginal representation on their boards; five of these nine represent major institutions in BC. Little has changed with respect to the distribution of Aboriginal representation on specific public post-secondary institution boards since this priority was identified.
- Most post-secondary institute Aboriginal board members are from NVIT and the largest increase in Aboriginal board members was achieved by NVIT because NVIT was in the process of filling board vacancies during the short time covered by the snapshot. Therefore this information cannot be interpreted as Ministry progress towards the increased Aboriginal representation goal since NVIT is – as well as being a public post-secondary institution – an Aboriginal post-secondary institution with an internal policy requirement respected by the BDRO for Aboriginal ancestry for all board members.

Analysis of Primary Data

Very little additional data was collected through surveys and regional and other meetings with respect to Aboriginal representation on post-secondary institution governing bodies. Only 25 individuals responded to questions on this topic in the survey; governance was only mentioned in two of the regional sessions; and it was only mentioned once in the written submissions.

However, the additional information provided the following new insights and opinions on increasing Aboriginal representation on post-secondary institution governing bodies:

- No one suggested that this should be a mandatory requirement and some suggested that it should remain a policy directive. Reasoning included that this needed focused “program type” effort and some Aboriginal groups felt that this forced approach could result in token board/senior administrative appointments to fill the requirement.
- A number of survey respondents suggested that the provincial government’s Board Resourcing and Development Office effects such appointments and needs to be more attuned to what is needed in this part of the Strategy.
- Most survey respondents and all discussions with individual stakeholders indicated that it is essential that every public institution have Aboriginal representation on its governing bodies and several indicated that they had Aboriginal representation on their board.
- One point that was raised by a few survey respondents and individual stakeholders was that they believe that the public post-secondary system does not really understand the Aboriginal community and measures should be established to ensure that Aboriginal involvement in governance engages the “experts”. Some suggestions included using

First Nations and other Aboriginal groups to identify Aboriginal board members, making post-secondary institutions' First Nations Council chairs mandatory board members to more "formally link these groups" and extending the six-year board member term limit for Aboriginal members if a suitable alternate is not available.

The Evaluators heard during their stakeholder meetings from some public post-secondary institutions that they were diligent in putting forward names of proposed Aboriginal board appointees that were not approved by the BDRO. Such information may suggest a review of the process is required to see if it can be improved.

7.8.3 Responses to Evaluation Questions

Below are the Evaluators' answers to the evaluation questions that the Steering Committee approved for this goal. Note that these questions were also designed to ask individual institutions, but they are being answered in this context for the entire system.

1. Has this program element achieved the intended outputs and outcomes?

No. There has been little to no change in board representation since the Minister's request.

2. Do you have Aboriginal representation on your board?

Yes for approximately one-third of BC post-secondary institutes.

3. Has the governance direction on Aboriginal representation in your institution changed over the last 3 years?

Aboriginal representation on post-secondary institute boards has changed very little suggesting that governance direction on Aboriginal representation in these institutes has either not changed or has changed but has not taken effect yet.

4. How much of this change do you think can be attributed to government direction through the Strategy?

It appears that if there has been any change in Aboriginal participation in institutional governance, it is tied to the initiatives and results of the larger Strategy, and reflects a failure in achieving this goal/initiative.

5. What other governance structures do you have in place/how have you modified other governance structures to ensure the inclusion of Aboriginal voice and perspectives in strategic planning and program and policy development?

The Evaluators could not obtain data to answer this question, and it appears the system and Ministry does not collect such data. This would require a targeted program type review of each public post-secondary institution.

7.8.3 Conclusions

Based on the available information and input received through this evaluation's survey and regional and other meetings, the Strategy's goal of increasing the Aboriginal voice on public post-secondary institution decision-making bodies has not been achieved since 2007. The following points summarize additional comments that support and provide additional context to this general finding.

1. Many post-secondary institutions have tried to implement a number of measures to gain Aboriginal direction to their institution's direction. These measures extend beyond representation on public post-secondary institutions' boards and may include Aboriginal advisory committees, community "boards", Elders groups and others. However, the existence and effectiveness of these other measures were not captured in this review. One anecdotal comment by a post-secondary institution that does not have Aboriginal representation on its board was that it relied on these other measures to provide direction.
2. As indicated, the nature and distribution of Aboriginal representation on public post-secondary institution boards has not changed since the Strategy's implementation in 2007. In general, it appears that post-secondary institutions that were committed to the Aboriginal education goals as part of their core priorities continue to maintain Aboriginal representation on their boards; while those whose core priorities did not include this component have not changed in this respect.
3. An outcome that logically arises from increased Aboriginal representation on governing boards is increased institutional effectiveness in its Aboriginal programs. However many of the post-secondary institutions that are reported as not having Aboriginal representation on their boards have shown through the outreach component of this review that they are doing valuable work in the area of Aboriginal post-secondary education. The correlation between Aboriginal representation on governing boards and the institution's effectiveness in Aboriginal programming was outside of the scope and ability of this review however it is a question that is worth exploring.
4. Institutions with multiple Aboriginal representatives on their boards generally have the ability to have Aboriginal representatives that bring legal, governance, financial, public policy, education, community and a variety of other skills to the post-secondary institution's board. Institutions that have only 1 or 2 Aboriginal representatives on their board must rely on these representatives to be an expert in all things Aboriginal.
5. The goal was implemented through a letter from the Minister strongly encouraging boards to consider qualified Aboriginal candidates for appointments with no apparent follow-up – either internally within government with the BDRO, or with the post-secondary institutions – to track their compliance or to remind them of the importance of this request.
6. This goal was more of a directive as opposed to a formal goal. Therefore, there is no logic model for this goal; there is little correspondence to illustrate that any thought was given to the desired outcomes of the goal; and there were no tracking mechanisms put in place to track progress towards achievement of the goal or its associated outcomes.

7.8.4 Recommendations

1. A future Aboriginal post-secondary strategy should retain the general goal of "Enhance Aboriginal Representation on Institutional Governance Bodies." However, this directive needs to be re-formulated as a goal with an associated logic model, desired outcomes and appropriate follow up.
2. Consideration should be given to re-framing this goal to ensure that there is a strong Aboriginal voice in establishing public post-secondary institutional direction. This should include Aboriginal representation on boards of such institutions, but as a goal, it should also support other methods of achieving the larger goal.

3. Establish measures to help public post-secondary institutions select qualified Aboriginal members and establish a strong Aboriginal voice in establishing the strategic direction of such institution. Some measures that were suggested include:
 - i Use experienced Aboriginal organizations to help a public post-secondary institution identify skilled board members using the institution's skills matrix. This allows the institution to gain additional perspectives through single board members.
 - i Have public post-secondary institutions with First Nations Advisory Councils have those Council's chairs as mandatory institutional board members.
 - i Extend the six-year board member term limit for Aboriginal members if a suitable alternate is not available.
5. Cabinet and BRDO should commit to Aboriginal representation on public post-secondary institution boards. This should include a regular reminder letter from the Minister and establishing this as a standing component of BRDO's consideration for post-secondary institution board members.

7.9 System-Wide Data Tracking and Performance Measures

7.9.1 Analysis

There is a general uncertainty with the state of Aboriginal post-secondary education data. As will be shown in survey responses (below), there is a general discontent with the data, yet most groups surveyed will admit to not being aware of the data available or "having much expertise in the area". Some of the difficulty is due to the self-identity nature of "Aboriginal" and the different meanings attributed to identifying words such as Aboriginal, First Nations, Métis and Inuit. As well, the ongoing efforts of the Ministry to regularize and improve the consistency of the data stream is not widely recognized or advertised. It appears that over the past few years the Ministry has made great efforts to regularize the data and to systematically produce more consistent data over time.

There appears to be a widespread feeling that the BC data – especially student headcounts – are inflated and not representative of the current reality. This feeling is most acute among institutional representatives: "I send the information to the Ministry but it always comes back higher than when I sent it." This results from the process of merging institutional records, so that people who are identified as Aboriginal during their K-12 education are counted as Aboriginal during their post-secondary education – a process that can only happen in the centralized databases due to privacy protection requirements. At the same time, most persons associated with Aboriginal post-secondary education would attest to the fact that in the last few years there has been a sizeable increase in the numbers of Aboriginal students attending BC institutions. A number of public post-secondary institution representatives provided the Evaluators with data showing sizeable growth.

Most BC data sources indicate that since 2006/07 more Aboriginal learners are entering the post-secondary system, hence enrolments are rising. It also seems to be evident that Aboriginal students (often male) have a continuing higher drop-out rate than non-Aboriginal students even following a significant series of initiatives to improve the Aboriginal retention and completion rates. The Ministry Central Data Warehouse (CDW) includes data from 21 of 25 public post-secondary institutions not including the four BC public research universities. Presented among the CDW report series are: aboriginal identity by program, by institution, by gender, and by

certificate. Using the Student Outcomes surveys, reports by satisfaction (“education”, “usefulness” and “quality of instruction”) are also available.

The recent link to total coverage of all public post-secondary institutions is the government-sponsored Student Transitions Project (STP) that publishes reports using data with comparative information across all universities, institutes and colleges (including the four research universities), as well as the Ministries of Education and Advanced Education. This is a significant data initiative as the STP requires cooperation from all the institutions and across Ministries, a process that required information-sharing agreements and protocols as well as review from the BC Privacy Commissioner for these merged new data sets. STP reports such as *Education Achievements of Aboriginal Students in BC* (March 2009) are noteworthy in themselves, and give an indication of what is possible in the future.

Survey Data

There were only 22 respondents to this portion of the survey indicating a low or modest interest in the topic. The respondents were evenly split between those that saw real progress and those that felt that little or no progress had been made. Those who pointed to progress cited the development of a provincial data standard, common definitions and the STP (Student Transitions Project) measures. Those who expressed concerns cited differences between data collected by institutions from those of the Ministry and a series of perceived problems – often with little specificity – such as “significant data has been provided, but I am unaware of what has been done with the data received”. Further, there was concern that the “numbers were inflated” above the levels that recent student growth would warrant.

Regional Sessions and Other Meetings

System-wide data tracking and performance measures were not topics that were widely discussed at the regional sessions. The majority sentiment to the topic would appear to be supportive with few persons holding strong opinions on the topic. In part, this was the case because the sessions were relatively short for the range of topics to be discussed and people wanted to speak on other topics. There were a few comments that indicated that some representatives (usually employees of institutions) felt that progress was being made, even if slowly.

On the other hand, a few members of the Aboriginal community felt dissatisfied with the data and data collection system. They felt remote from the process and stated that they had never been invited to discuss data issues with the Ministry. While data issues at the regional meetings was not overwhelming there was an on-going interest shown in data tracking and performance measures. It was also noted that there have been regular meetings concerning data between FNEESC, IAHLA and the Ministry. In addition, both FNEESC and IAHLA have attended an STP steering committee meeting to participate in discussions concerning data issues. (For example, see the reports from the *BC Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Partners Group* for both 2008/09 and 2009/10.)

A number of Aboriginal representatives, particularly from Aboriginal institutes and communities, commented on the need to formally recognize IAHLA institutes’ contribution to post-secondary education. At the Evaluators’ meeting with IAHLA, that association called for joint work by it and the Ministry to ensure IAHLA students in recognized post-secondary education programs – whether or not those programs are part of a public institution program delivered with and at an IAHLA institute – are counted by the Ministry and reflected in its Central Data Warehouse.

Again, there was a general concern with the validity of the enrolment numbers, and a few voiced concern that the enrolment data does not reflect FTE value, since it includes enrolments in part-time and shorter term courses.

7.9.2 Responses to Evaluation Questions

While these questions are worded from an individual/institution perspective, the Evaluators respond to them below based on existing and new information collected.

1. Do you feel data needs are satisfied by existing data availability?

Existing Aboriginal educational data tracking and performance measures have improved since 2006/07 and many of the difficult issues are being dealt with. Recent innovations include the Aboriginal Data Standard and the ongoing Student Transitions Project. Despite adjustments and data issues, the improvements bode well for the future of accurate and consistent data tracking and measurement for the Aboriginal post-secondary education system.

2. How familiar are you with the existing stock of data?

The Student Transitions Project, the Central Data Warehouse and BC Stats would appear to be the major sources of Aboriginal time-series data, as well, of course, as individual institutional data of a one-off nature. Note that public institution data is the property of the institutions. The Student Transitions Project and the Central Data Warehouse accesses this data through data sharing agreements.

3. Do you consult data sources more than you did three years ago?

As Aboriginal progress in post-secondary education is made, there will be more interest in charting this progress. Disaggregation of participation data will be more forthcoming and sought-after as it becomes available.

4. Are there measures that you think should be evaluated?

The only system-wide performance measure created by the Ministry is the student headcount, which is used to calculate the rate of Aboriginal learners participating in post-secondary education. However, as has been discussed here and elsewhere, the validity and reliability of these measures are often questioned. In addition, as above, there will be an ongoing need for more disaggregated data as the pressure for resolving the serious “retention issues” affecting Aboriginal students takes place. More data surrounding the root causes of this difficult issue should be sought, much of it beyond the more narrow post-secondary education realm of issues. Issues surrounding qualitative data including relationship building, post-education success and the fate of student drop-outs should be explored. As Aboriginal post-secondary student retention becomes even more important, there will continue to be more investigation of this challenge and more questions will be asked of the data surrounding the economy and society. It would appear that tracking (especially male) students as they cycle in and out of the system will become more important over time, and statistics dealing with the root causes of the low retention rate will be most interesting to probe. Tracking the importance of such variables as the cost of tuition and books, summer job availability, distance from the nearest post-secondary institution, family income and parental experience in post-secondary education, among others, should be worth pursuing.

5. Are there any performance measures that systematically track Aboriginal students (for example for 12 months after they leave the post-secondary system)?

The tracking of Aboriginal students who drop out needs exploring as data shows that this is a characteristic more of Aboriginal students than non-Aboriginal students (and is more prevalent among males). Post-secondary Aboriginal students often take longer to graduate on average. In many cases, Aboriginal students return and finish their post-secondary education but over a period of years. This issue raises questions of how links are kept with Aboriginal students during and after the post-secondary experience. Knowledge of post-secondary employment experience would be valuable as it would also help institutions and government understand the learning needs of Aboriginal students. It would also assist in tailoring programs to meet the need of older Aboriginal students. For example, some ASPF projects have attempted to deal with this issue; and the Gathering Places initiative, with its attempt to provide more comfortable surroundings on campus, also may assist with this problem.

6. Has the system-wide data collection process made your job any easier?

Post-secondary educators appear to be supportive of the improvements to the data collection process as they often collect data that is forwarded to the Ministry. Other groups, including students and community representatives, do not share this interest. Students, in particular, were often disinterested in data tracking and performance measurement issues, preferring to concentrate on issues concerning finance, daycare and a variety of campus issues that affect them more immediately.

7.9.3 Conclusions

1. BC is the leader in Canada in post-secondary education for Aboriginal students. Despite that leadership and the significant achievements under the 2007 Strategy there is much to be done including data collection, measurement and analysis.
2. Although observers might argue that this Data Tracking and Performance Measures portion of the 2007 Strategy is not high profile, it would appear that the quality of Aboriginal data and systems is improving. The Ministry has attempted to provide a climate of “continuous improvement” for Data Tracking and Performance Measurement.
3. One of the major improvements is the creation and reliance on the Student Transitions Program (STP), which has linked all 25 public post-secondary institutions for standardized data. This is a major initiative that has done much to create a system of standardized post-secondary data.
4. Another major improvement is the Aboriginal Administrative Data Standard, which applies a standard agreed-upon methodology to the issue of the definition of “Aboriginal” students. In 2008, standardized formats for self-identification were introduced which creates consistent data across institutions. Of course, these data recognise and must allow for the Aboriginal students who do not self-identify. As well, concurrent with the introduction of the data standards, the number of Aboriginal students self-identifying has increased.
5. Using “PEN matches” between institutional records, the STP initiative has significantly reduced double counting.
6. The Ministry should encourage institutions to ensure that all data that contributes to variables are accurate up to plus or minus three percent. For example, for data that influence the calculation of student FTEs, this has been achieved. Some other data series (e.g. Aboriginal, immigration) still require additional institutional effort, as they do not offer as high a degree of accuracy.

7. The Student Transitions Project obtains information from all 25 public institutions and will continue to do so as it expands its range of data series available. Each variable requires obtaining elaborate protocols with the research universities and the approvals of the privacy commissioner. Nonetheless, while this process is a slow and time-consuming exercise, the effort appears to be bearing fruit and should be encouraged.
8. The recent separation of the two ministries which have the responsibility for post-secondary education in BC has also imposed an extra workload on the data group.
9. There is a concern among some Aboriginal data users that Ministry data, particularly head-counts that are perceived as inflated. The rationale for the system and its improvements needs to be better explained to data users.

7.9.4 Recommendations

1. It is recommended that the Ministry continue to invest resources in the data and statistical analysis function of the Ministry. In this way, the Ministry can more effectively target its other resources aimed at closing the gap between Aboriginal post-secondary students and non-Aboriginal student by 2015.
2. It is recommended that the Ministry continue to support the Student Transitions Program and focus on the issue of Aboriginal student retention and the resulting required efforts with disaggregation of relevant data. In doing so, it should work to improve statistical knowledge about Aboriginal students who leave post-secondary institutions and often return. Any attempt to better track them and to better understand the flows involved will be valuable. The portion that returns to post-secondary institutions and how long (on average) students stay away should continue to be studied. It should also continue its investigations the effects of interventions in the K-12 system to maximise Aboriginal post-secondary student retention.
3. The Ministry and IAHLA should create a formal joint project to identify a way to “tag” IAHLA post-secondary students so they are counted as IAHLA students and be reflected as such within the Central Data Warehouse.
4. Two economic studies from Ontario (*Under Represented Groups on Post Secondary Education in Ontario* and *Access to Postsecondary Education: How Ontario Compares*) published by the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario in February 2011 may be instructive for BC. These studies examine the participation of various groups in the Ontario post-secondary system and including the role of Aboriginal origin, low-income families, history of attending post-secondary education, rural versus urban residence, single parent families, and the role of disabilities in predicting post-secondary participation and performance. The Ministry is aware of these studies and should consider replicating the methodology to obtain BC-specific data on potentially predictive variables for Aboriginal post-secondary participation and completion.
5. In the light of concerns in Aboriginal communities regarding the validity and reliability of the Aboriginal student head-count, it is recommended that the Ministry re-examine the head-count and explain the recent surge of enrolment numbers in the BC post-secondary sector to the satisfaction of all parties. This would appear to be valuable, especially for the Aboriginal community at large. Perhaps a representative advisory group can advise the Ministry and reassure the relevant Aboriginal audiences of the quality of information forthcoming from the Ministry.

8. CONCLUSION AND OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS

This section provides over-arching conclusions and overall recommendations not already covered in the previous section for each program element of the 2007 Strategy.

8.1 Conclusions

Closing the post-secondary educational gap for Aboriginal learners is a long-term goal – success in this area will take some time. This evaluation was conducted after three years of the Strategy, where many aspects of the Strategy are less than three years old. Making conclusions on the attainment of long-term outcomes of the Strategy and each program element is premature. However, the Evaluators are able to assess how elements were implemented and the direction these elements are taking; and are also able to provide a general framework for future evaluations.

Overall, there were indications of many positive activities and outputs of the 2007 Strategy. Particularly positive, is that each of the four “priority” elements (i.e. ASP, ASPF, Gathering Places, and Awards and Scholarships) showed promise in the outputs and short-term outcomes achieved to date. Of course, they were not perfect and therefore, we have identified some challenges and recommended future actions.

With the exception of the ATRF, the smaller Strategy elements (i.e. One-Time Grants, Aboriginal Representation on Institutional Governance Bodies, Targeted Aboriginal Seats, and Data Tracking and Performance Measures) tended to involve more questions about their effectiveness and processes to date.

The lack of an evaluation framework built into (from the start) the 2007 Strategy and clear logic models and measurement indicators for some program elements, made it challenging to assess the outcomes of every element.

This evaluation was completed within very limited time and resource parameters. These factors limited the extent of the analysis and it limited the nature and extent of participation in the evaluation by stakeholders.

One has to keep in mind when reviewing this report that the participation of Aboriginal communities, institutes and students was limited because of timelines and resources. Despite best supporting efforts by IAHLA, FNEESC, MNBC, and other Aboriginal organizations plus additional resources to support travel costs and other costs by the Ministry, the participation of Aboriginal people in some parts of the regional sessions and parts of the online survey was less than desired.

One trend that varied by element of the Strategy showed differences between public post-secondary institutions in the success or level of effective practices in Aboriginal post-secondary education. Some institutions were singled out by Aboriginal groups as role models and very effective in relationship-building; about others – albeit a smaller number – we heard a pattern of complaints about not being inclusive, not responding as well to local Aboriginal community needs, etc.

While having reliable and valid data on Aboriginal student participation, retention and successful completion of educational programs has been identified as a challenge throughout this

evaluation, it should also be noted that there have been gradual improvements in data tracking and performance measurement by the Ministry and its partners in recent years.

One strong message from Aboriginal post-secondary students and Aboriginal communities was about the serious financial barriers impeding participation and retention in higher education. This was particularly an issue for First Nations students. While it is beyond the scope of this evaluation, the Evaluators believe mention should be made of concerns consistently raised by Aboriginal students, educators and communities regarding what they see as deficiencies and, in fact, real declines in the levels of resources available for post-secondary studies. It would be remiss on the part of the Evaluators to identify part of the potential solution, without considering the broader context. These concerns – which appear to be grounded in empirical evidence – are driven by four inter-related factors:

1. Federal funding levels for First Nations post-secondary education were “capped” in the mid-80s and annual adjustments, when available, have been limited to 2%.
2. The Aboriginal 15-30 year old cohort is the only demographic group in Canada experiencing dramatic population growth. Accordingly, it would be reasonable to expect that the post-secondary eligible population would also be growing but little has been done to adjust the funding level available to reflect that change;
3. Aboriginal learners’ K-12 graduation rates, although still well below where they need to be, have gone up quite significantly²³ and yet nothing has been done to increase the overall level of resource to support a larger pool of eligible students;
4. Tuition levels at colleges and universities have gone up dramatically in Canada. Particularly at the university level, these increases have been in the order of 100%, or more, in some jurisdictions. The consequence of this very real cost increase, without action at the federal level to modify funding levels accordingly, is a very significant loss of the “buying power” of First Nations communities with respect to post-secondary access opportunities for their students.

In reality, substantial reductions in buying power, coupled with the impact of more students calling on a capped level of resource that has not been properly modified to reflect actual inflationary pressures, results in tough choices about who gets to go on to post-secondary education and for how long. Many of those we talked to feel that, in effect, access to post-secondary education is being rationed and this is difficult to reconcile with general Federal recognition regarding the importance of Canadians having broad access to post-secondary studies.

8.2 Overall Recommendations

1. For future initiatives such as the 2007 Strategy, the Ministry should develop an evaluation framework before/as it is implemented, with clear logic models, measurable indicators and program logic models. The prescribed reporting and monitoring should be consistent with the evaluation framework’s indicators and logic models. It is realized that initiatives evolve and such a framework may need to be updated along the way. This evaluation framework should include both formative and summative evaluation and both process and outcome evaluation.

²³In British Columbia the increase over the last 15 years has been from approximately 30% to closer to 50%, making it clear that the community of students potentially ready for post-secondary studies is growing quite significantly.

2. When the Ministry is ready to have such initiatives evaluated, it should have data and documentation packaged and ready to provide to evaluators early in the evaluation process.
3. If for whatever reason an element of such initiatives is discontinued before the end of the initiative or before it can be evaluated, the Ministry should do some kind of review and analysis of the element to date (until it was discontinued).
4. Realistic timelines and resources should be carefully considered regarding evaluations of this scope and magnitude. This should include a methodical process of estimating the amount of time and resources by considering the complexity, the number and type of stakeholders to be involved, geographic considerations, time of year, etc. In particular, an evaluation of an Aboriginal post-secondary education initiative needs to reflect time and resources that will allow Aboriginal communities, institutes and students throughout the province adequate time to have meaningful input. It may also be possible to address some of this outreach component through the ongoing monitoring system.
5. The conception, development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of any future similar strategy should place an even greater emphasis on involving the Aboriginal community, institutes and student representatives in direct, timely and comprehensive ways. Even those Aboriginal representatives that are not directly involved in a post-secondary partnership or program should have the opportunity to understand and provide input on any new strategy.
6. Related to the previous recommendation, the Ministry and provincial stakeholder groups – particularly led by the BC Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Partners – should prepare, implement and monitor a comprehensive communication process in developing, launching and implementing any new Aboriginal post-secondary initiative. This needs to be an on-going activity and not just around the launch of such an initiative.
7. Reciprocal, respectful and collaborative relationship-building, communication and partnership with Aboriginal communities and institutes should be part of the requirements and accountability for funding to public post-secondary institutions under any new Aboriginal post-secondary strategy. This has been happening to an increasing extent already at many public institutions; but we have heard reports of a number of exceptions to this from Aboriginal organizations and communities.
8. Mechanisms like funded Aboriginal Service Plans have been – and could continue to be – an effective tool to accelerate services to Aboriginal students and communities and perhaps, over time, to shift the numbers on recruitment, retention and completion success. The ASP approach is, however, not the only option and the Ministry may wish to consider the value of institution or sector-specific approaches that would fund strategic plans designed to more directly address core objectives. Some institutions are clearly ready for this and would be prepared to entertain a form of “pay for performance” funding. In many cases, momentum will be lost if there is an absence of some form of support to sustain programs and services that have been developed through the ASPs.
9. Notwithstanding the benefits of ASP, the Ministry and post-secondary system should review more closely how some institutions and regions without ASP funding were able to achieve significant growth in Aboriginal student enrollment and other important outcomes.
10. The Evaluators consistently heard concerns (particularly from community education coordinators) that Aboriginal K-12 students are not at the skills and knowledge levels that their paper credentials illustrate. The Evaluators cannot confirm or deny these

allegations however the Evaluators feel that it is worthwhile seriously considering the recommendation that a review similar to this review explore the K-12 system. The Evaluators also recommend that an associated research project be incorporated into future versions of this strategy that deals with Aboriginal student transition from K-12 to post-secondary. It is highly likely that this associated project would capture these concerns.

11. While it is beyond the scope of this Review, deficiencies in federal funding consistently emerged as an issue. Failure to resolve this could impair the potential for continued progress at the provincial level and there is a clear need to come to some form of understanding that would help to reduce the ambiguities that currently limit the capacity of some of the IAHLA institutes to be as effective as they could be.
12. This type of strategy is highly dependent upon higher-level factors that are beyond individual program element. Some of these include: the number and quality of relationships between all relevant players; the levels of resources that were leveraged from external sources; the amount that aboriginal graduates have made a difference in the evolution of the aboriginal community, etc. These elements of success are not explicitly addressed in the strategy or the associated monitoring system. Future versions of the strategy should consider these meta-indicators and use them throughout, i.e., determining program priorities, monitoring, implementation, etc.
13. This first iteration of the strategy represents a good start. Like all first attempts there are many things to be learned. Some higher level learnings that should be incorporated into future versions include:
 - a. Put more effort into creating ownership and buy-in by the relevant players through the design stage;
 - b. Establish tighter outcomes and measures for all elements and incorporate these into a formalized monitoring system;
 - c. Use the monitoring system to collect data on the any future program elements a new Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education framework that would be required during its evaluation;
 - d. Establish higher-level outcomes for the overall strategy (again incorporating their measures into the monitoring system);
 - e. Ensure that the monitoring system is easy, provides information that is useable at all stages to all involved with the strategy (particularly those collecting the information); and
 - f. Establish longer-term outcomes and targets that work towards those outcomes for each iteration of the strategy.

APPENDIX

ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS

Introduction/Background

As part of the evaluation of the Strategy, HCS designed and implemented an online survey that was distributed via various parties to hundreds of Aboriginal post-secondary education stakeholders.

The survey questions, design and methodology were reviewed and vetted by the Ministry and the Evaluation Steering Committee.

The survey link was initially distributed by the Ministry with a backgrounder on the evaluation and an invitation to partners and stakeholders to respond to this opportunity to provide input. Subsequently, a number of groups within the post-secondary and Aboriginal communities distributed the survey within their memberships and networks. Particularly helpful were a call for action on the survey by FNEESC and IAHLA as well as repeated reminder by members of the BC Aboriginal Post-Secondary Coordinators throughout the public post-secondary system and among members' other networks.

The survey contained 32 closed and open-ended questions about the 2007 Strategy and its individual program elements. The survey was designed and administered using the *QuestionPro* proprietary online survey tool.

The survey was initiated in early December 2010, and was extended several times to allow ample time for individuals to respond, particularly in light of the two-week holiday period starting in the latter part of December.

The survey was closed on February 7, 2011. As of that date, there were 1,247 individual "views" of the survey, with 577 "starts" and 213 completions (after any duplication was eliminated). In addition to the completions, another 119 respondents completed the survey to varying degrees. These responses are included in the analysis.

The number of responses to questions that involve a single reply only (i.e. "select only one") range from a low in the 50s to a high of 322. The reason for variability in these numbers is mainly two-fold: 1) some respondents may have dropped out of the survey at a certain point before completing; and 2) some questions did not apply to some respondents, and even if there was a "does not reply" response option, some people may still have refrained from responding to the question. The response size ("n") will be indicated for each question in the following analysis.

The average time taken to complete the survey was 33 minutes.

The survey yielded a huge amount of data involving a diversity of several affiliations or memberships among the respondents. Since it was very important for the Steering Committee members and other leadership groups that responses be qualified by who was responding to a particular question, the analysis of each question took much time and space in this report in order to analyze responses by each of the several respondent groups (e.g. First Nations, Aboriginal communities, Aboriginal leadership bodies, Métis, urban Aboriginal people, Aboriginal

students, Aboriginal-controlled institutes, public post-secondary institutions, unions and faculty at public institutions, etc.).

In the end, while there was much agreement – in terms of orders of magnitude – among these groups, it is fair to say that overall public post-secondary institution respondents, including unions and faculty, tended to rate aspects of the Strategy more positively than many of the Aboriginal groups. There were exceptions to this and often the differences were a matter of degree and not direction; however, on a number of the survey questions, the responses were almost diametrically opposite.

One challenge that the survey design and software were not able to overcome is multiple affiliations or memberships of survey respondents. For example, many respondents who indicated they were part of a public post-secondary institution also indicated they were a member of a First Nation and/or a member of an Aboriginal community, and/or an urban Aboriginal person and/or a Métis person. Therefore, because we could not differentiate more finely, we could not identify respondents who were, for example, only a member of a First Nation or only a Métis person. Making this differentiation was important for some of the Aboriginal representatives on the Steering Committee because they wanted to see, for example, responses from those Aboriginal persons who are “independent” of public post-secondary institutions.

Responses by Survey Question

Question 2

Please indicate in which region of BC you reside. (select one only)

Thirty-seven percent of respondents (n=118) reside in the Vancouver Island/Coast region. The next two largest regions of response were Mainland/Southwest at 21% (n=68) and North Coast/Nechako at over nineteen percent (n=62). There were very low response levels from the Kootenays and the Northeast region of BC.

Vancouver Island/Coast	118	36.65%
Mainland/Southwest	68	21.12%
Thompson-Okanagan	34	10.56%
Kootenays	8	2.48%
Cariboo	21	6.52%
North Coast/Nechako	62	19.25%
Northeast	9	2.80%
Outside BC	2	0.62%
Total	322	100.00%

Question 3

Please indicate in which region(s) of BC your organization is located. (select all that apply)

In terms of location of respondents’ organizations, almost six percent of respondents were not part of an organization (for the purposes of this survey). Over thirty percent of the organizations were located in the Vancouver Island/Coast region, while over eighteen percent and almost eighteen percent were in the Mainland/Southwest and North Coast/Nechako regions, respectively. Eleven percent were in the Thompson-Okanagan and the other regions involved four to seven percent of respondents.

I am not part of an organization	23	5.76%
Vancouver Island/Coast	121	30.33%
Mainland/Southwest	73	18.30%
Thompson-Okanagan	44	11.03%
Kootenays	17	4.26%
Cariboo	28	7.02%
North Coast/Nechako	71	17.79%
Northeast	18	4.51%
Outside BC	4	1.00%
Total	399	100.00%

Question 4

Do you work for, attend, or have membership in any of the following types of organizations? (select all that apply)

The two single largest groups of affiliation or membership among respondents were public post-secondary institutions (n=186) and First Nations (n=139). Other significant groups in terms of number of respondents were Aboriginal communities (n=105), union or faculty association (n=60), Métis organizations (n=41), and Band schools or learning centres. Membership in other groups that involved still sizeable numbers (n=27 to 30) included Tribal Councils, Urban Aboriginal organizations, Friendship Centres, IAHLA institutes, student associations and provincial ministries.

I am not involved with any of these organizations	2	0.24%
A First Nation	139	16.91%
A Tribal Council	29	3.53%
A Métis organization	41	4.99%
An Urban Aboriginal organization	30	3.65%
A Friendship Centre	29	3.53%
An Aboriginal Human Resources Development Agreement holder or sub-holder ²⁴	12	1.46%
A First Nations leadership umbrella organization	18	2.19%
A public college, institute or university	186	22.63%
An Aboriginal-controlled post-secondary or adult learning institute(s) and an IAHLA member	27	3.28%
An Aboriginal-controlled post-secondary or adult learning institute(s) and not an IAHLA member	4	0.49%
A private career training institution(s)	7	0.85%
A Band school or adult learning centre(s)	38	4.62%
An Aboriginal community	105	12.77%
A union or faculty association	60	7.30%
A student association	30	3.65%
A provincial ministry	30	3.65%
A federal department	5	0.61%
A municipal or local government (non-First Nations)	5	0.61%
Other (please specify)	25	3.04%
Total	822	100.00%

²⁴ While "AHRDA" was used in this survey, these entities are now called Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASETS) agreement holders.

This is a pivotal question in the survey. First, because of the total responses selected, one can see many respondents have multiple memberships. Second, when the responses to this question are cross-tabulated with itself, one can further distinguish different profiles of respondents. Responses to this question will be cross-tabulated with other questions in this survey to show how similarities and differences exist among groups of respondents in the survey.

For example, of the 139 respondents who indicated they are part of a First Nation, 74 of them indicated they are also part of a public post-secondary institution, and 22 are part of an IAHLA institute.

Of the 41 who indicated they are part of a Métis organization, 25 are also part of a public post-secondary institution.

Of the 27 who are part of IAHLA institutions, fourteen are also part of a Band school or learning centre, and ten are also part of a public post-secondary institution.

Of the 105 respondents who indicated they are part of an Aboriginal community, 86 indicated they are part of a First Nation, fourteen are part of a Métis organization, and 57 are part of a public post-secondary institution. Also, twenty of the 105 are part of an IAHLA institute and thirty are part of a Band school or learning centre.

These are just examples that show the multiple memberships and relationships of individuals among various organizations. They will be drawn upon in analysis of other questions in the survey.

Question 5

If you work for, attend or are a member of any of the above organizations, what is your role? (select all that apply)

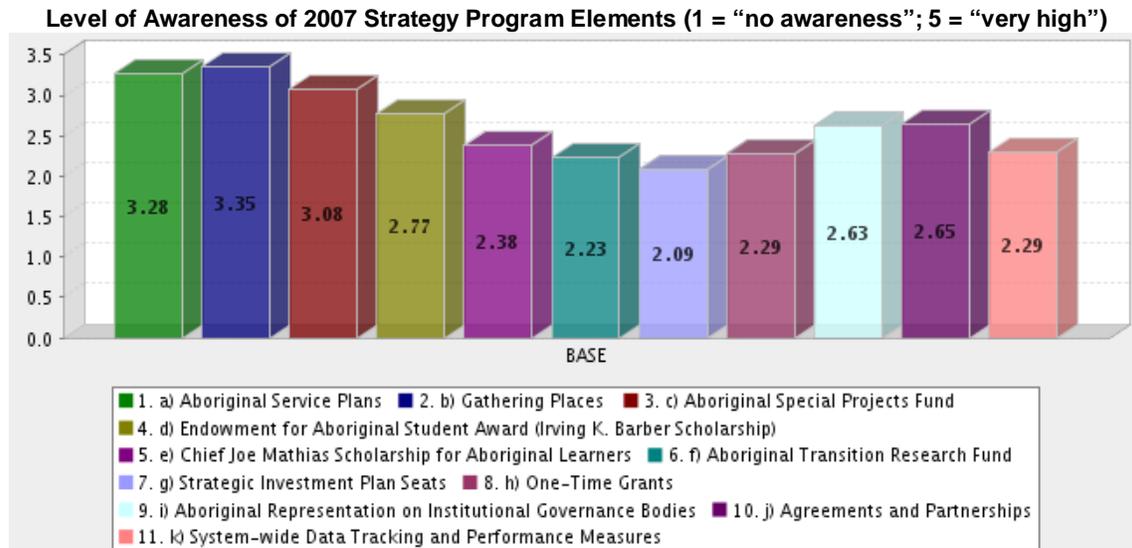
The most prevalent roles or positions among respondents were Educational Administrators (n=85), Management (n=65) and Instructors/Faculty (n=59). Again, given the number of responses, a number of those responding indicated more than one role. Over fourteen percent (n=66) selected “other”; the most frequent categories were Board members (n=7), Educational Coordinators/Advisors (n=11), Management (n=6), Researchers (n=5), and Policy Advisors (n=4).

Not applicable - I am not with any of the above organizations	7	1.53%
An Executive	24	5.25%
Management	65	14.22%
Educational Administrator	85	18.60%
Administrative Services	30	6.56%
Instructor or Faculty Position	59	12.91%
Counsellor	26	5.69%
Front-Line Support Services	43	9.41%
Part-Time Student	20	4.38%
Full-Time Student	32	7.00%
Other (please specify)	66	14.44%
Total	457	100.00%

Question 6

What is your level of awareness of each of the following program elements of the 2007 BC Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education Strategy (2007 Strategy)?

Overall, respondents had the most awareness of Gathering Places (3.35) (1 being “no awareness” and 5 being “very high”), Aboriginal Service Plans (3.28), and Aboriginal Special Projects Fund (3.08). Lowest awareness was of the Strategic Investment Plan Seats (SIPS) (2.09), the Aboriginal Transition Research Fund (ATRF) (2.23), One-Time Grants (OTG) and System-Wide Data Tracking/Performance Measures (DTPM) (2.29), and the Chief Joe Mathias Scholarship (2.38).²⁵



More specifically, 39%, 37%, and 32% of respondents had no awareness at all of the SIPS, ATRF, and OTG and DTPM, respectively. Conversely, 20%, 20% and 19% of respondents had a very high awareness of the ASP, Gathering Places and ASPF initiatives. This is not surprising since these programs have the largest number of partnerships and thus a better chance of being known beyond public institutions. The lesser-known initiatives have a low awareness among respondents for various reasons. For example, most Aboriginal community members and students would not be aware of SIPS grants or OTGs (except for the partners involved). Since only First Nations students are eligible for the Chief Joe Mathias Scholarship, it would not be promoted to urban Aboriginal people and Métis students and organizations.

If we look at levels of awareness among different respondent groups, there are not large differences in most cases. For example, twelve percent of respondents had no awareness of ASP and most groups were within one or two percentage points of this average, with the

²⁵ Please note that the survey software generates the bar charts in this survey analysis. The “Base” on the horizontal axis is always zero. The vertical axis is either the response scale (1 to 5) or the number of responses; and the horizontal axis is the reverse. In every case, it is clear which axis is which. Those charts with five vertical bars means the horizontal axis is the response scale (1 to 5); if there is more than five bars on the horizontal axis, it is referring to respondent groups.

exception of Métis organizations²⁶ (19.5%) and students (20%); conversely, union or faculty association members had a much lower rate of “non-awareness” (8.3%).²⁷

Regarding Gathering Places, overall 11.3% of respondents had no awareness of this initiative. Respondents from Métis organizations (15.4%) and students (17.9%) had higher levels of non-awareness; and respondents from urban Aboriginal organization members (28.6%), Friendship Centre members (27.6%), and members of public post-secondary institutions (26.3%) had higher than the average (20.7%) levels of “very high” awareness.

For the ASPF initiative, the overall level of respondents who were not aware of it at all was 18.7%. Respondents from Métis organizations (31.6%), Friendship Centres (29.6%) and First Nations umbrella organizations (26.7%) had much higher levels of non-awareness; respondents from IAHLA institutes (8%) had a much lower level of non-awareness. Overall, 18.4% of respondents had a very high level of awareness of ASPF, while respondents from urban Aboriginal organizations (24%) and public post-secondary institutions (25.4%) had above average levels of very high awareness. Respondents from First Nations (13.5%), Band schools or learning centres (9.4%), and students (11.5%) had below average levels of very high awareness.

Regarding the Strategy initiative of increasing Aboriginal representation on public post-secondary governance bodies, 21% of respondents had no awareness of this initiative. Respondents from First Nations (24.2%), Métis organizations (25%), First Nations leadership umbrella organizations (31.3%), and Band schools/learning centres (30.6%) had above average levels of non-awareness of this initiative. Respondents from urban Aboriginal organizations (15.4%) and unions/faculty associations (13.8%) had below average levels of non-awareness of this initiative. Overall, 9.2% of respondents possessed a very high level of awareness of this part of the Strategy. Respondents from Friendship Centres (6.9%), IAHLA institutes (4.2%) and Band schools/learning centres (2.8%) had below average levels of high awareness.

In terms of the Aboriginal Student Award, 14.3% of respondents had no awareness of this initiative. Respondents from Métis organizations (21.1%), First Nations leadership umbrella organizations (18.8%), and unions/faculty associations, students and provincial ministries had higher than average levels of non-awareness. Interestingly, no respondents from IAHLA institutes indicated having no awareness of this Award. At the same time, no IAHLA institutes indicated a very high level of awareness. Almost thirteen percent of all respondents indicated they had a very high level of awareness, with respondent from Tribal Councils (23.1%) and provincial ministries (17.2%) having higher than average very high levels of awareness. Respondents from Métis organizations (7.9%) had a below average proportion of very high levels of awareness.

Regarding the Chief Joe Mathias Scholarship for Aboriginal Learners, almost one-quarter (23.9%) of respondents possessed no awareness of this initiative. The lack of any awareness was higher for Métis organizations (32.4%) and public post-secondary institutions (28.7%).

²⁶ Throughout the survey analysis, when referring to “Métis organization”, “urban Aboriginal organizations”, etc., the text is referring to “a member” of such organizations. For example, in this instance, 19.5% were members of Métis organizations.

²⁷ In this survey analysis, when comparing respondent groups, if a particular respondent group is not mentioned as being above or below the overall average, it means that either they are not significantly different from the average; and/or the sample size for that group is too small. Also, because it is of less importance for this survey, rating by provincial ministries and federal government departments are not mentioned unless there is a notable reason for doing so.

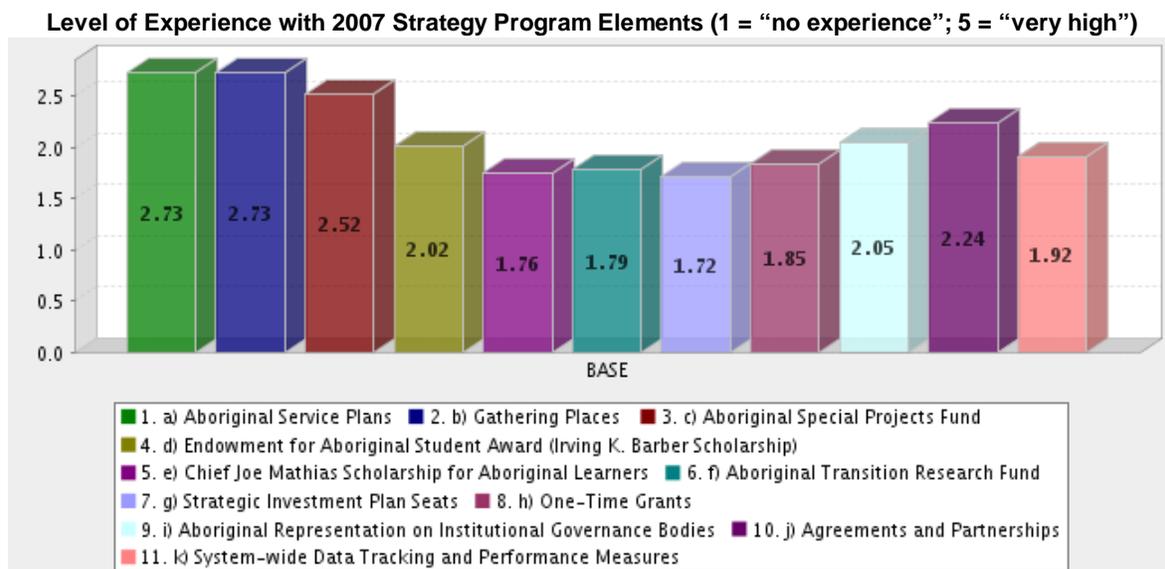
Further, while overall 8.3% of respondents had a very high level of awareness of the Scholarship, respondents from Tribal Councils (11.5%) and First Nations leadership umbrella organizations (18.8%) had higher than average levels of very high awareness. No respondents from IAHLA institutes indicated that they had a very high level of awareness of the initiative; and Band schools/learning centres (5.6%) were below average in this regard.

The awareness of the other Strategy initiatives is generally much lower than those described above, so awareness and experience (see below) levels are not covered here for the ATRF, SIPS, OTG, DTPM and increased Aboriginal governance initiatives.

Question 7

What is your level of *experience* with each the following program elements of the 2007 Strategy?

For purposes of this evaluation, this question is perhaps more significant than the previous one because it asks respondents about their level of experience with Strategy program elements.



While responses to this question mirror those to the previous question in an ordinal way, generally, the level of experience is somewhat lower than respondents’ level of awareness. This is not surprising and would probably be the same pattern for most public social programs.

As with the previous question, the rest of this section will focus on the differences in levels of experience among the respondent membership groups.

Over 28% of respondents indicated they have had no experience with ASPs. The lack of any experience with ASPs was much higher for respondents from Métis organizations (48.7%) and students (46.7%). Respondents with lower rates of “non-experience” were affiliated with Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy agreement holders (ASETS) (9.1%), IAHLA institutes (15.3%), and unions/faculty association members (15%). Fewer than eighteen percent of respondents indicated they had a very significant amount of experience with ASPs. This was over double for urban Aboriginal organizations (37.9%), and much lower than average for students (13.3%).

Regarding Gathering Places, 25.8% of respondents indicated no experience with this initiative. This lack of experience with it was much higher for respondents from First Nations leadership umbrella organizations (41.2%) and provincial ministries (33.3%); it was much lower for Tribal Councils (18.5%), urban Aboriginal organizations (17.9%), ASETS (10%) and Friendship Centres (20.7%). Almost fifteen percent of respondents indicated they had a very significant level of experience with Gathering Places. There was no significant divergence from this average except that no respondents from IAHLA institutes rated their experience as “very significant” and only ten percent of respondents from ASETS indicated this.

Almost 36% of respondents indicated no experience with the ASPF initiative. This was even higher for respondents from Métis organizations (46.2%), Friendship Centres (41.4%), First Nations leadership umbrella organizations (60%) and students (50%). Respondents from ASETS (20%) and IAHLA institutes (19.2%) had much lower non-experience levels. While 15.2% of all respondents rated their experience level with ASPF as very significant, respondents from urban Aboriginal organizations (20.7%) and public post-secondary institutions (19.6%) had higher levels of very significant experience. The only group significantly lower than the average was students at 10.7%.

Regarding the initiative to increase Aboriginal representation on public post-secondary governance bodies, 41.3% of all respondents had no experience with this. This non-experience was higher for respondents from Métis organizations (48.6%), First Nations leadership umbrella groups (53.3%), and students (53.9%). Respondents from ASETS (12.5%) and IAHLA institutes (29.2%) had a lower than average level of non-experience. While only 6.9% of all respondents had a very significant level of experience with this initiative, Tribal Councils (12.5%) had a relatively greater level of very significant experience.

Almost 43% of survey respondents indicated they have no experience with the Aboriginal Student Award. The proportion of respondents with no experience was even higher for respondents from Tribal Councils (50%), Métis organizations (52.8%), First Nations leadership umbrella organizations (50%) and students (62%). It was lower for respondents from First Nations (37.7%), urban Aboriginal organizations (26.9%), IAHLA institutes (29.2%) and Aboriginal community members (34%). Only 7.4% of respondents indicated they have a very significant level of experience with this initiative. Respondents from Tribal Councils had a significantly higher level (15.4%), as did First Nations leadership umbrella groups (18.8%).

Regarding the Chief Joe Mathias Scholarship, over half (52.1%) of all respondents had no experience with this, and 5.4% had very significant experience with the Scholarship. The non-experience was higher for respondents from Tribal Councils (57.7%), Métis organizations (58.3%), First Nations leadership umbrella organizations (62.5%), and students (71.4%).

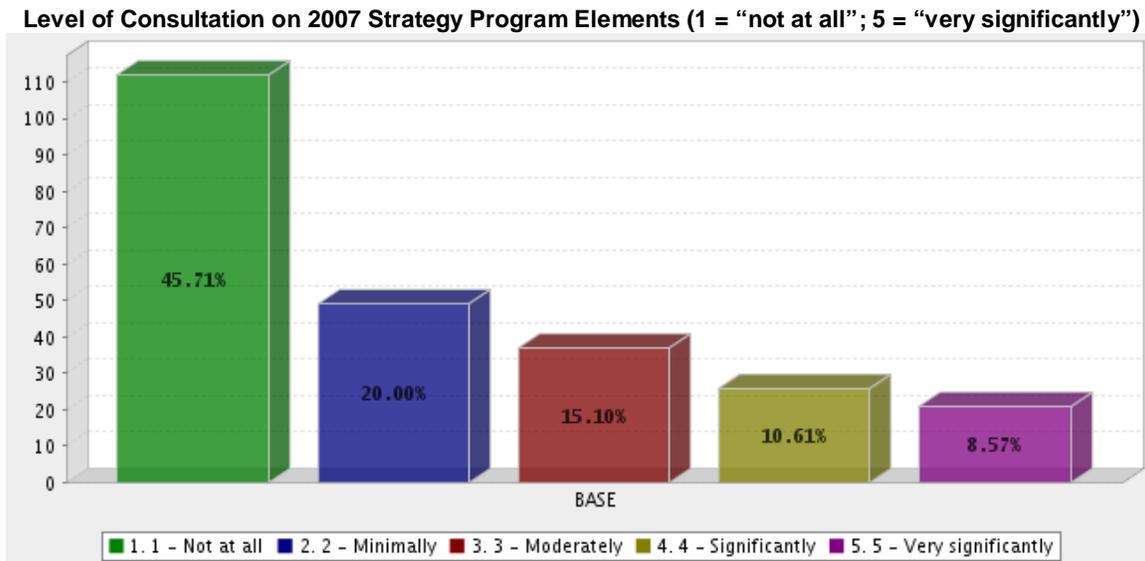
As indicated in the previous question, the experience with the other Strategy initiatives is generally much lower and therefore is not covered here for the ATRF, SIPS, OTG, DTPM and increased Aboriginal governance initiatives.

Question 8

To what extent were you and/or your organization involved in the *development* of the 2007 Strategy?

a) Extent to which one was consulted on the Strategy

Of the 245 who responded to this part of the question, 112 and 49 indicated they were not consulted at all or minimally, respectively – a total of almost 66%.

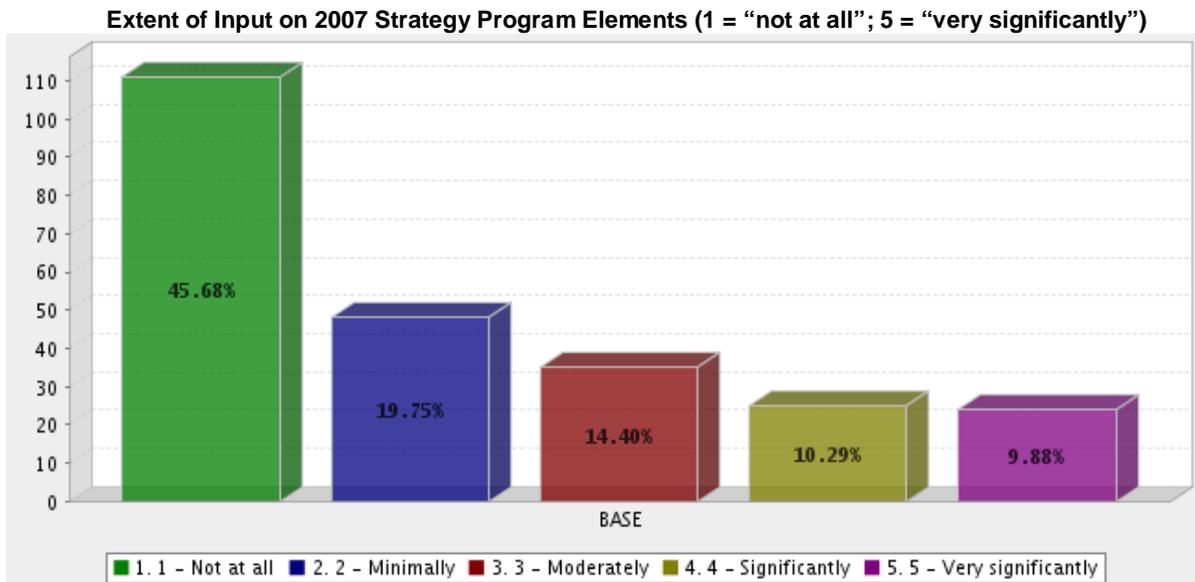


In terms of consultation, 43.4% of all respondents indicated they were not consulted at all. Respondents from Métis organizations were even higher in this regard at 60.6%, while Tribal Councils were lower than average at 27.3%. Respondents from First Nations and public post-secondary institutions were close to the average at 44.3% and 43.9%, respectively. Respondents from Tribal Councils (13.6%) also exceeded the average of 7.5% of all respondents who indicated they were consulted very significantly. Respondents from First Nations leadership umbrella groups were also higher than average at 14.3%. Again, respondents from First Nations and public post-secondary institutions were close to average on the “very significant” consultation scale at 7.1% and 8.1%, respectively.

b) Extent to which one provided input on parts of the Strategy

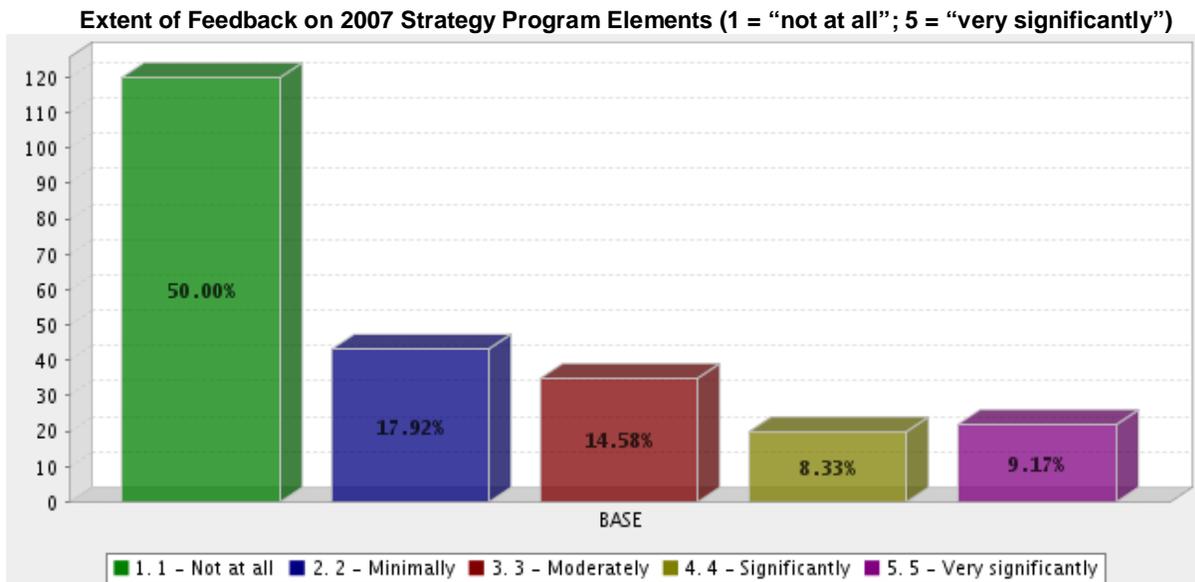
Of the 243 who responded to this part, 111 and 48 did not provide input or provided minimal input, respectively, for a total of over 65%.

Over 42% of all respondents indicated they provided no input on the Strategy. Respondents from Métis organizations had a higher percentage of “no input” at 54.6%. Many respondents from other groups were lower than average in this regard: Tribal Councils (31.8%); urban Aboriginal organizations (36.4%); Friendship Centres (34.8%); and Band schools/learning centres (35.5%). While 8.1% of all respondents reported very significant input, respondents from Tribal Councils (18.2%), First Nations leadership umbrella organizations (14.3%), and IAHLA institutes (33.3%) reported higher than average “very significant” input ratings.



c) Extent to which one provided feedback on draft material about one or more elements of the Strategy

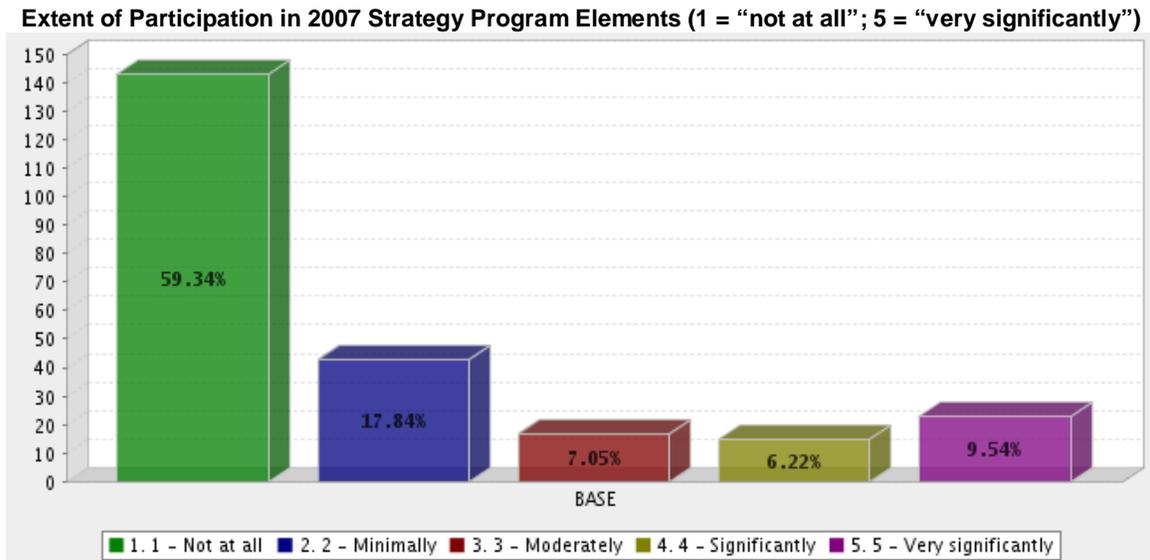
Of the 240 who responded to this part, 120 and 43 indicated they provided no or minimal feedback – a total of almost 68%.



Almost 46% of all respondents indicated they provided no feedback on a draft Strategy. Again, this was higher for respondents from Métis organizations, at 59.4%, and First Nations leadership umbrella organizations, at 53.9%. Conversely, both of these groups have significantly higher than average indications of very significant feedback on the Strategy – 13.6% and 15.4%, respectively, compared to the overall average of 7.8% for all respondents.

d) Extent to which one participated on an advisory committee to provide formal input on the Strategy

Of the 241 who responded to this part of the question, 143 and 43 indicated they did not participate on an advisory committee to provide input on the Strategy or did so to a minimal degree – a total of over 78%.

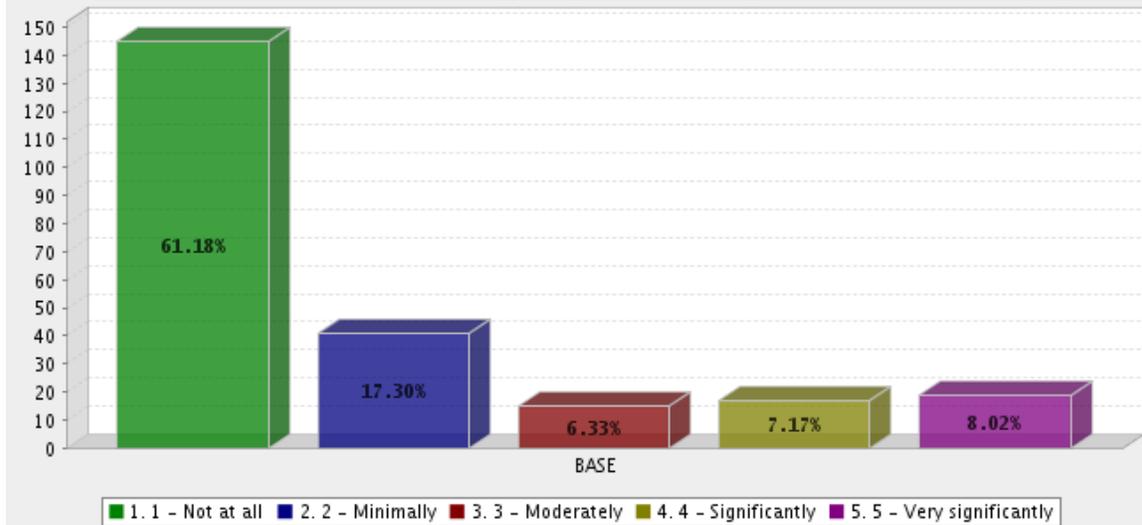


Close to 53% of all respondents were not part of an advisory committee for the development of the Strategy. This figure was 63.6% for respondents from Métis organizations, 60.8% for unions/faculty associations, 36.4% for Tribal Councils, and 14.3% for ASETS. Again, respondents from Tribal Councils and First Nations leadership umbrella organizations indicated they participated very significantly in an advisory committee to a higher extent (13.6% and 14.3%, respectively) than the average for all respondents (8.7%).

e) Extent to which one made formal recommendations that were adopted in the Strategy

Of the 237 who responded to this part, 145 and 41 indicated they made no or minimal recommendations that were adopted in the Strategy – a total of over 78%.

Extent Recommendations made on 2007 Strategy Program Elements (1 = “not at all”; 5 = “very significantly”)



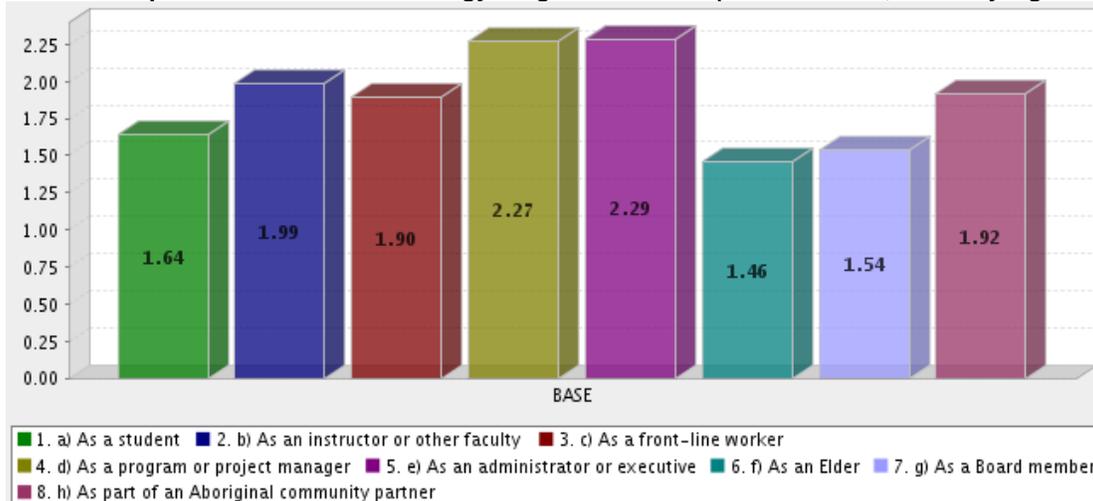
In terms of making formal recommendations that were adopted in the Strategy, 56.6% of all respondents indicated “not at all”. This was even higher for respondents from Métis organizations (68.8%) and First Nations leadership umbrella organizations (66.7%). In terms of having very significant involvement in making formal recommendations adopted in the Strategy, 7.5% of all respondents indicated they did so. Respondents from Tribal Councils were significantly higher, at 14.3%, and Métis organizations were significantly lower at 3.1%.

Question 9

To what extent were you and/or your organization involved in the *implementation* of one or more program elements of the 2007 Strategy?

Overall, the extent of involvement in the implementation of the Strategy ranged from a high of 2.29 (2 being minimal involvement and 3 being moderate involvement) for administrators or executive members of responding organizations and 2.27 for program or project managers, to a low of 1.46 for Elders and 1.54 for board members (1 is no involvement).

Involvement in Implementation of 2007 Strategy Program Elements (1 = “not at all”; 5 = “very significantly”)



a) As a student

Of 180 respondents to this part of the question, 134 and fourteen indicated no or minimal involvement with the implementation, respectively – a total of 82%.

b) As an instructor or other faculty

Of 192 respondents to this part of the question, 116 and 24 indicated no or minimal involvement with the implementation, respectively – a total of 73%.

c) As a front-line worker

Of 185 respondents to this part of the question, 121 and fifteen indicated no or minimal involvement with the implementation, respectively – a total of 74%.

d) As a program or project manager

Of 196 respondents to this part of the question, 106 and 21 indicated no or minimal involvement with the implementation, respectively – a total of 65%.

e) As an administrator or executive

Of 208 respondents to this part of the question, 107 and 24 indicated no or minimal involvement with the implementation, respectively – a total of 63%.

f) As an Elder

Of 178 respondents to this part of the question, 149 and seven indicated no or minimal involvement with the implementation, respectively – a total of 87%.

g) As a Board member

Of 183 respondents to this part of the question, 138 and fifteen indicated no or minimal involvement with the implementation, respectively – a total of 84%.

h) As part of an Aboriginal community partner

Of 196 respondents to this part of the question, 116 and 76 indicated no or minimal involvement with the implementation, respectively – a total of 72%.

Question 10

To what extent do you think the Aboriginal Service Plan(s) in which you have been involved has/have met the objectives below to date?

a) Increase the access, retention, completion and transitions opportunities for Aboriginal learners

Overall, out of 131 responses to this part of the question, 54.2% of respondents indicated this objective in ASPs was met significantly or completely. Over 19% indicated it had not been met at all or to a minimal degree.

1 - Not at all	7	5.34%
2 - Minimally	18	13.74%
3 - Moderately	35	26.72%
4 - Significantly	59	45.04%
5 - Completely	12	9.16%
Total	131	100.00%

In considering respondent group differences, 23.3%²⁸ indicated that this objective was not achieved at all or minimally. This was somewhat higher for respondents from First Nations (30.2%), Métis organizations (33.3%), urban Aboriginal organizations (29.4%), Friendship Centres (28.6%), and IAHLA institutes (28.6%). Public post-secondary respondents (12.7%) and union/faculty association members (14.3%) were significantly lower in this regard. Almost 55% of respondents indicated this objective was achieved to a significant degree or completely. While public post-secondary institutions (66.7%) and unions/faculty members (71.4%) were substantially higher in this regard, First Nations (50.8%), and Tribal Councils, Métis organizations and IAHLA institutes (all fifty percent) were slightly lower than average. Respondents from Band schools/ learning centres were also significantly lower than average at 46.7%. Students were even lower at 37.5% who said this objective was significantly or completely achieved. Respondents from Urban Aboriginal organizations (58.8%) and Friendship Centres (57.1%) were slightly higher than average on achievement of this objective.

It is important to note that because the survey software cannot drill down in more detail, we do not know, for example, how many of the First Nations in these group comparisons are First Nations with no affiliation with or membership in public post-secondary institutions.

b) Increase the receptivity and relevance of post-secondary institutions and programs for Aboriginal learners, including providing support for initiatives that address systemic barriers

Of the 126 of respondents who answered this part of the question, 59.5% indicated it was significantly or completely achieved, while 17.4% indicated it was not achieved at all or only minimally.

1 - Not at all	9	7.14%
2 - Minimally	13	10.32%
3 - Moderately	29	23.02%
4 - Significantly	65	51.59%
5 - Completely	10	7.94%
Total	126	100.00%

In the group comparison, 21% of all respondents indicated this objective was not achieved at all or minimally achieved. Many Aboriginal organization respondents rated this more negatively than the average: First Nations (28.3%); Tribal Councils (27.3%); Métis organizations (27.3%); urban Aboriginal organizations (31.3%); First Nations leadership umbrella groups (28.6%); and IAHLA institutes (35.7%). Respondents from Aboriginal communities and students were a bit higher than average in this regard at 25%. Public post-secondary respondents were much lower

²⁸ Note that figures may vary between reporting at the aggregate level and reporting at the respondent group level for the following reason. At the aggregate level, it counts individual separate responses (i.e., one response per respondent), whereas the respondent group level includes “double-counting” because, as explained in Question 4, many respondents chose more than one option. For example, regarding the a) part of this question, there are 131 individual responses, compared to 360 when counting by the respondent group.

in terms of no or minimal achievement, at 10.7%, as were unions/faculty members at 7.1%. While overall, 60.3% of respondents rated this objective as being achieved to a significant degree or completely, the figure was 55% for First Nation respondents, 45.5% for Métis organization respondents, 28.6% for First Nations leadership umbrella groups, fifty percent for IAHLA institute respondents and 52.3% for Aboriginal community respondents. The highest positive ratings for this objective were: Tribal Councils (63%); urban Aboriginal organizations (68.8%); Friendship Centres (64.3%); public post-secondary institutions (67.9%); and unions/faculty members (78.6%).

c) Strengthen partnerships and collaboration in Aboriginal post-secondary education

Almost sixty percent of the 131 respondents to this part of the question said the objective was met to a significant degree or completely, while almost twenty percent indicated it was not met at all or only minimally.

1 - Not at all	9	6.87%
2 - Minimally	17	12.98%
3 - Moderately	27	20.61%
4 - Significantly	66	50.38%
5 - Completely	12	9.16%
Total	131	100.00%

While 22.3% of all respondents thought this objective was not achieved at all or only minimally, the figure was much higher for respondents from First Nations (30.2%), First Nations leadership umbrella organizations (57.2%), and IAHLA institutes (35.7%). Interestingly, Métis organizations had a lower rating (16.7%) in this regard, as did urban Aboriginal organizations (11.8%). Public post-secondary respondents were also lower than average, at 15.9%; as were unions/faculty members, at 10.7%. Fifty-six percent of respondents indicated that this objective was achieved to a significant degree or completely. Those who rated the achievement of this objective less positively than average were affiliated as follows: First Nations (50.8%); Métis organizations (41.7%); First Nations leadership umbrella organizations (14.3%); IAHLA institutes (50%); Aboriginal community members (46.8%); and students (50%). More positive ratings (than average) were received from Friendship Centres (64.3%), public post-secondary institutes (71.6%), and unions/faculty members (71.4%).

Question 11

Please indicate your rationale for your above rating for each of the Aboriginal Service Plan objectives.

Respondents were asked the above supplementary question to explain their rating of the attainment of each of the three objectives associated with the ASPs. The responses provided a rich body of information that provides many examples of achievements and issues. These were drawn on in the analysis of each component in the body of this evaluation report, and will only be briefly summarized here because of time and in order to avoid duplication.

It should be noted that limitations in survey software mean that respondent groups cannot be cross-tabulated with responses to open-ended questions.

a) Increase the access, retention, completion and transitions opportunities for Aboriginal learners

Of the 104 who responded to this question, many respondents indicated growth in access, retention and completions and gave examples and anecdotes about this. Reading these open-ended responses provides a deeper appreciation of the benefits, as well as the issues and barriers.

A number of respondents commented that ASP has been positive, but that it is a start and the types of activities it supports need to be continued. A small number of respondents indicated they did not know or could assess whether ASP has led to increases in access, retention and completion; and further that ASP goals are long term and one cannot expect to achieve them (at all or completely) in three years. A small number also indicated they or their community did not benefit from ASP; in some cases, they indicated this was because they were not in a region with an ASP.

All in all, a fairly strong positive response about ASP is reflected in most of the 104 open-ended responses.

b) Increase the receptivity and relevance of post-secondary institutions and programs for Aboriginal learners, including providing support for initiatives that address systemic barriers

Again, respondents (n=91) provided many positive comments about achieving improvements in regard to this objective of ASPs. Elders-in-Residence programs, increased support services for students, and new/supplemented Aboriginal coordinator/advisor positions were noted by many; as were the benefits of a greater awareness among faculty and staff at public institutions in terms of Indigenous culture, history, perspective and learner needs. Respondents also noted the creation of a greater sense of community on campus. A few respondents indicated this objective is embedded in their public institution's mandate/mission/strategic direction.

Shortcomings in ASPs in terms of achieving this objective were identified by a small number of respondents; nevertheless such comments are instructive and include the following:

- Few initiatives for Métis people
- Vagueness about concept of "Indigenization" and what it means on the ground
- Resulting in putting on a few new courses but not necessarily embedding in curriculum and culture across the campus
- Adding many supports for students on campus but not necessarily translating this into sustained outreach to Aboriginal communities
- High turnover rate of Aboriginal support positions

c) Strengthen partnerships and collaboration in Aboriginal post-secondary education

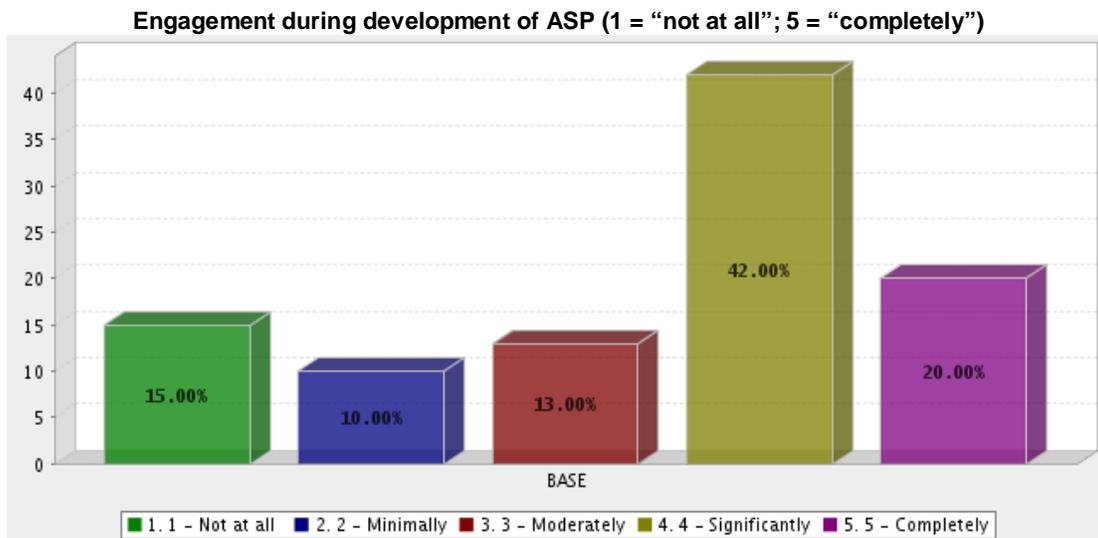
Of the ninety respondents to this part of the question, most reported increases in partnerships and collaboration and/or expansion of existing partnership(s); many of these respondents provided specific information and/or examples about ASP partnerships and collaboration. Again, this reflects a generally positive response. Over ten respondents did express concerns that ASP did not lead to new/expanded partnership for their organization/community and ASP institutions. For example (paraphrased to protect identity): "As the largest Aboriginal-controlled learning institute in the region, we have never been consulted or collaborated with on any initiatives that the (public ASP) institution has tried. We only became aware of the ASP just before it was to be submitted."

Question 12

To what extent were Aboriginal communities/partners engaged in and participating in the various stages of the Aboriginal Service Plan in which you may have been involved?

a) During the development or conception of an initiative or project

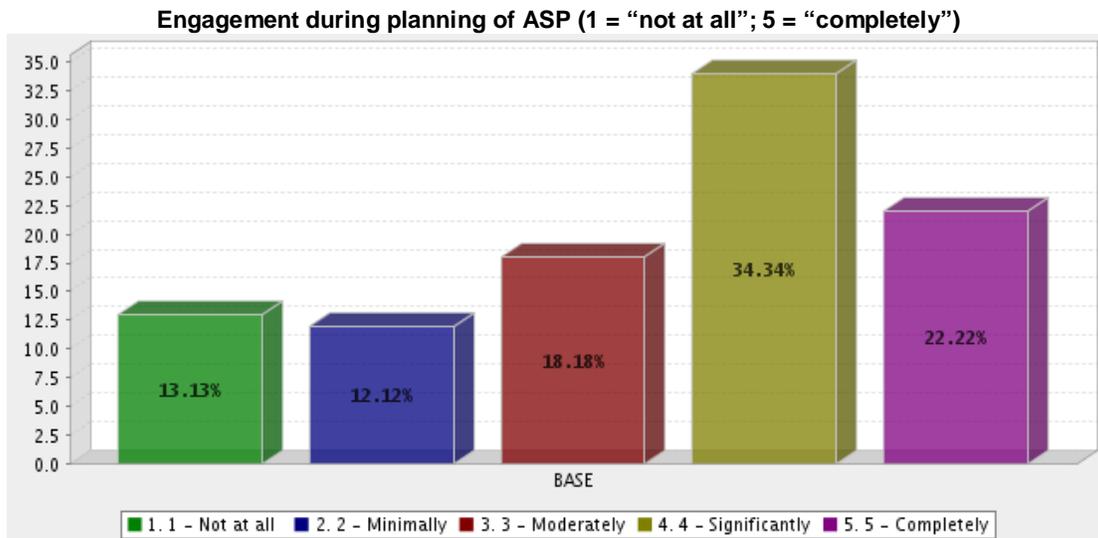
Of 100 responses to this part of the question, 25 (25%) indicated no or minimal engagement and participation during ASP development/conception, while 62 (62%) indicated significant or complete engagement/participation.



In terms of respondent groups, 28.4% of all respondents rated involvement in this stage of the ASP as not at all or minimally. Higher levels of this lack of/minimal involvement were reported by respondents from First Nations (38.5%), Tribal Councils (44.4%), Métis organizations (40%), First Nations umbrella organizations (50%), and students (42.9%). Respondents from public post-secondary institutions (18.2%), urban Aboriginal groups (21.4%), and unions/faculty members (14.3%) indicated lower levels of this negative rating. Almost sixty percent of respondents rated involvement at this stage of ASP as significant or completely. While urban Aboriginal organizations (78.6%), public post-secondary institutions (70.8%) and unions/faculty members (71.4%) provided a higher positive rating, First Nations (50%), Tribal Councils (44.4%), Métis organizations (50%), First Nations leadership umbrella groups (50%), and students (42.9%) were all lower than the average rating for involvement during this stage of ASP.

b) During the planning of an initiative or project

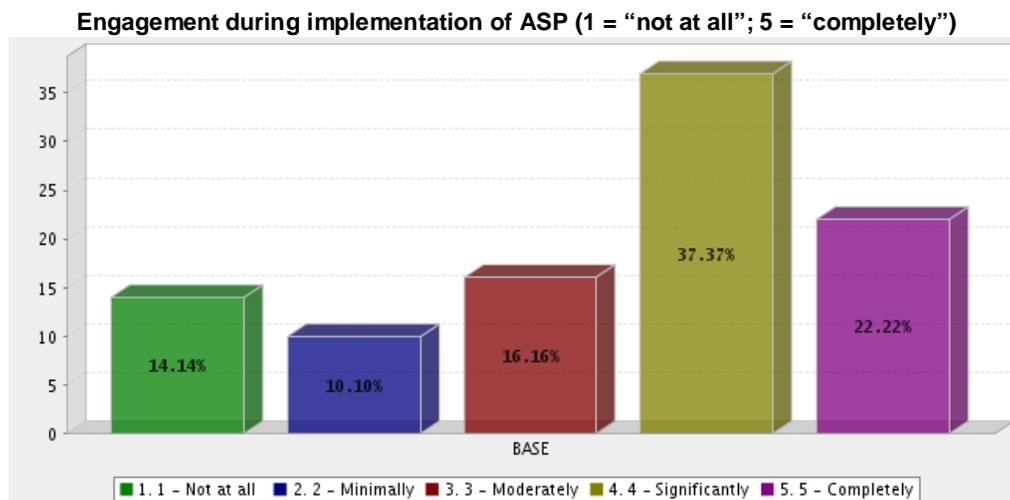
Of the 99 responses to this part, 25 (25.3%) reported no or minimal engagement/ participation during ASP planning; 56 (56.6%) indicated significant or complete involvement in this stage.



Over 28% of all respondents indicated they were not or were minimally involved in the planning of the ASP; 51% indicated they were involved to a significant degree or completely. Significantly higher levels of no/minimal involvement reports came from First Nation respondents (40.4%), Tribal Councils (33.3%), Métis organizations (40%), Aboriginal community members (34.1%), and students (50%). Respondents from urban Aboriginal organizations (23.1%), Friendship Centres (16.7%), public post-secondary institutions (18.1%) and unions/faculty members (14.3%) indicated a lower proportion of negative ratings. The same patterns existed in a reverse way for positive ratings. First Nations and the other groups that had higher than average no/minimal involvement ratings also had lower than average positive ratings; the same with the other groups who had lower than average no/minimal involvement reports. There was one exception; respondents from IAHLA institutes involved a higher proportion of respondents who rated involvement in ASP planning at 61.5% compared to the overall average of 51%.

c) During the implementation/delivery of the initiative or project

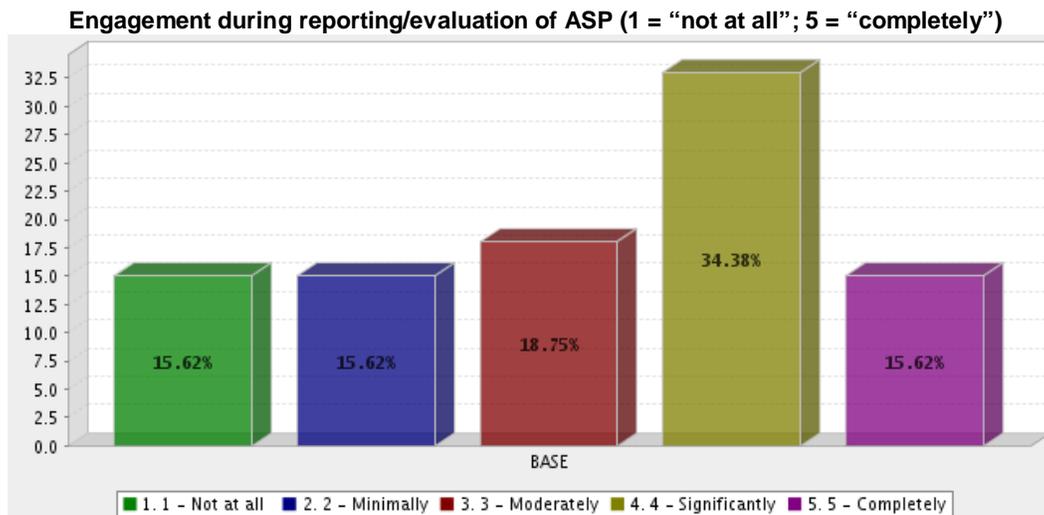
During implementation/delivery of ASPs, 24 of the 99 respondents indicated they were not engaged at all or only to a minimal degree; while 59 (59.6%) reported they were involved significantly or completely.



Overall, the respondent rating for involvement in implementation of ASPs is similar to those for the planning stage: 28.4% indicated no or minimal involvement and 50.2% indicated significant or complete involvement. The pattern of response by respondent group is similar to responses to question 12 c), including the above-average positive ranking by respondents from IAHLA institutes (61.5%). The one difference from the previous sub-question is that sixty percent of respondents from Métis organizations characterized their involvement in ASP during its implementation/delivery as significant or complete. It is important to note that for some of these groups, the numbers are small (n=10 for Métis organization responses to this part of the question).

d) During the reporting and evaluation of the initiative or project

During the reporting and evaluation of ASP activities, thirty (32.3%) of the 96 respondents to this question reported no or minimal involvement in ASP reporting/evaluation; while 48 (50%) reported significant or complete involvement. This relatively lower involvement (than in the other three phases of ASP) may be understandable since the three-year ASP funding has only recently ended.



Based on the respondent group analysis, over one-third (36.3%) of respondents indicated they were not involved or were minimally involved in the reporting and evaluation of ASP. Conversely, 45.8% indicated they were involved significantly or completely. Those who indicated most non/minimal involvement are respondents from First Nations (43.1%), Tribal Councils (44.4%), First Nations leadership umbrella groups (50%), Aboriginal community members (43.9%), and students (62.5%). Those who indicated least non/minimal involvement were reported by respondents from public post-secondary institutions (24.6%), Band schools/learning centres (20%), and unions/faculty members (28.6%). Groups with lower than average proportions that indicate significant or complete involvement are respondents from Tribal Councils (33.3%), urban Aboriginal organizations (30.8%), Aboriginal community members (35%), and students (25%). Those with higher proportions of positive responses are public post-secondary institutions (55.1%), IAHLA institutes (61.5%), and Band schools/learning centres (80%) (n=10).

Question 13

Please describe the process of engagement regarding an Aboriginal Service Plan in your institution or region, and describe your and other partners’ involvement in this process.

The open-ended responses to this question (n=79) reflect a very similar pattern as the question about partnerships in Question 11. Most of the responses indicate a significant level of engagement with Aboriginal partners and communities, with positive examples and indications of the extent and methodology of engagement. However, there was a minority (13 or 16.5%) of respondents who expressed concern about minimal or no engagement by a public post-secondary institution in their region. These negative responses mostly centred around two institutions.

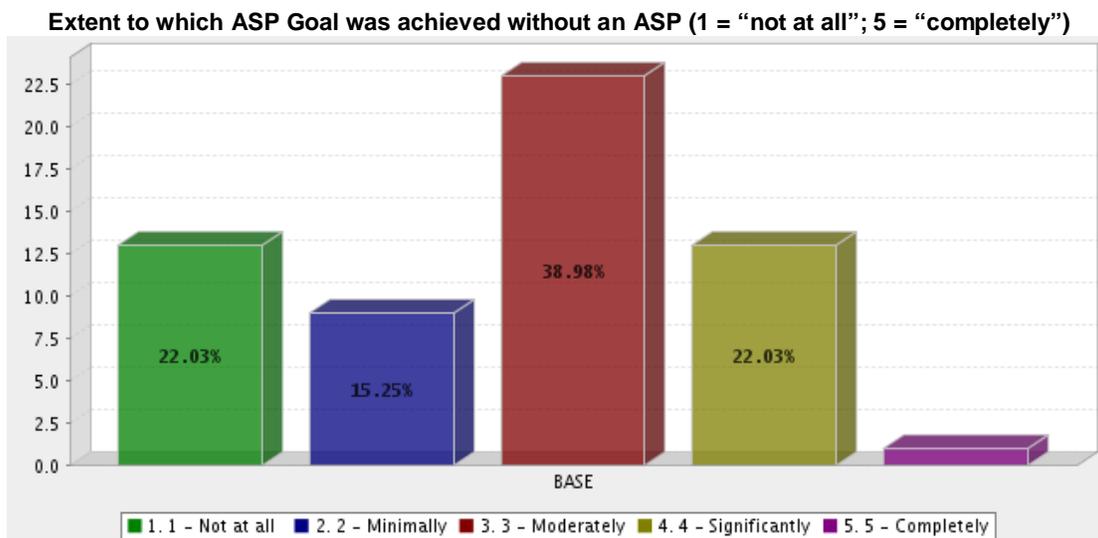
Question 14

If you are part of an institution or region without an Aboriginal Service Plan, to what extent has your institution or region been able to use other mechanisms to achieve goals similar to those set out in the Aboriginal Service Plans?

This is potentially an important question in the survey because it can give a voice to individuals in those regions where an ASP does not exist. Since the focus of the survey is on the Strategy and its various program elements, the evaluators thought it was important to ask respondents about this.

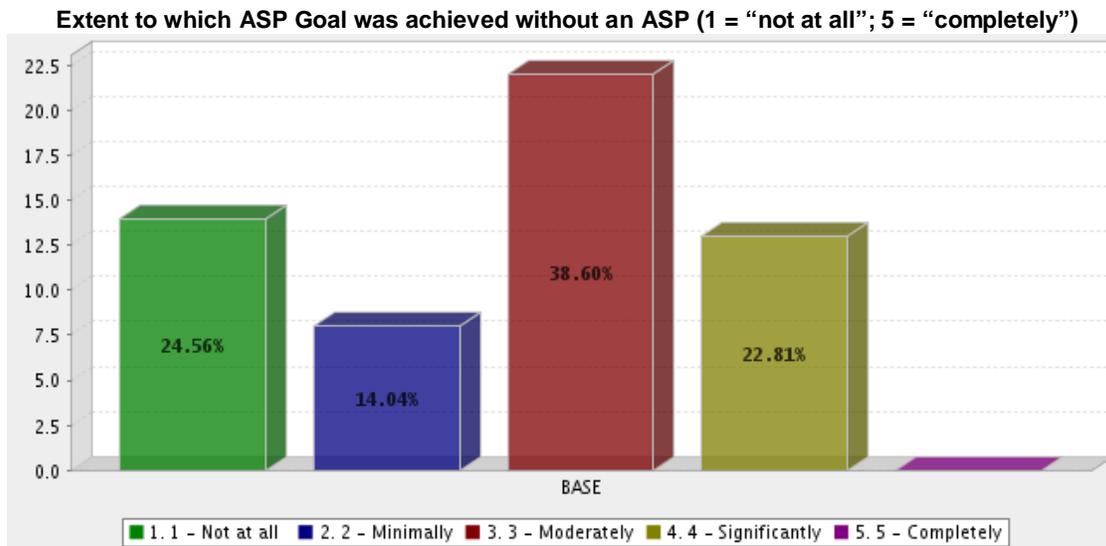
a) Increase the access, retention, completion and transitions opportunities for Aboriginal learners

In terms of achieving this objective, 22 or 37.3% of the respondents (n=59) indicated these have not been achieved at all or minimally; and fourteen or 23.7% indicated they have been achieved to a significant degree or completely.



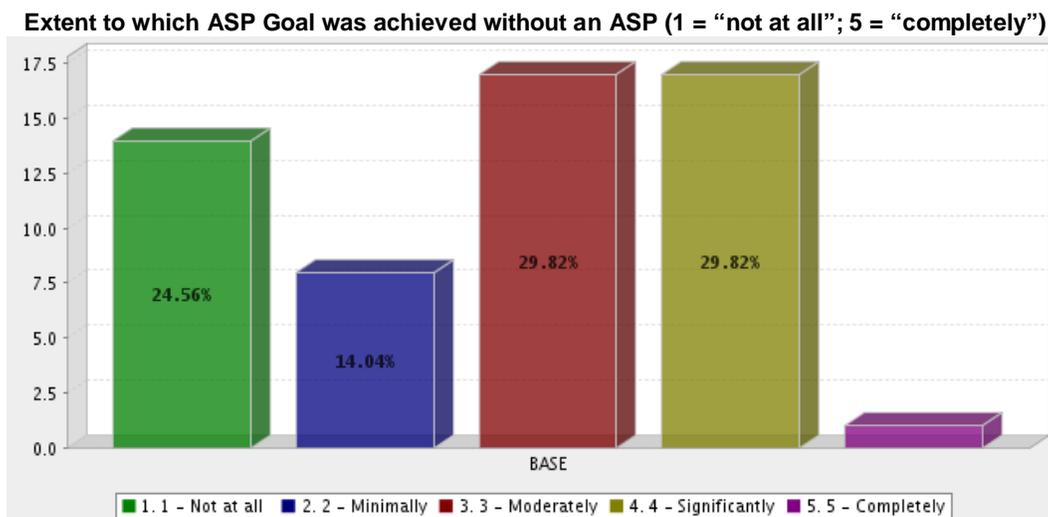
b) Increase the receptivity and relevance of post-secondary institutions and programs for Aboriginal learners, including providing support for initiatives that address systemic barriers

Of the 57 respondents who replied to this part of the question, 22 or 38.6% saw no or minimal progress toward this objective; while thirteen or 22.8% thought it was achieved to a significant degree or completely.



c) Strengthen partnerships and collaboration in Aboriginal post-secondary education

Of the 57 who responded to this part of the question, 22 or 38.6% thought that alternatives to ASPs did not achieve the partnership/collaboration objective at all or only minimally. Eighteen or 31.6% of respondents indicated this was achieved to a significant extent or completely.



When analyzing the responses to this question by respondent group, the patterns are very similar to the responses to questions about attainment of ASP objectives. Most respondents from Aboriginal organizations and students show less positive ratings of the degree to which these objectives have been achieved outside of ASPs; public post-secondary institutions and unions/faculty associations tend to show more positive ratings. Further, since n=57 to 59, the numbers for individual groups by each part of the rating scale are relatively small making one less confident to draw conclusions from.

When one compares responses in achieving the above three objectives among respondents not involved in ASPs with respondents involved in ASPs (i.e. Question 10), non-ASP (this question) respondents (overall) rated achievement to a lower extent than ASP respondents (Question 10). For example, 54.2%, 59.5% and 59.5% of those involved in ASP indicated that objectives a), b)

and c), respectively, were achieved significantly or completely. For non-ASP responses to this Question (14), the proportions were 27.3%, 22.8% and 31.6%, respectively.

Question 15

Please indicate your rationale for your above rating (as an institution or region without an Aboriginal Service Plan) for each of the Aboriginal Service Plan objectives.

a) Increase the access, retention, completion and transition opportunities for Aboriginal learners

Respondents (n=46) identified a number support services for students, preparatory and bridging programs, funding from other parts of the Strategy (e.g., ASPF, Gathering Places), and making Aboriginal post-secondary education a priority within an institution's vision and strategic direction as strategies to achieve this objective without ASP funding.

b) Increase the receptivity and relevance of post-secondary institutions and programs for Aboriginal learners, including providing support for initiatives that address systemic barriers

Respondents (n=40) referred to "Indigenizing" initiatives, bridging programs, coordinators and support services, MOUs, Gathering Places, recruiting strategies, the Aboriginal Health and Human Resource Initiative (AHHRI), reforming admissions policies, "de-colonization" of curriculum and multicultural training as strategies for increasing institutional receptivity and relevance.

c) Strengthen partnerships and collaboration in Aboriginal post-secondary education

Respondents (n=35) cited Aboriginal community councils, curriculum committees, affiliation partnerships with IAHLA institutes, and other types of partnership with Aboriginal communities. A number of respondents emphasized that partnerships and broad goals are good, but the real focus should be on students – on and off campus (in communities) and supporting them as much as possible. Some respondents provided examples of positive partnerships and forms of collaboration.

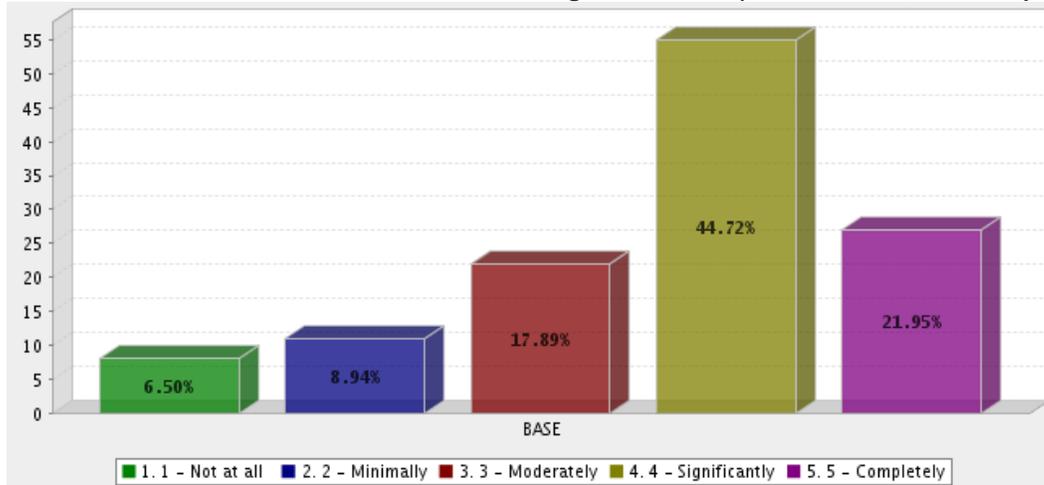
Question 16

To what extent do you think the Gathering Place(s) in which you have been involved has/have met the objectives below to date?

a) Reflect the cultural needs and characteristics of Aboriginal students, community, and traditions

Two-thirds (66.7%) or 82 of respondents (n=123) indicated that the Gathering Place objective was achieved to a significant degree or completely. Nineteen respondents or 15.4% indicated that it was not achieved or only minimally.

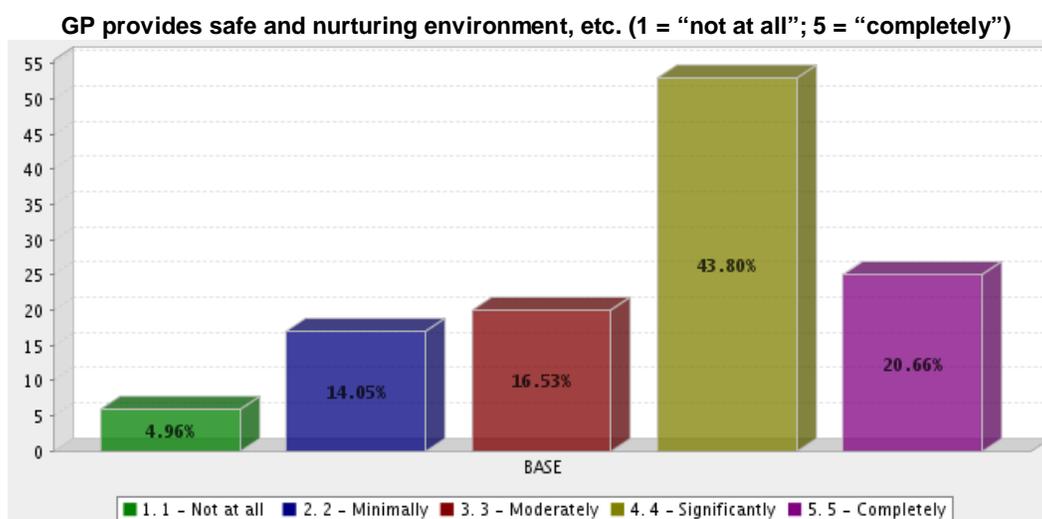
GP reflects cultural needs and characteristics of Aboriginal students (1 = “not at all”; 5 = “completely”)



When viewed from a respondent group perspective, overall, 15.3% of respondents rated this objective as not achieved or minimally achieved. Respondents from First Nations (20.6%), urban Aboriginal organizations (25%), and Friendship Centres (23.5%) were over-represented on this end of the scale. Interestingly no respondents from First Nations umbrella organizations or Band school/learning centre members rated this objective as not being achieved or only minimally achieved. Aboriginal community member respondents were close to the overall average in this regard, at 15.6%. Almost two-thirds (65.9%) of all respondents indicated this objective was achieved to a significant extent or completely. This objective received one of the highest ratings by members of Aboriginal organizations: Tribal Councils (78.5%); Métis organizations (75%); urban Aboriginal organizations (68.75%); and IAHLA institutes (77.9%). Almost 72% of public post-secondary institution respondents gave this a positive rating. Over 58% of First Nations members indicated this objective was achieved to a significant degree or completely; Friendship Centres', First Nation leadership umbrella organizations', Band schools/learning centres' and Aboriginal community members' positive ratings were 52.9%, 62.5% and 60%, respectively. For unions/faculty members and students, the ratings were 69.1% and 57.9%, respectively.

b) Provide a safe and nurturing environment, where Aboriginal learners can experience a spiritual and physical connection to their culture

Of 121 who responded to this part of the question, 64.5% (78) indicated that this objective was achieved to a significant extent or completely. Nineteen percent (23) said it was not achieved at all or only minimally.

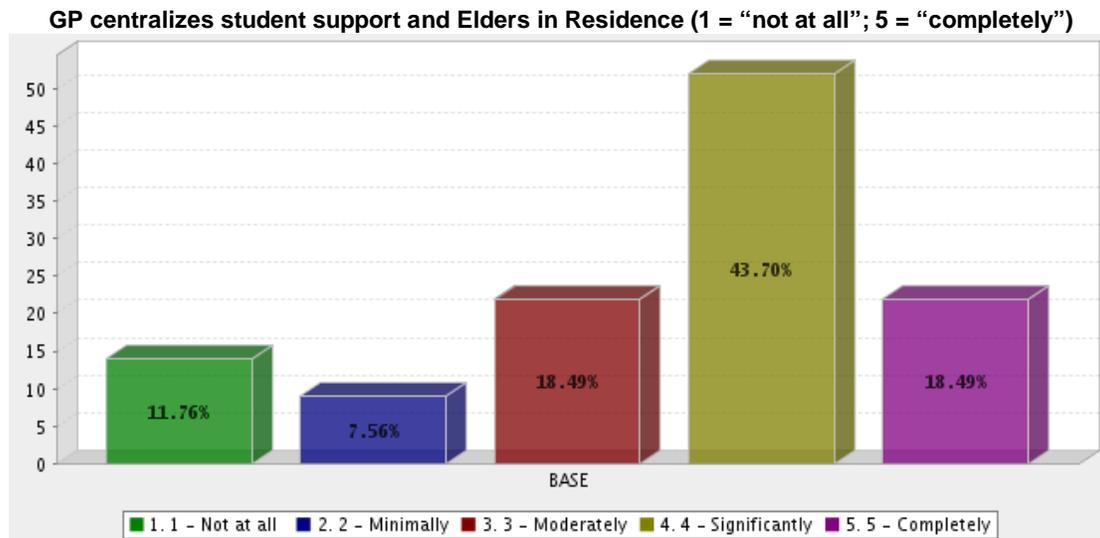


In terms of respondent group differences, overall, 18.6% indicated this objective was not achieved or minimally achieved, while 64.4% indicated it was achieved significantly or completely.

The respondent groups who provided a significantly higher than average negative rating were First Nations (22.6%), urban Aboriginal organizations (25%), Friendship Centres (29.4%), and students (26.3%). Those groups who provided a significantly lower than average negative rating for this objective were respondents from Tribal Councils (12.5%), First Nations leadership umbrella groups (14.3%), IAHLA institutes (11.1%), and Band schools/learning centres (6.7%). On the positive end of the scale, an above-average proportion of “significantly” or “completely” ratings were provided by respondents from Métis organizations (73.3%), First Nations leadership umbrella organizations (71.4%), Band schools/learning centres (73.3%), and unions/faculty members (73.1%). Lower than average “positive” ratings were provided by respondents from First Nations (56.4%), Friendship Centres (58.9%), IAHLA institutes (55.6%), and Aboriginal community members (54.6%).

c) Centralize student development and support, including Elders in residence programming

Responses to this part of the question were similar (n=119) to the previous one, with 62.2% reporting that this objective was achieved significantly or completely; while 19.3% indicated it was not achieved or only minimally.

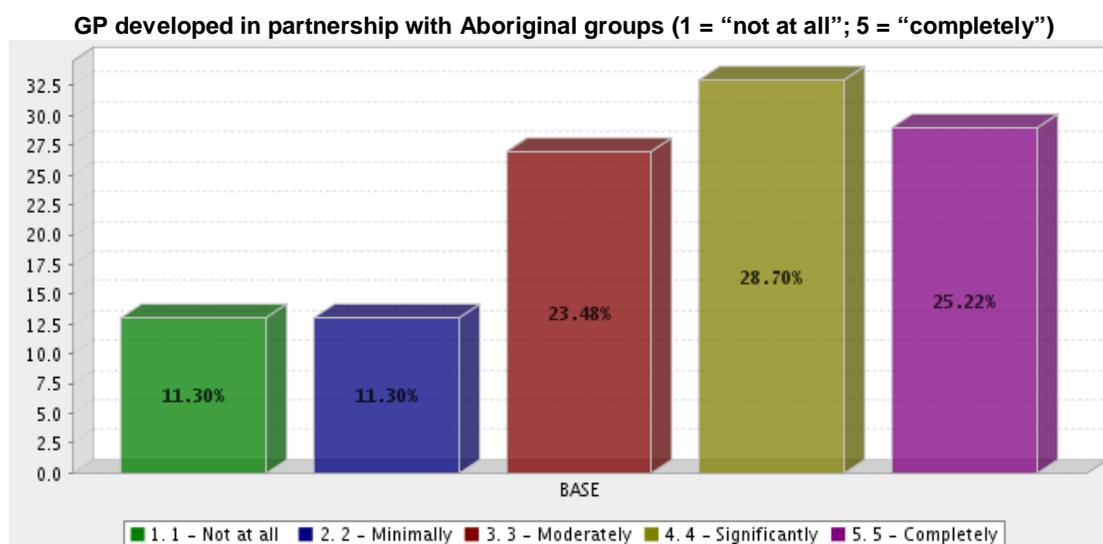


In terms of respondent group differences, overall, 18.8% indicated this objective was not achieved or minimally achieved, while 62.7% indicated it was achieved significantly or completely.

Those respondent groups who provided a significantly higher than average negative rating were urban Aboriginal organizations (31.3%), Friendship Centres (29.4%) and IAHLA institutes (37.5%). Those respondent groups who provided a significantly lower than average negative rating for this objective were Tribal Councils (11.8%) and Band schools/learning centres (7.1%). Groups that had a higher than average positive rating (“significantly” or “completely” achieved) were First Nations leadership umbrella organizations (71.4%) and Band schools/learning centres (78.6%). All of the other respondent groups were around or slightly below the 62.7% average positive rating for all respondents.

d) Developed in partnership with Aboriginal organizations, communities, bands and/or tribal councils with a demonstrated commitment to ongoing consultation and involvement

Just over half (53.9%) of the respondents (n=115) chose “significantly” or “completely” regarding this objective, while 22.6% or 26 responded that it has not been achieved or only minimally.



In terms of respondent group differences, overall, 22.5% indicated this objective was not achieved or minimally achieved, while 51.1% indicated it was achieved significantly or completely. While still a positive rating overall, the Gathering Place objective received the lowest overall rating for this partnership/commitment to on-going consultation objective relative to the other Strategy elements.

Those respondent groups who provided a significantly higher than average negative rating were Friendship Centres (29.4%), First Nations leadership umbrella organizations (28.6%) and Band schools/learning centres (28.8%). Those respondent groups who provided a significantly lower than average negative rating for this objective were Tribal Councils (17.6%) and unions/faculty members (17.4%). Respondent groups that had a higher than average positive rating (“significantly” or “completely” achieved) were Métis organizations (57.1%), public post-secondary institutions (60.7%), IAHLA institutes (62.5%) and Band schools/learning centres (64.3%). Respondent groups with a significantly lower than average positive ratings were Tribal Councils (41.2%), Friendship Centres (36.3%) and First Nations leadership umbrella groups (43.9%).

Question 17

Please indicate your rationale for the above rating for each of the Gathering Place objectives.

a) Reflect the cultural needs and characteristics of Aboriginal students, community, and traditions

Of the 107 respondents who provided a rationale for the rating of the achievement of the above Gathering Place objective, most comments reflected positive experiences with recently completed Gathering Places. They described respectful processes for involving Aboriginal communities and students in the conception, design and start up of Gathering Places; they spoke positively of physical features of artwork and culture with such structures; and commented on how they are a welcoming place for students, Elders, staff and community members, and where staff can provide the support needed by Aboriginal students in one place. These comments included many examples of the inclusive processes and benefits of Gathering Places, and the importance of this initiative. A number of respondents referred to their Gathering

Place still being under construction or not completely finished, which made it difficult for them to comment on achievement of this goal.

At the same time there were instructive and sometimes negative comments from 25 of the respondents. These included:

“Not being part of the process or not being consulted in a respectful way on the development.”

“Difficult for those in remote communities to participate.”

“Many (smaller) campuses do not have one and it is difficult for smaller campuses and communities to raise the necessary funds (i.e., it is a great thing and now everyone wants one).”

“Not enough space, need for a stand-alone building.”

“Perhaps created in an older building and not developed with Aboriginal culture or spiritual needs in mind – “just another office”.”

“Should not be built as a “multicultural” space for others to use.”

“Nice but it is only a “shell” that needs to be filled with Aboriginal support services, and Aboriginal art and cultural designs.”

“Our Gathering Place is rarely used by students.”

“There is a lack of awareness about this resource, it needs to be promoted more.”

There were negative and concerning comments from six respondents about how one institution used its Gathering Place funds. For example: “[The institution] spent the money minimally on the so-called Gathering Place.” Or “neither the [an Aboriginal organization] nor the [a First Nation] had any input into the project nor were they ever consulted [even though both were identified as partners in the application].”

b) Provide a safe and nurturing environment, where Aboriginal learners can experience a spiritual and physical connection to their culture

Of the 98 respondents to this part of the question, again, most were quite positive about the Gathering Places they have experienced. They provided many examples of how the space has addressed safety, spirituality and provided a physical “home away from home” (as one respondent said). Some comments were repetitive of the first objective responses. Some comments referred to the “work in progress” of Gathering Places and indicated it takes time. Elders are a big part of the Gathering Places described by those responding positively. Some Gathering Places are already offering specialized support services, cultural workshops, various cultural events and customs like potlucks, traditional feasts, talking circles, and showcases of artwork, profiles of cultures, spiritual smudging ceremonies, indigenous plants in the exteriors, etc.

Again, a smaller number (19) of respondents provided critical comments about the achievement of this Gathering Place goal, including a small number who expressed concerns about one institution’s Gathering Place approach. Some of the other negative comments might have been referring to “growing pains”, issues that will be worked out over time. These included things like not enough space, a lack of privacy, issues around access and having adequate staff to keep the space open most hours, smudging policy, not enough use of the space by students, etc. Some of these respondents also felt that the spiritual support aspect of their Gathering Place

was not or only minimally developed. One Métis respondent expressed that they felt “out of place” and not welcomed in their Gathering Place.

c) Centralize student development and support, including Elders in residence programming

Again, most of the 91 respondents who responded to this part of the question provided positive examples of bringing student supports and Elders into one space, their Gathering Place. There was a strong positive response to the importance of having Elders involved on campus, and specifically at Gathering Places; in particular, many of these responses referred to the critical importance of Elders-in-Residence programs for many reasons. At the same time, a number of respondents pointed out the challenge of providing adequate funding for Elders’ involvement including sustained funding, funds for Elder travel, food and other expenses, and for a dedicated space (e.g., Elders’ Lounge) within the Gathering Place. One respondent was “stunned” that their institution’s Elders were there “on soft money”, and expressed that they should be funded out of base-budget funds like they do for Elders involved in “academic programs.”

As indicated, while many respondents described their Gathering Place as bringing together services and supports in one space, some described a challenge of centralizing these activities when the institution is a large and/or spread-out campus and when the institution is distributed across several traditional territories.

d) Developed in partnership with Aboriginal organizations, communities, bands and/or tribal councils with a demonstrated commitment to ongoing consultation and involvement

A large majority of the 89 responses to this part of the question described positive relationships, partnerships, committees and councils that were an integral part of the work around Gathering Places. Many of these stressed the importance of meaningful, respectful partnerships, and involving all First Nations, other Aboriginal groups and students in these processes. Some respondents did express the importance and challenge of sustaining such involvement on an on-going basis. There were a smaller number of negative responses (9) and these focused on a couple of institutions and on not being included in the Gathering Place process in their region.

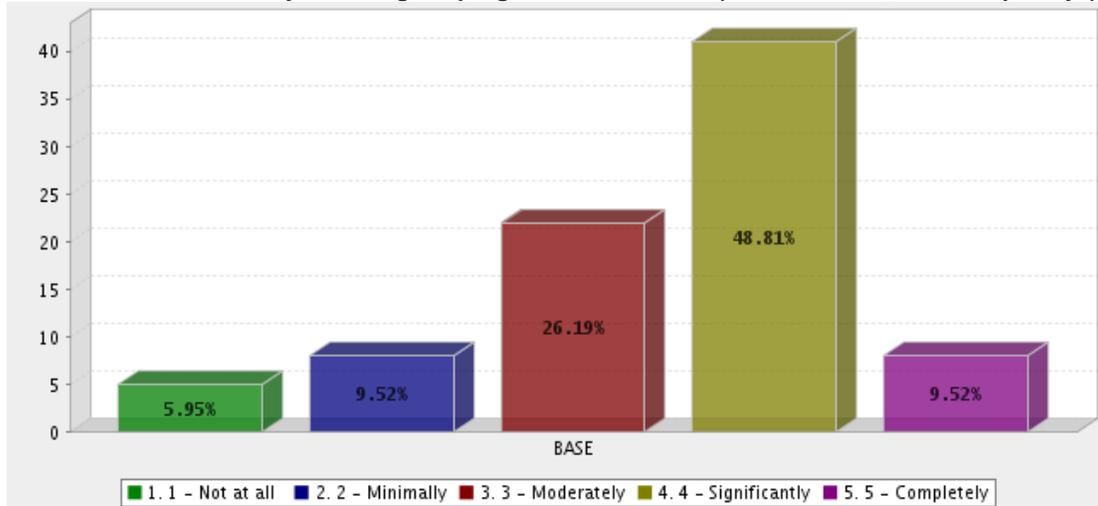
Question 18

To what extent do you think the Aboriginal Special Projects Fund project(s) in which you have been involved has/have met the objectives below to date?

a) Increased delivery of Aboriginal programs and Aboriginal content in programs and services

Of 84 who responded to this part of the question, 58.3% (49) indicated that this objective was achieved to a significant extent or completely. Almost sixteen percent (13) indicated it was not achieved at all or only minimally.

ASPF increased delivery of Aboriginal programs and content (1 = “not at all”; 5 = “completely”)



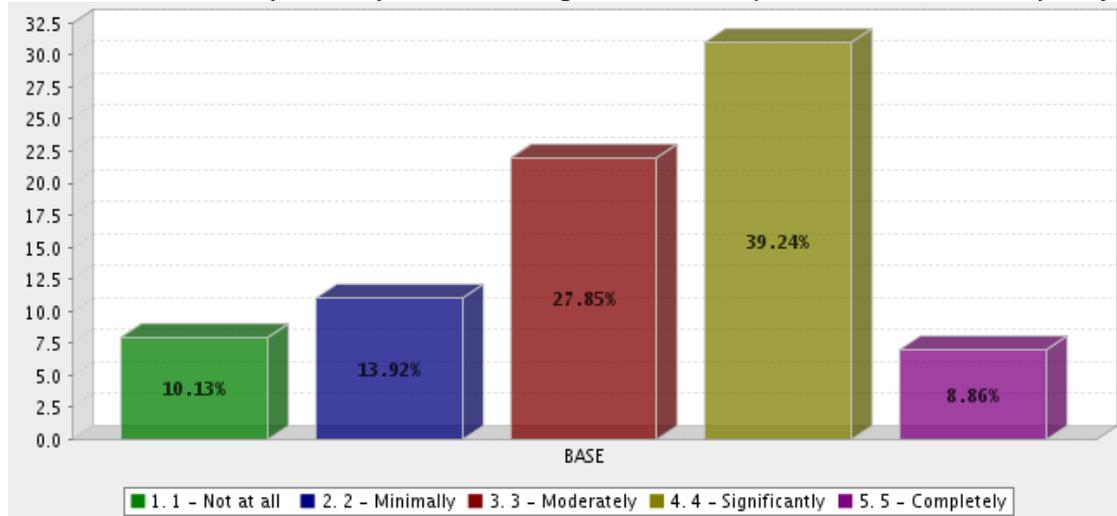
In looking at the differences among respondent groups, the sample size of each group for this question is lower than previous questions. For those with large enough sample sizes, here are the responses:

- Of 33 First Nation respondents, 18.2% (6) indicated this objective was not achieved or only minimally; while 54.5% indicated it was significantly or completely attained.
- Of 63 public post-secondary respondents, 11.1% saw this objective not being achieved or being achieved to a minimal degree; while two-thirds (66.7%) thought it was achieved to a significant degree or completely.
- Of the 28 Aboriginal community respondents, 21.4% indicated it had not been achieved at all or only minimally; 57.2% felt it had been achieved to a significant degree or completely.
- The numbers for unions/faculty respondents were 13.6% (not achieved or only minimally) and 59.1% (significantly or completely achieved).

b) Increased development of provincial curriculum specifically designed for Aboriginal students

Of 79 who responded to this part of the question, 48.1% (38) indicated that this objective was achieved to a significant extent or completely. Twenty-four percent (19) said it was not achieved at all or only minimally.

ASPF increased development of provincial Aboriginal curriculum (1 = “not at all”; 5 = “completely”)



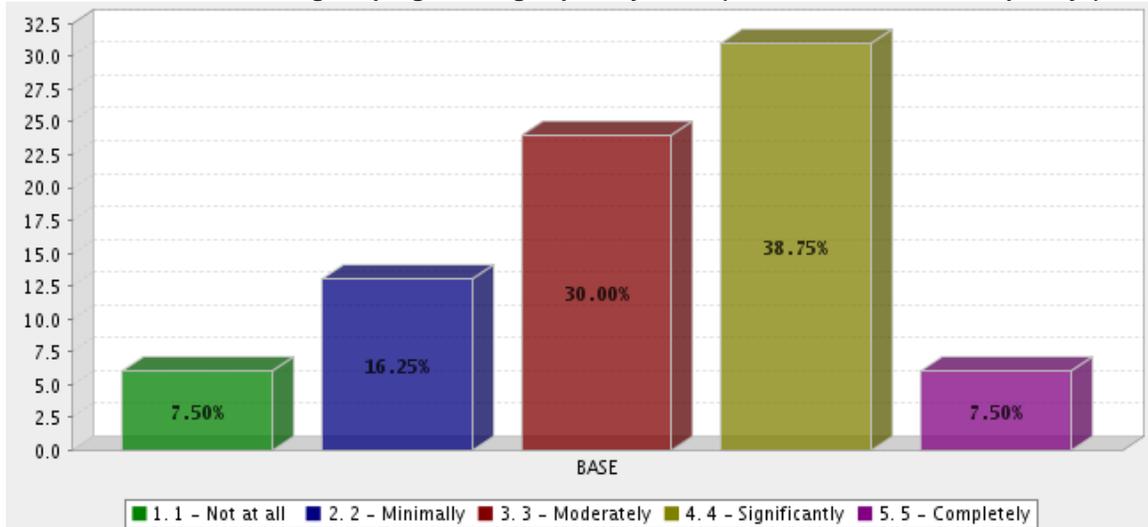
Again, due to the response size, only certain respondent groups have large enough samples to analyze:

- First Nations responses were almost identical to the above overall averages.
- Public post-secondary institution respondents were similar to the overall average but provided a higher positive rating – 52.5% indicated this ASPF objective was achieved significantly or completely.
- Aboriginal community respondents had a similar response pattern to public post-secondary respondents: 23.1% indicated the objective was not achieved or only minimally; and fifty percent felt it was achieved to a significant or complete extent.
- Unions/faculty member responses mirrored the overall average.

c) Increased Aboriginal-specific programming in labour market and strategic priority areas (i.e., ABE, health)

Of eighty who responded to this part of the question, 46.3% (37) indicated that this objective was achieved to a significant extent or completely. Almost 23.8% (19) believed it was not achieved at all or only minimally.

ASPF increased Aboriginal programming in priority areas (1 = “not at all”; 5 = “completely”)

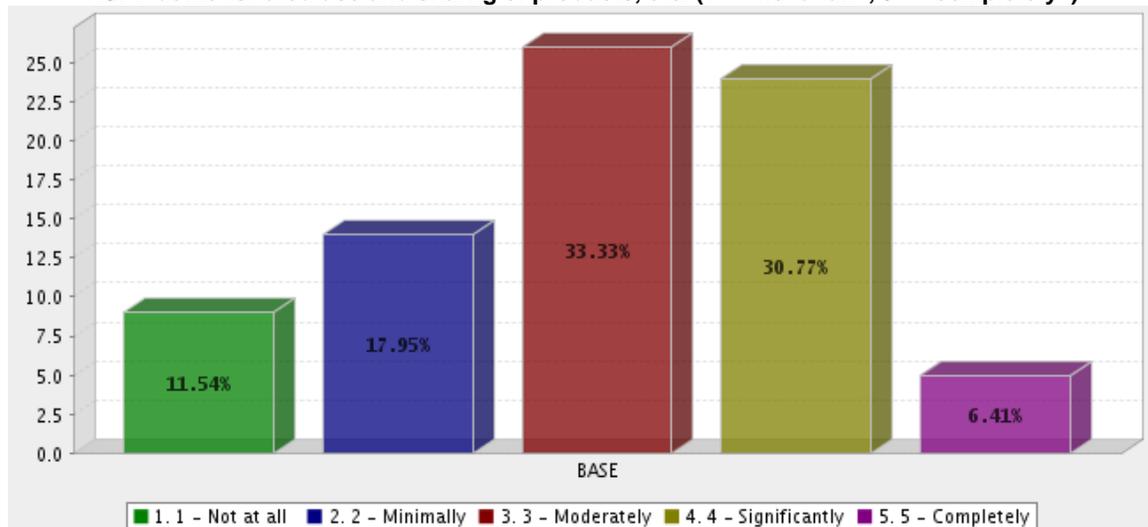


While one-quarter of all respondents to this part of the question indicated this objective was not achieved or only minimally, twenty percent of First Nations respondents felt this way; and 24.1%, 22.2% and 30% of public post-secondary, Aboriginal community, and unions/ faculty respondents, respectively, indicated this. While First Nations and Aboriginal community members had average positive responses (43.3% and 44.4% respectively), public post-secondary respondents had a higher rating at 55.2%.

d) Demonstrated use and/or sharing of products (curriculum, programs, tools, etc.) of the Aboriginal Special Projects Fund among public post-secondary institutions and Aboriginal institutes and communities

Of 78 who responded to this part of the question, a relatively low proportion of 37.2% (29) indicated that this objective was achieved to a significant extent or completely. Almost 29.5% (23) indicated it was not achieved at all or only minimally.

ASPF demonstrated use and sharing of products, etc. (1 = “not at all”; 5 = “completely”)



Most respondent groups gave this part of the question one of the lowest ratings of questions in the survey. Only 36.7% of respondents from First Nations, 49.7% of public post-secondary institutions, 34.6% of Aboriginal community members, and 31.6% of unions/ faculty members indicated this objective was achieved to a significant degree or completely. Those who indicated it was not achieved at all or only minimally ranged from twenty percent (First Nations) to 26.3% (unions/faculty members).

Question 19

Please indicate your rationale for the above rating for each of the Aboriginal Special Projects Fund objectives.

a) Increased delivery of Aboriginal programs and Aboriginal content in programs and services

The large majority of responses (n=67) to this part of Question 19 spoke positively about ASPF; most gave examples of how one or more ASPF projects lead to on-going programs and services and other legacies. Examples included: community-based programs; northern-specific content developed and delivered; online learning development; new summer programs; literacy initiatives; bridging programs (e.g., for Teacher Education, Nursing, etc.); necessary research; language courses; university prep courses; recruitment activities; Indigenization activities; trades programming; community capacity-building; curriculum development; academic upgrading; ability to deliver to smaller groups in remote communities; a sustainable tourism program; seed funding for an Aboriginal Access Studies program; and more.

Of the few respondents who offered negative comments or concerns about ASPF, some examples are:

“The program had a low profile and could have used “broader leadership” like ASP.”

“We were not aware of this funding.”

“The ending of the ASPF funding really hurt our capacity to respond to Aboriginal student and community needs.”

“The program lacked ‘strategic direction’ – it lacked a “sound strategy and long-term, predictable funding” designed to produce stated deliverables.”

“It is short-term funding that does not allow us to sustain important activities.”

b) Increased development of provincial curriculum specifically designed for Aboriginal students

While the achievement of this objective received an overall positive rating, there was not a lot of evidence of this in the 49 “rationale” responses for it. While some respondents pointed to examples of curriculum developed within their ASPF project(s), most comments were circumspect about, or unaware of how ASPF sponsored curriculum development specifically designed for Aboriginal students. A question from a few respondents was, “Where was the summative report on this objective of ASPF?”

c) Increased Aboriginal-specific programming in labour market and strategic priority areas (i.e., ABE, health)

Most of the 53 respondents to this part of the open-ended question identified examples of labour market and other programming priorities for Aboriginal students. The most prevalent examples mentioned were Health Care – including Nursing – and Human Services, ABE, Trades, Language and Bridging programs. A few respondents were not aware of what priorities might have been addressed by ASPF.

d) Demonstrated use and/or sharing of products (curriculum, programs, tools, etc.) of the Aboriginal Special Projects Fund among public post-secondary institutions and Aboriginal institutes and communities

Consistent with the above quantitative rating of the achievement of this objective of ASPF, a moderate amount of the 48 respondents to the open-ended part identified use and/or sharing of products developed. Over one-fifth (10) of respondents identified a lack of sharing of curriculum and/or challenges to achieving this objective. The following comments illustrate this concern:

“Much more work should have been done here – there was not a lot of sharing by the Ministry or institutions. For example, a database should have been developed, maintained and shared.”

“Projects/products need to be more accessible and evidence-based and promising practices shared provincially.”

“This was a huge limitation to the success of the initiative; partly due to a lack of resources with the Ministry to coordinate, promote and make the curricula and tools available and accessible in a meaningful way.”

“Sharing information and pedagogical approaches occurs informally and purposely through established partnerships; however, there is no central repository for sharing information and resources.”

“This is so important as we need to share all information/products/tools, as this funding will be wasted if everyone re-invents the wheel.”

A few other respondents added that this takes time and that they feel the sharing will continue for the next few years: “This program will be shared over time with multiple communities through delivery.”

Question 20

To what extent did the Irving K. Barber Scholarship (Endowment for Aboriginal Student Award) achieve the following objectives?

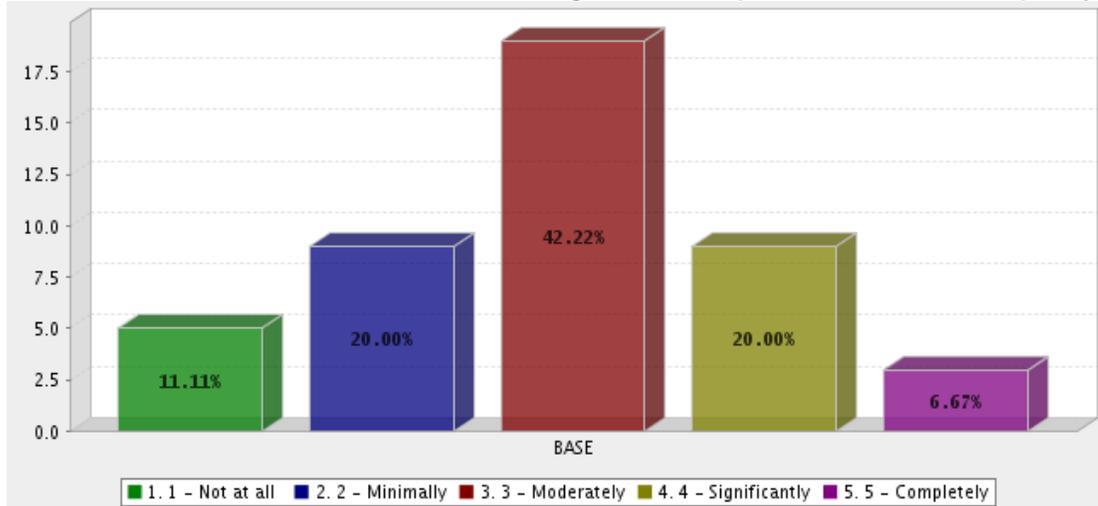
The sample size of respondents to this question is relatively small (n=45 to 47), and in three of the four parts of the responses, the single largest response was “moderate” (in the middle). As with a few other questions in the survey, it is challenging to do respondent group comparisons with a smaller sample size. In the case of this question, it is only large enough to compare responses of First Nations, public post-secondary institutions and Aboriginal communities.

Also, it is interesting that a small number (6) of students were among the respondents to this question.

a) Increased the number of students receiving additional financial aid from the Provincial Government

Of the 45 responses to this part of the question, 31.1% felt this objective was not achieved or only minimally achieved; while 26.7% indicated it was achieved significantly or completely.

The Award increased number of students receiving financial aid (1 = “not at all”; 5 = “completely”)

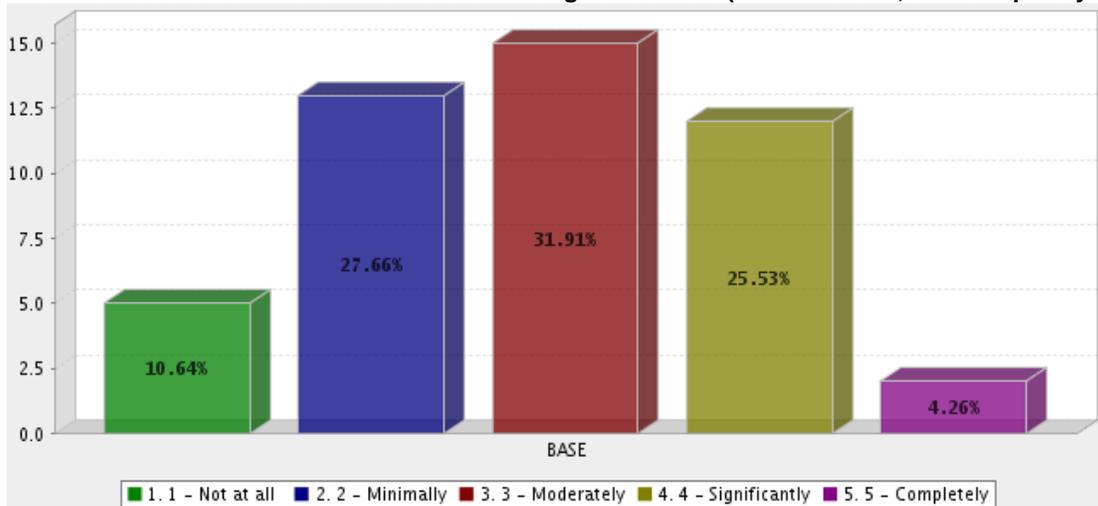


In looking at the three respondent groups large enough to compare, the most significant differences were that 43.1% of Aboriginal community respondents indicated this objective had not been met at all or to a minimal degree, compared with the overall average for groups of 28.8%. On the other end, First Nation respondents had a much smaller proportion of responses (21.7%) than average (28.1%) that indicated the objective was met significantly or completely. Groups not mentioned in each case hovered around the overall average.

b) Addressed financial barriers to public post-secondary education that Aboriginal learners face

Of the 47 respondents in this part of the question, 38.3% did not think this objective was achieved or that it was achieved minimally. Almost thirty percent disagreed and thought it was achieved to a significant extent or completely.

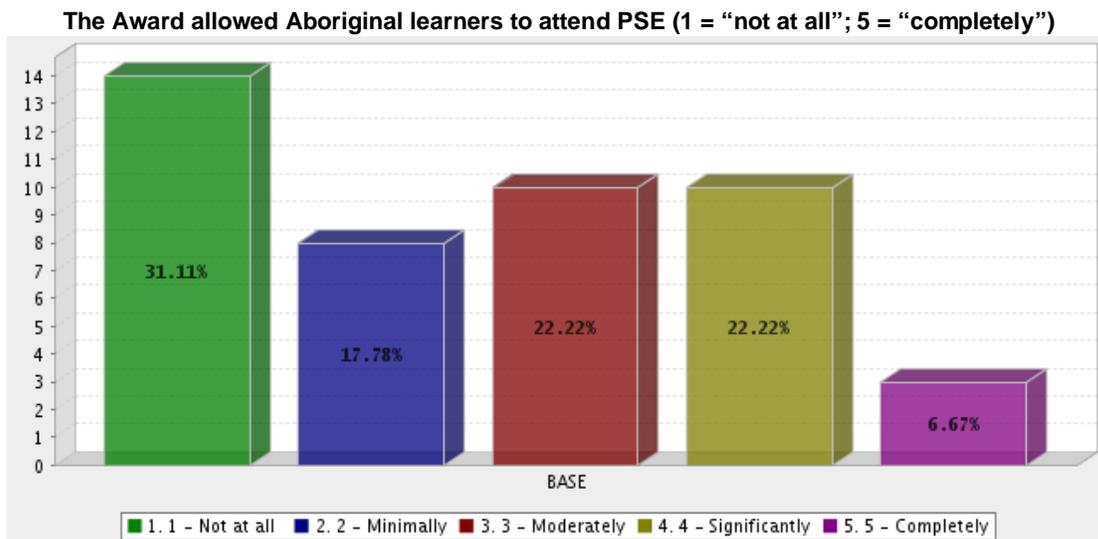
The Award addressed financial barriers for Aboriginal learners (1 = “not at all”; 5 = “completely”)



Overall, respondent groups were equally divided with 33.8% indicating this objective was not met or only minimally met and 33.8% indicated that it was met significantly or completely. The significant differences were that 39.1% and 42.9% of First Nation and Aboriginal community respondents indicated the objective was not met or only minimally attained; and only 26.1% of First Nation respondents thought it was met significantly or completely. Groups not mentioned in both cases were near the overall average.

c) Allowed you or someone you know to attend post-secondary education that you/they otherwise would not have

Forty-five respondents answered this part of the question. Almost half (48.9%) indicated that this objective was not achieved or only minimally achieved; while 28.9% suggested it was achieved to a significant degree or completely.

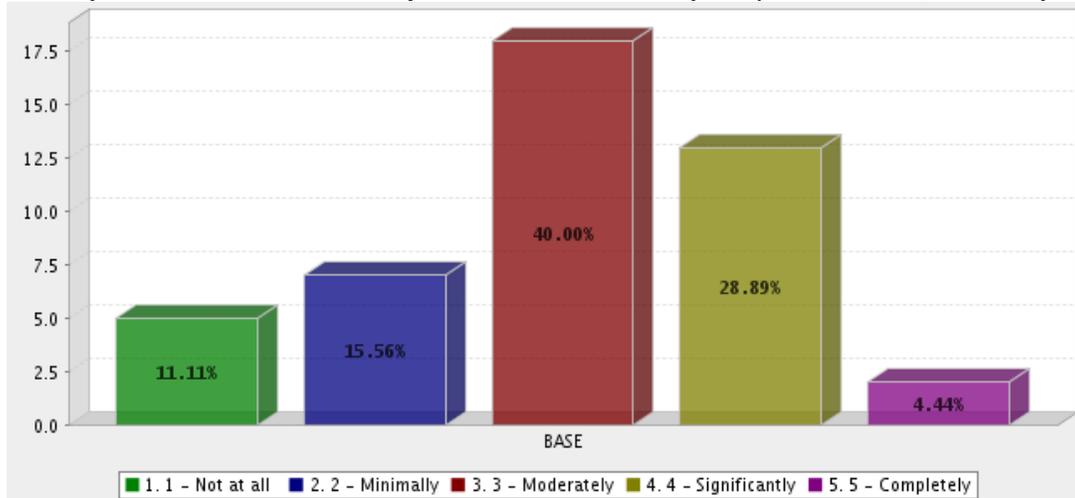


This objective has an overall higher negative rating, with 43.1% indicating it had not been met at all or only minimally – First Nations and Aboriginal community respondents’ negative ratings were higher than average, at 55.5% and 47.6%, respectively. Both public post-secondary institutions and Aboriginal community members gave a higher than average positive rating with 33.3% of each group indicating this objective was met to a significant extent or completely.

d) The scholarship application process was fair and easy to understand and complete

This part of the question received the lowest negative rating regarding achievement of the objective and highest positive rating. Almost 27% indicated it was not achieved or only minimally so; while one-third believed it was achieved significantly or completely.

The Award process was fair and an easy to understand and complete (1 = “not at all”; 5 = “completely”)



Overall, 28.9% of all respondent groups indicated that this objective was not achieved at all or only minimally; and 33.6% reported it was achieved to a significant degree or completely. The variances from this were that respondents from public post-secondary institutions and Aboriginal community members gave this a significantly lower and higher negative rating at 20.7% and 38.1%, respectively. Further, a higher proportion than the average of respondents from public post-secondary institutions and Aboriginal community members indicated this objective had been achieved significantly or completely, at 37.9% and 38.1%, respectively.

Question 21

Please indicate your rationale for the above rating for the Irving K. Barber Scholarship (Aboriginal Student Award) in terms of the following objectives.

a) Increased the number of students receiving additional financial aid from the Provincial Government

Of the 38 responses to this part of the question (this objective), most were positive about the Award and its impact; many indicated it did increase the number of Aboriginal students receiving financial aid.

Some recipients of the Award were among the respondents and others knew of students who received it – in both cases, the respondents indicated the Award made a very positive contribution to Aboriginal students’ education. Other respondents, while positive about the Award, indicated the numbers of students needing such financial assistance is huge and the number of students who were able to access this Award represents a very small portion – they felt that more assistance is needed. One respondent suggested “emergency bursaries” are needed more than a “plethora of scholarships.” Another respondent familiar with the Award sees it as just a start and it has “great potential to help facilitate Aboriginal learners to achieve their education or training objectives”.

A small number of respondents were not aware of the Award, including a few who indicated they thought they were up to date on various scholarships, awards, bursaries, etc. A few respondents suggested this needs to be addressed, for example: “I don’t think it is just this scholarship; I think we need to do a better job overall in getting the information out to the Aboriginal students.”

b) Addressed financial barriers to public post-secondary education that Aboriginal learners face

Of the 32 responses to this part of the question, most of those who were aware of it indicated, yes, the Award did address Aboriginal learner financial barriers. Some again referenced a large number of scholarships, awards, etc. for Aboriginal students and that they and educators need help to navigate this information.

Some respondents indicated that this Award is part of the solution; for example: “For those students who qualified for the program, yes, the scholarship does address some financial barriers; but it is not the silver bullet; additional programs need to be created that will build from this program as well as other special bursaries or scholarships.”

Another example: “It addresses the financial barriers, yes, however even with scholarships, some Aboriginal students do not have enough funding. Bands only pay tuition and books up to a certain amount.”

While not responding directly to the Award, one respondent puts the financial barriers for Aboriginal students in a daunting perspective:

“Peer pressure, teen pregnancies, no care for children while in school, no proper housing, rent too high, racism is too high, too lonely, no contact from parents, communities, or other agencies for funding of other needs the students may encounter. Not enough food each month, not enough family support due to low income from parents/family members who are trying their best to meet their students’ needs, institutions are too high, book prices are too high. The curriculum is too difficult to read and understand to grasp. We need more Aboriginal books that our students can relate to, or understand so they can express their learning in a much easier way. School clothing is lacking, transportation, and bus pass is lacking and cannot afford. Fear of making a big decision of moving into the college level atmosphere. And most of all, the lack of budgeting and time management skills that our students are not aware of. Lack of sleepless nights, due to financial difficulties.”

c) Allowed you or someone you know to attend post-secondary education that you/they otherwise would not have

Approximately half of the 27 respondents who answered this part of the question indicated the Award made a difference between attending and not attending post-secondary education, or they may have still attended but this Award gave them a better chance of succeeding because they were less likely to have to worry about funding. A number of these respondents were either recipients of the Award or knew someone who was.

One respondent commented on the Award not being available for those who want to attend an institution outside BC: “There are some students in the far north and in northeastern BC where the post-secondary institution(s) with the necessary programming and closest to them was/were in the Yukon or Alberta.”

Other responses repeated what was said in reply to the previous part of the question.

d) The scholarship application process was fair and easy to understand and complete

Most of the 35 responses were affirmative, that the Award process was fair and easy to understand. Again, a small number of respondents expressed a lack of an awareness of the Award. One respondent pointed out that her only issue was that the Award was not available for those entering their final year, a year that can be very difficult.

One respondent said, “Too many would not be able to apply and perhaps more important, too many do not come from a culture of seeking funds external to their Band community. A lot of work needs to be done to educate Aboriginal students about the availability of awards and how to look for and apply for awards.” Similarly, a respondent referred to helping students understand the application process and how to collect all the required paperwork. Another stated, “The students need help in understanding their financial status as required in the application – there was a lot of confusion on what was asked to determine their status.”

One respondent pointed out that “significant consultation with Aboriginal educational stakeholders enhanced the effectiveness of the [Award] forms and process.”

Question 22

To what extent did the Chief Joe Mathias Scholarship for Aboriginal Learners achieve the following objectives?

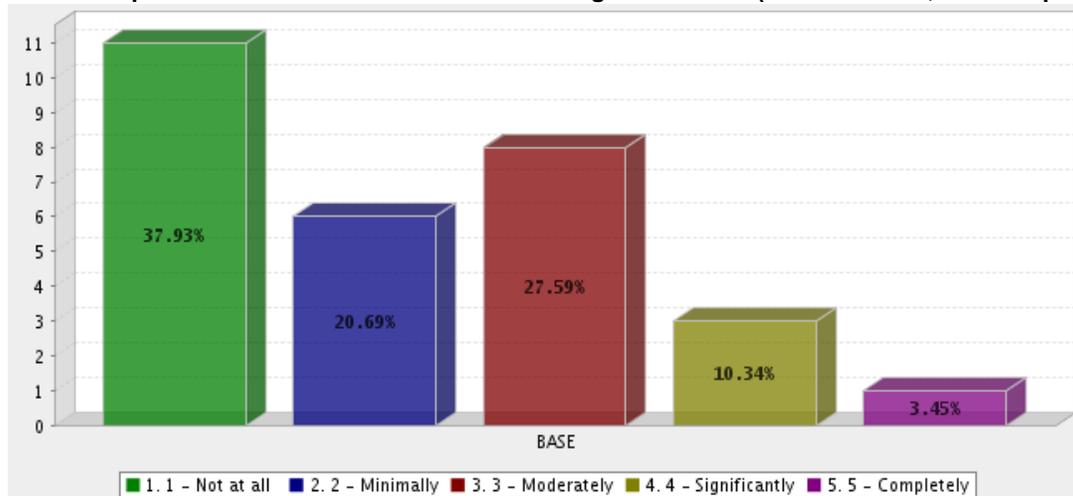
As with the previous two questions, the sample size of respondents to this question was relatively small (i.e., n=27 to 31 for the quantitative part). Overall, the responses to this scholarship were more negative than the responses to questions about the Aboriginal Student Award.

a) Increased the number of students receiving additional financial aid from the Provincial Government

Of 29 respondents to this part of the question, 58.6% indicated this objective was not achieved or only minimally achieved; whereas 13.8% said it was significantly or completely achieved.

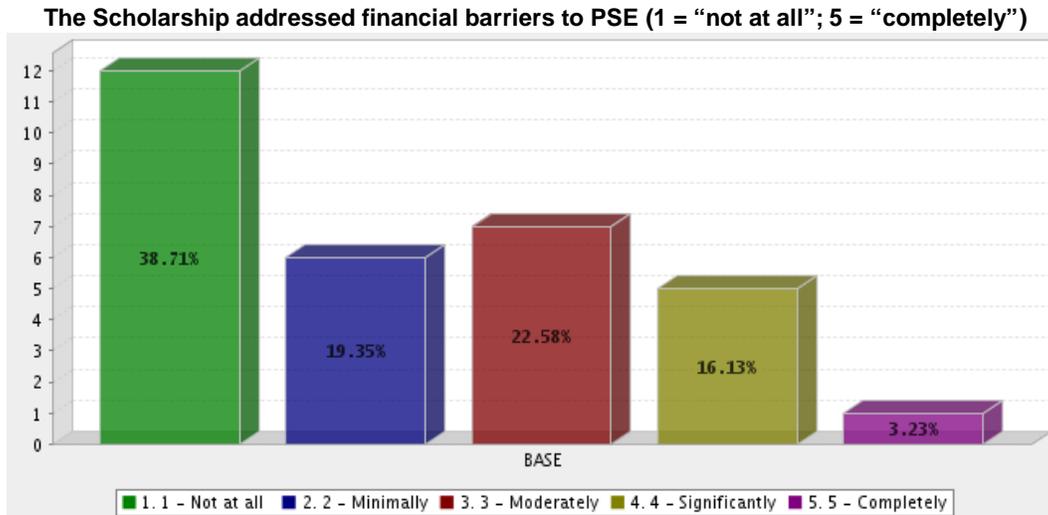
The sample size for individual respondent groups is smaller than other questions. The largest sizes are for First Nations (16), public post-secondary institutions (20), and Aboriginal community members (16). The responses of these groups were not significantly different from the overall averages (above).

The Scholarship increased number of students receiving financial aid (1 = “not at all”; 5 = “completely”)



b) Addressed financial barriers to public post-secondary education that Aboriginal learners face

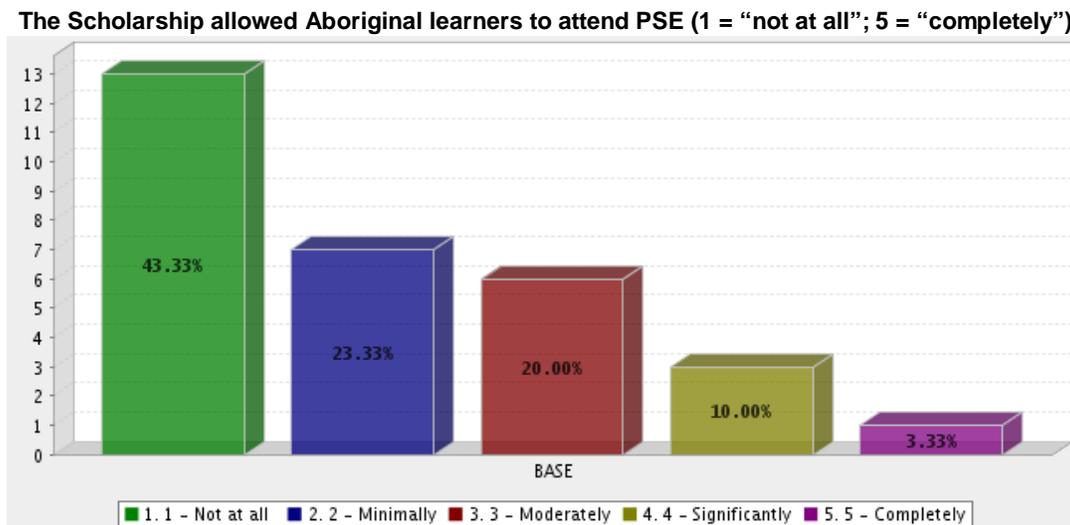
Of 31 responses, 58.1% indicated this objective was not achieved or only minimally achieved. Almost twenty percent indicated that it had been achieved to a significant degree or completely.



While respondents from First Nations and Aboriginal community members had ratings similar to the overall average, public post-secondary institution respondents had a significantly higher negative rating for this objective, with 66.7% of those respondents indicating the objective was not achieved or only minimally achieved. Conversely, Aboriginal community respondents had a much higher than average positive rating of attainment of this objective, with 25% of such respondents indicating the objective was achieved significantly or completely.

c) Allowed you or someone you know to attend post-secondary education that you/they otherwise would not have

Of thirty respondents, 66.7% indicated that this objective had not been achieved or only minimally so; while 13.3% disagreed and indicated it had been achieved to a significant or complete extent.

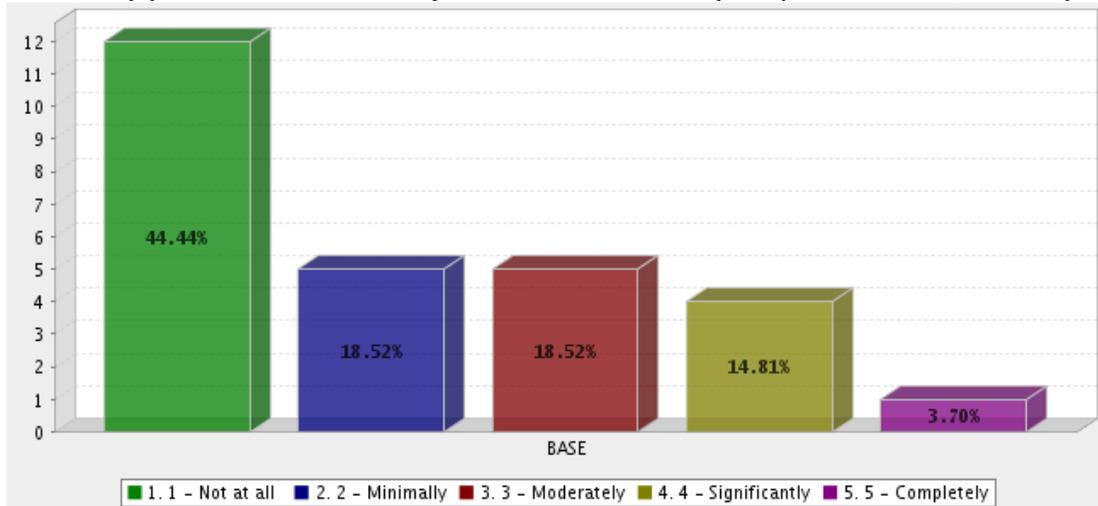


For this objective, it was interesting that public post-secondary institution respondents had a higher negative rating of the attainment of it. Over 71% of such respondents indicated that this objective was not met or only minimally met; compared with 58.8% and 56.3% of First Nations and Aboriginal community respondents.

d) The scholarship application process was fair and easy to understand and complete

Of the 27 responses to this part of the question, 63% thought this objective had not been achieved or minimally achieved, and 18.5% thought it had been achieved to a significant extent or completely.

The Scholarship process was fair and easy to understand and complete (1 = “not at all”; 5 = “completely”)



The only significant variance among respondent groups from the overall averages for this objective was the higher than average positive rating by public post-secondary institution and Aboriginal community respondents: 21.1% indicated that this objective had been achieved to a significant degree or completely.

Question 23

Please indicate your rationale for the above rating for the Chief Joe Mathias Scholarship for Aboriginal Learners in terms of the following objectives.

The number of responses to this question were even smaller than for the previous (quantitative) question (n=12 to 20), so it is challenging to draw many patterns or conclusions from the comments.

a) Increased the number of students receiving additional financial aid from the Provincial Government

Of the twenty respondents to this part of the question, almost half provided no substantive indication of attainment of this objective and/or were not aware of it. Of those that were aware of the Scholarship and commented on it, some were positive about its value, and others indicated, while helpful, it only benefits a small number of Aboriginal students.

While it was not apparent that any Scholarship recipients were among the respondents, one person indicated, “This scholarship has permitted a student to attend college when Band funding was not in place.” Another respondent stated, “Yes, a lot of stress has been lifted off the

students' shoulders, when they knew they got approved – that made a big difference, including their work at school, assignments, and they were more positive in their learning, and they feel appreciated as they were recognized by an outsider away from the college.”

b) Addressed financial barriers to public post-secondary education that Aboriginal learners face

Of the fourteen respondents for this part of the question, there were not many substantive comments; of those that were, they were mostly positive. For example:

“It was definitely another source of funding that helped address barriers for some students.”

“Any financial assistance helps to reduce the financial stress of Aboriginal students.”

c) Allowed you or someone you know to attend post-secondary education that you/they otherwise would not have

Half of the twelve respondents for this part of the question had no knowledge of the Scholarship and/or of anyone who received it. The other comments were either very brief or repetitive of comments in responses to other parts of this question.

d) The scholarship application process was fair and easy to understand and complete

Half of the twelve respondents to this part of the question either had no experience with the Scholarship or anyone who received it, or otherwise could not comment on it. A few respondents indicated that the Scholarship was helpful and not onerous to apply for. One individual indicated that the application was “way too long” and “asked for so [much] financial information.” Another respondent “did not think it was fair that Métis students were prevented from applying for this scholarship.”

Question 24

To what extent do you think the Aboriginal Transitions Research Fund project(s) in which you have been involved has/have met the objectives below to date?

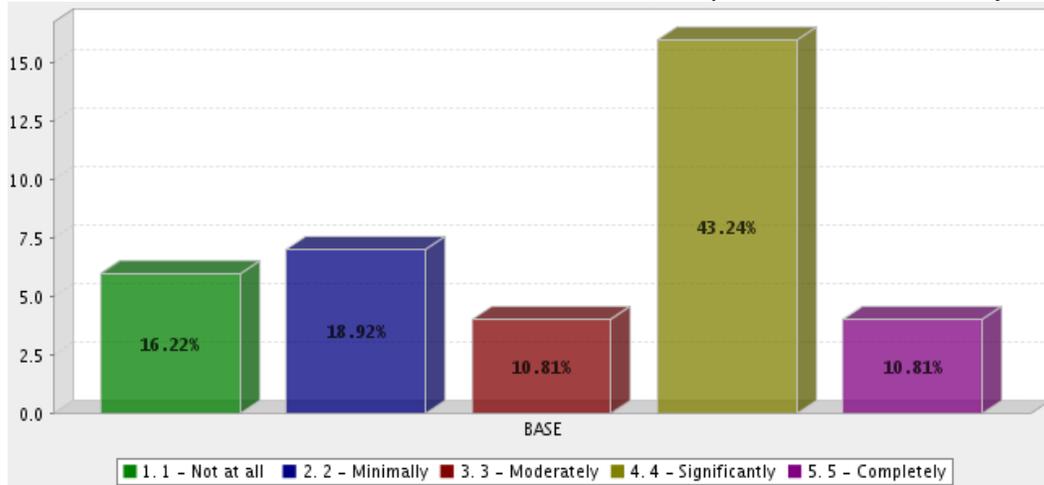
It should be noted that responses to this question were much lower in number than those to other questions in this survey because only three public post-secondary institutions and their partners have been involved in this part of the Strategy. The other reason could be that the three projects were in their final stages of completion during this survey; and institutions, partners and others have yet to incorporate research results into programming except on a pilot basis.

It should be noted also that because of this, the size of individual respondent groups for this question in most cases are too small to analyze cross-tabulations; therefore, group responses are only compared for First Nations, public post-secondary institutions and Aboriginal communities.

a) Researched existing models and practices, identified evidence-based success indicators, and demonstrated ability to incorporate research into programming

Of the 37 responses to this part of the question, over half (54.3%) indicated this objective was met to a significant degree or completely; while 35.1% (13) thought it had not been met at all or only minimally.

ATRF researched and identified evidence-based indicators, etc. (1 = “not at all”; 5 = “completely”)

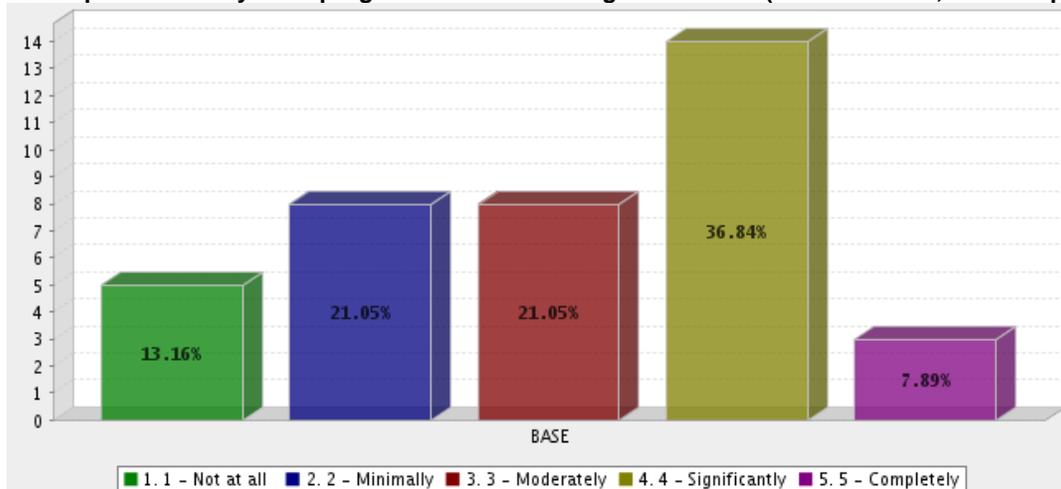


On a group comparison, overall, a relatively large 41.4% of respondents did not think this objective was achieved or that it was only minimally achieved; and 50.8% indicated it was achieved to a significant or complete extent. The variances to this pattern was for the positive ratings – First Nation respondents had a higher than average positive rating at 55%, while public post-secondary institution (46.5%) and Aboriginal community (47.3%) respondents were lower in terms of the proportion who thought this objective was achieved to a significant degree or completely.

b) Developed the necessary tools and programs to assist Aboriginal learners with successful transitions along the post-secondary education spectrum

Of the 38 responses to this part of the question, 44.7% (17) agreed that this objective was achieved to a significant extent or completely. Thirteen respondents or 34.2% indicated it had not been achieved or only minimally.

ATRF developed necessary tools/programs to assist Aboriginal learners (1 = “not at all”; 5 = “completely”)



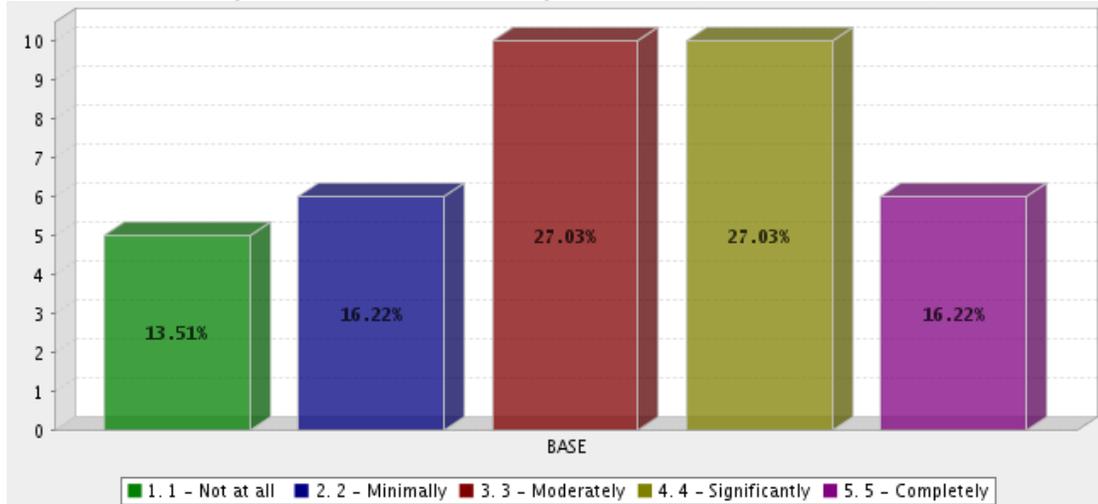
Among the respondent groups, overall, 38.5% did not think this objective was achieved or that it was achieved to a minimal extent; and 48.2% indicated it was achieved to a significant or complete degree. The three respondent groups (First Nations, public post-secondary institutions

and Aboriginal community members) with large enough sample sizes to analyze for this objective did not vary significantly for the overall averages.

c) Promoted strategies that reflect the unique histories, culture, value and traditions of Aboriginal people and their learning needs

Forty-three percent (16) of the 37 respondents to this objective indicated it had been achieved significantly or completely. Eleven or 29.7% believed it was not achieved or only minimally achieved.

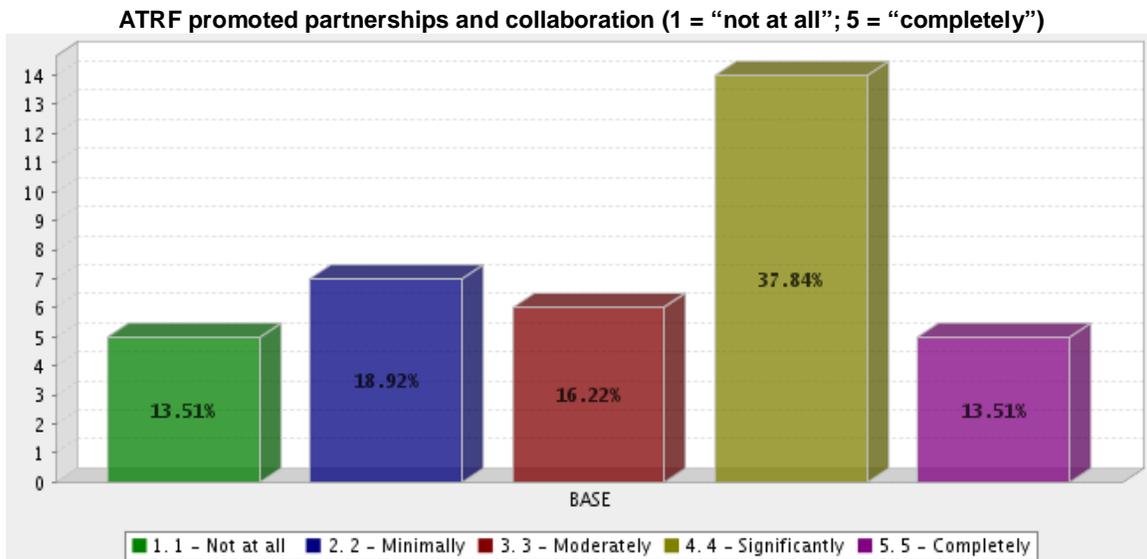
ATRF promoted strategies to reflect unique Aboriginal cultures, etc. (1 = “not at all”; 5 = “completely”)



On a group comparison, overall, 39.2% of respondents did not think this objective was achieved or that it was only minimally achieved; and 43.8% indicated it was achieved to a significant or complete extent. The variances to this pattern were for the positive ratings – First Nation respondents had a higher than average positive rating at 52.4%, while only 36.4% of public post-secondary institution respondents felt that this objective was achieved to a significant degree or completely.

d) Promoted partnerships and collaboration among public post-secondary institutions, Aboriginal institutes, communities/organizations, local school districts, industry and others

Over half (51.4%) of the 37 respondents to this question reported that this objective was achieved significantly or completely. Almost one-third (32.4%) of them felt the opposite, that it had not been achieved or only minimally achieved.



In terms of respondent group differences, the same pattern was seen as with the previous objective (c) above: First Nation respondents had a higher than average (49.3%) positive rating, with 55% of them indicating they thought this objective was achieved to a significant or complete degree; public post-secondary institution responses, at 45.5%, were a bit below the average in this regard.

Question 25

Please indicate your rationale for the above rating for each of the Aboriginal Transition Research Fund objectives.

As with the previous question, the response rate to this question was relatively low for the same reasons.

a) Researched existing models and practices, identified evidence-based success indicators, and demonstrated ability to incorporate research into programming

Thirty-one respondents answered this part of the question. Generally, those familiar with the ATRF initiative – more specifically, familiar with one of the three research projects – were positive about this objective being achieved. Those respondents familiar with a project were members of one of the three sponsor institutions and a number of IAHLA members familiar with the UVic/IAHLA transition project. Other respondents indicated a lack of awareness of this initiative. There were no negative comments about the ATRF or individual projects, although one respondent indicated, “I saw no evidence of any impact of this funding at our little college or on any students in this region.”

A couple of the comments are particularly instructive:

“I read all three research reports, which provided a significant contribution to knowledge in three areas of Aboriginal learner transitions. Of significance is the fact that very little research into specific research questions has been undertaken previously. The research team developed specific programs and projects incorporating their research findings, ensuring that the projects they were undertaking were relevant to the population they were researching and to whom the programs would be delivered.”

“The initial expression of interest called for transitions research for [many types of transition]....of 21 proposals only three met criteria (unfortunately) so there is need for additional research particularly at the K-12 to PSE transition (in BC), and PSE to labour market transition points.”

b) Developed the necessary tools and programs to assist Aboriginal learners with successful transitions along the post-secondary education spectrum

Of the 27 individuals who responded to this part of the open-ended question, approximately half referred to concrete tools and results from the three ATRF projects including handbooks and booklets for students, administrators and faculty, a website, and other informational tools. One indicated it helped expand projects and initiatives that IAHLA institutes had started. A number of respondents indicated they did not know whether tools or programs were produced.

c) Promoted strategies that reflect the unique histories, culture, value and traditions of Aboriginal people and their learning needs

Of the 23 responses to this part of the question, only a few provided substantive information, and most of these indicated that processes and products did reflect Indigenous histories, cultures, values, traditions and languages. The concrete examples that were provided include; a handbook for educators of Aboriginal students produced by Thompson Rivers University with partners; mentoring from graduate Aboriginal students in UBC’s Undergraduate to Graduate project; and a UVic/ IAHLA pilot project undertaken by the Saanich Adult Education Centre on an approach to teaching young people the SENCOTEN language through a master (Elder)-apprentice mentoring process.

d) Promoted partnerships and collaboration among public post-secondary institutions, Aboriginal institutes, communities/organizations, local school districts, industry and others.

Of 21 responses, many indicated that the ATRF project(s) with which they were familiar did promote partnerships and collaboration among public post-secondary institutions and Aboriginal communities and institutes. The comments did not provide a lot of substance or examples. Other than a lack of awareness among some respondents, there were no real negative comments about the achievement of this ATRF objective.

Question 26

For the five other program elements of the 2007 Strategy, for those of which you have some direct experience, please add any input you wish. Please focus your comments on how effective a particular program element was in achieving desired results, and on the process and management of the program element.

a) Strategic Investment Plan (Targeted) Seats

Of the 32 individuals that commented on this aspect of the Strategy in response to this question, several were not aware that there was such an initiative but thought it was a good idea; other respondents were obviously part of the institutions (or partners of) that received such FTE (student full-time equivalent spaces) funding. Some respondents indicated the types of programs that this initiative supports; most of those that identified program areas involved Health programs. A few respondents indicated that they were part of an institution that received targeted FTE funding but did not know this until after the fact. Also, a few respondents were positive about this funding but suggested it needed more predictability for longer term planning. Related to this, a few indicated that “utilization” of such spaces was low because they had to

spend the first year or two developing and promoting the program; still others referred to needing time for the “readiness” of students, and indicated that they needed time to prepare the students (i.e., preparatory programming) to enter the program funding under SIP.

b) One-Time Grants

There were only fifteen responses to this part of the question, as most respondents were not aware of this part of the Strategy. One person provided examples of one-time grants at an institution that lacked evidence of results. Another person suggested this initiative provided flexibility with which institutions and partners could meet emerging needs that could not be resourced through other means; conversely, another respondent said, “This was a catch-all for some year-end funding that was provided to support specific projects; it is likely this funding, if given more lead and development time, could have been spent more effectively.”

c) Aboriginal Representation on Board of Directors

There was a strong response among the 25 respondents to this question that this is an important issue and goal. A number of respondents suggested that the provincial government’s Board Resourcing and Development Office (BRDO) effects such appointments and needs to be more attuned to what is needed in this part of the Strategy. Most respondents indicated that they thought it essential that every public institution have Aboriginal representation on its governing bodies. Several respondents identified Aboriginal representation on their institution’s board of governors. A number of respondents spoke of the importance of potential board members being identified by First Nations (and other Aboriginal groups). Also, the few who commented on it felt that this objective should be facilitated through provincial policy and not mandated in legislation. Further, one respondent suggested that public post-secondary institutions’ First Nations Council chairs should have a permanent seat on each board to more “formally link these groups.”

One respondent was particularly frank: “This element of the Strategy appears to have had little impact on the actual number of Aboriginal persons appointed to public institutions’ boards. Despite being asked to do so, most public institution boards have not identified suitably qualified Aboriginal members of their communities for consideration by the Board Resourcing and Development Office and Cabinet, and the BRDO is not fully committed to this objective.”

Another interesting viewpoint: “Consultation on this issue was divided; some Aboriginal groups did not want to see token Aboriginal representation on boards and in senior administrative appointments.”

d) Agreements and Partnerships

Of the 32 responses to this part of the question, there were many emphatic comments about the importance of this object; for example: “Greatest outcome of our ASP”; “this is the key to everything in the Strategy”; “agreements and partnerships have been created and have had a significant impact on the community of Aboriginal learners.” Almost every respondent pointed to agreements and/or partnerships that had been created between their organizations and others in Aboriginal post-secondary education.

A few respondents made some suggestions. One indicated there are many “good stories,” and there is a need to compile an inventory on the collaborations and partnerships; and they referred to some work already underway on this among institutions. Another respondent

suggested it would be “good to have some templates that could be shared freely for various kinds of agreements” (e.g., MOUs, MOAs, affiliation agreements, etc.).

A few respondents also pointed to more work being required: “an ongoing issue that requires more attention by the Ministry and its partners”; “co-registration, articulation, and seamless transition remain a challenge between institutions”; and “the requirement for Aboriginal training institutes to have a post-secondary partner to grant credentials creates tension.”

e) System-Wide Data Tracking and Performance Measures

Of the 22 respondents to this part of the question, they were fairly evenly divided between those who see progress on this objective and those that have concerns about a lack of progress or issues related to the objective.

Those who pointed to progress, referred to either improvements within their institution regarding capacity to track and report on Aboriginal post-secondary data; and/or the development of a provincial “data standard”, a standard Aboriginal definition used by institutions, the “Charting Our Path” Ministry data, the Transformative Change Accord measures, etc. One example: “We have access to tracking students from other areas that we did not have previously.” Another example: “We invested ASP funds in developing internal systems and processes so that we can track and report on the experience and performance of Aboriginal students over time; this was a significant advance in capacity for us and should help us track the effectiveness of other initiatives to improve Aboriginal education in our institution.”

Those who expressed concerns about data tracking and performance measures raised the following issues:

There is a need for full-time Aboriginal staff dedicated to tracking Aboriginal post-secondary statistics.

“I think the data is available but not being utilized to its full potential.”

“Significant data has been provided; I am unaware of what has been done with the data received.”

“I have been tracking the Aboriginal students at our [institution] for many years and it has always been remarkably difficult but I agree it is very important. It is very puzzling to me how the Ministry figures can be so remarkably greater than mine when it comes to Aboriginal participation each term.”

“The Aboriginal institution data requires significant attention in order to ensure a full data set that supports tracking of students, analysis of data and identification of what works. PEN for IAHLA institutes is vital; and should be done through an information-sharing agreement/research project until such time as the legislation is changed.”

“I do not support implementing another tracking system when the current practices do not show where we are at with education.”

“I believe an awareness campaign should also have been a part of the initiative; a province-wide understanding of why Aboriginal students should self-identify, who is eligible to self-identify, and what happens to ‘my stats’ is needed to make this initiative more successful.”

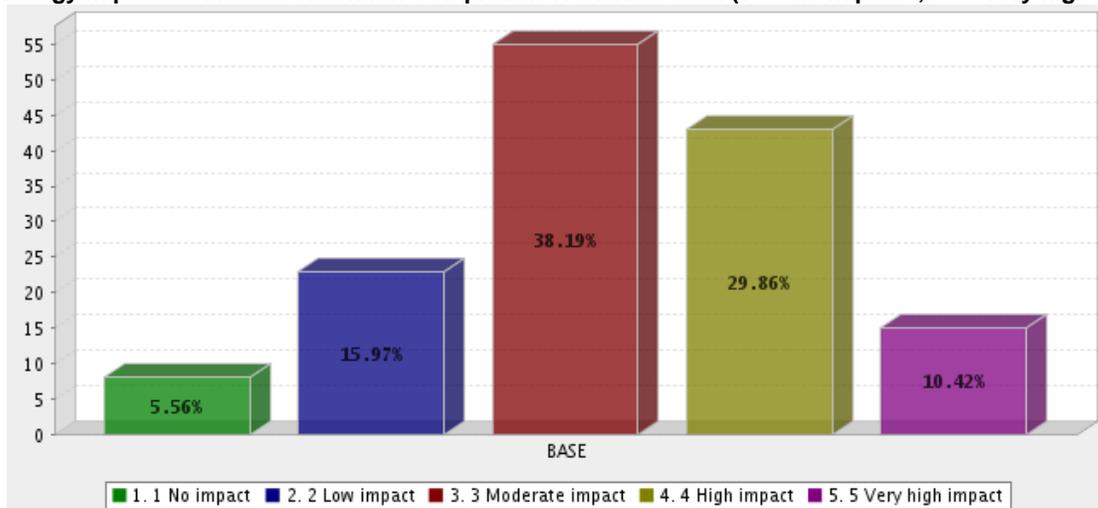
Question 27

Please rate overall on a scale of 1 (minimal to no impact) to 5 (maximum impact) the impact that the 2007 Strategy has had on its goals of closing the educational gap for Aboriginal learners, and effective and accountable programs and services and implementation and delivery for Aboriginal learners.

a) Increased access, retention, completion and transition opportunities for Aboriginal learners

Of 144 responses, 21.5% indicated that the Strategy had no or a low impact in regards to this objective, and 40.3% indicated that it had a high or very high impact.

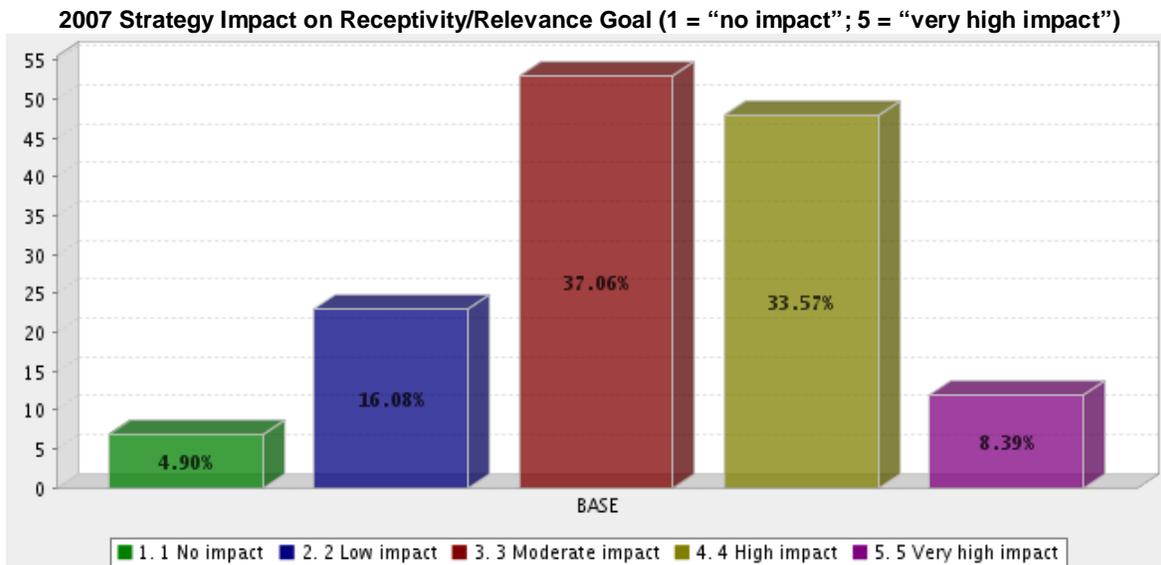
2007 Strategy Impact on Access/Retention/Completion/Transition Goal (1 = “no impact”; 5 = “very high impact”)



Overall in terms of respondent group comparisons, 27.7% and 38.8% of all groups rated this objective as having no/low impact and as a high/very high impact, respectively. Respondents from IAHLA institutes (53.3%), Band schools/learning centres (35.3%), Aboriginal community members (34.9%), and First Nations (30%) had higher than average negative (“no/a low impact”) ratings. Respondents from Métis organizations (13.3%) and public institutions (15.7%) had lower than average negative ratings with regard to this objective. Compared to the 38.8% overall that indicated the Strategy had a high or very high impact on this objective, respondents from Métis organizations (46.7%) and urban Aboriginal organizations (46.7%) exceeded this, and Tribal Councils (33.3%), First Nations leadership umbrella bodies (25%), and public post-secondary and student respondents (both 26.7%) were below the average.

b) Increased receptivity and relevance of post-secondary institutions and programs for Aboriginal learners

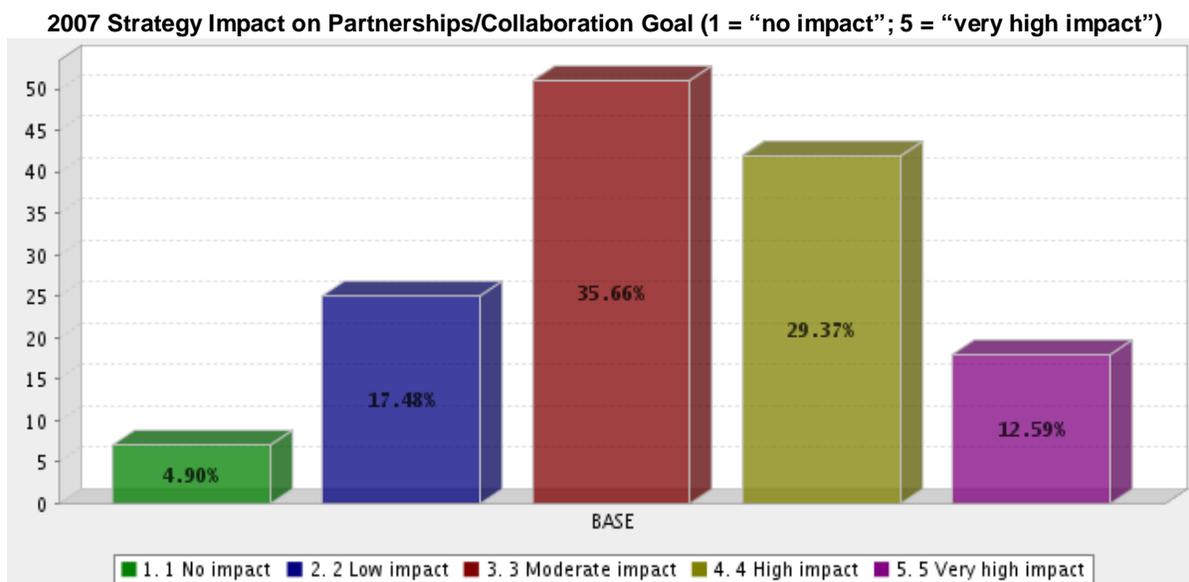
Of 143 responses, 21% saw no or a low impact of the Strategy, and 42% thought the Strategy had a high or very high impact in terms of receptivity and relevance of post-secondary institutions and programs for Aboriginal learners.



While fifty percent of Band school/learning centre respondents and 37.5% of IAHLA institute respondents indicated that the Strategy had no or a low impact on the “receptivity and relevance” objective, the overall average was 23.6%; and significantly below this average were respondents from First Nations (17.1%), Tribal Councils (9.1%), Métis organizations (13.3%), urban Aboriginal organizations (12.5%), public post-secondary institutions (15.9%), and students (14.3%). In terms of a high or very high impact, the most positive respondents were public post-secondary institutions (47.5%), Band schools/learning centres (43.8%), and unions/faculty members (41.2%). Only 20% of Métis respondents, 31.3% of IAHLA respondents, and 14.3% of students shared this positive assessment.

c) Strengthened partnerships and collaboration in Aboriginal post-secondary education

Of 143 responses, 22.4% indicated that there was no or a low impact of the Strategy in regards to strengthening partnerships and collaboration in Aboriginal post-secondary education. Forty-two percent of them saw a high or very high impact from the Strategy for this objective.



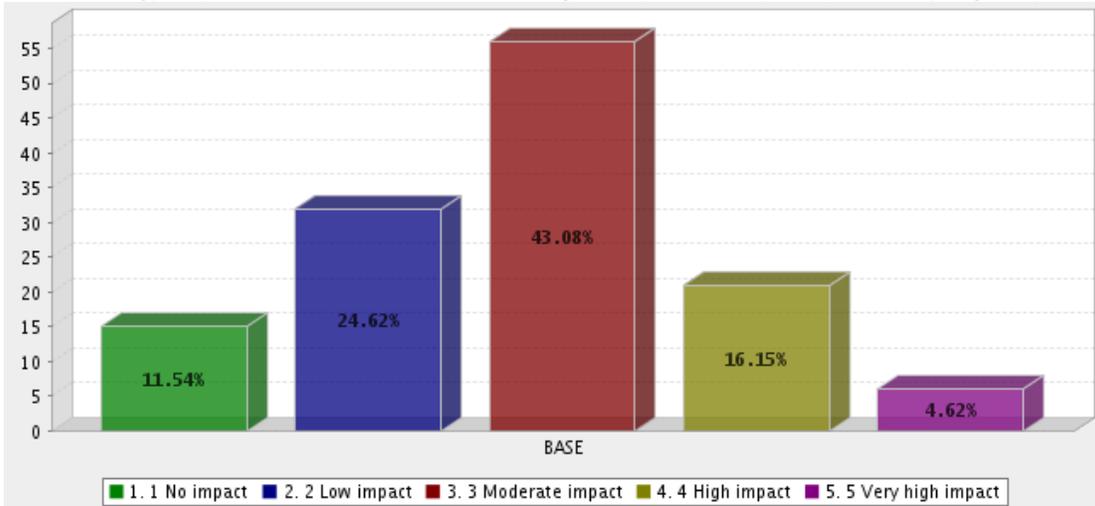
Half of IAHLA institute and First Nation leadership umbrella organization respondents indicated that the Strategy had no or a low impact in achieving the “strengthening partnerships and collaboration” objective. Respondents from band schools/learning centres also showed a relatively high negative rating at 41.2%. In addition to the 17.8% of public post-secondary institution respondents who indicated no or a low impact, Tribal Council (16.7%), Métis organization (14.3%), urban Aboriginal organization (12.5%) and Friendship Centre (18.8%) respondents all had lower than average negative assessments. Almost 32% of Aboriginal community respondents also felt the impact was “no or low”.

A number of respondent groups had near fifty percent or a higher proportion that indicated the Strategy had a high or very high impact for this objective. These include Métis organizations (57.2%), urban Aboriginal organizations (50%), public post-secondary institutions (49.5%), and Band schools/learning centres (47%). The lowest rating in this was by Tribal Council (25%) and student (28.6%) respondents.

d) Ensured effective measurement and progress monitoring

Of 130 responses, 36.2% thought the Strategy had no or a low impact in terms of ensuring effective measurement and progress monitoring. Just over one-fifth of respondents thought the impact was high or very high in this regard.

2007 Strategy Impact on Measurement/Monitoring Goal (1 = “no impact”; 5 = “very high impact”)



While this part of the question received the highest negative assessment across all respondent groups at 40.8%, some respondent groups in particular indicated no or a low impact of the Strategy for this objective: Band schools/learning centres (53.3%); IAHLA institutes (50%); and Tribal Councils (45.5%). This objective also received the lowest positive rating among the four in this question. At the respondent group level, on average, 16.7% of respondents indicated the Strategy had a high or very high impact on effective measurement and progress monitoring. This figure was even lower for certain groups: urban Aboriginal organizations (6.3%); Friendship Centres (6.7%); and students (0%). Interestingly, First Nations (19%), Tribal Councils (27.3%), and Band schools/learning centres (26.7%) had a higher proportion of respondents than the average that assessed the Strategy as having a high or very high impact on this objective.

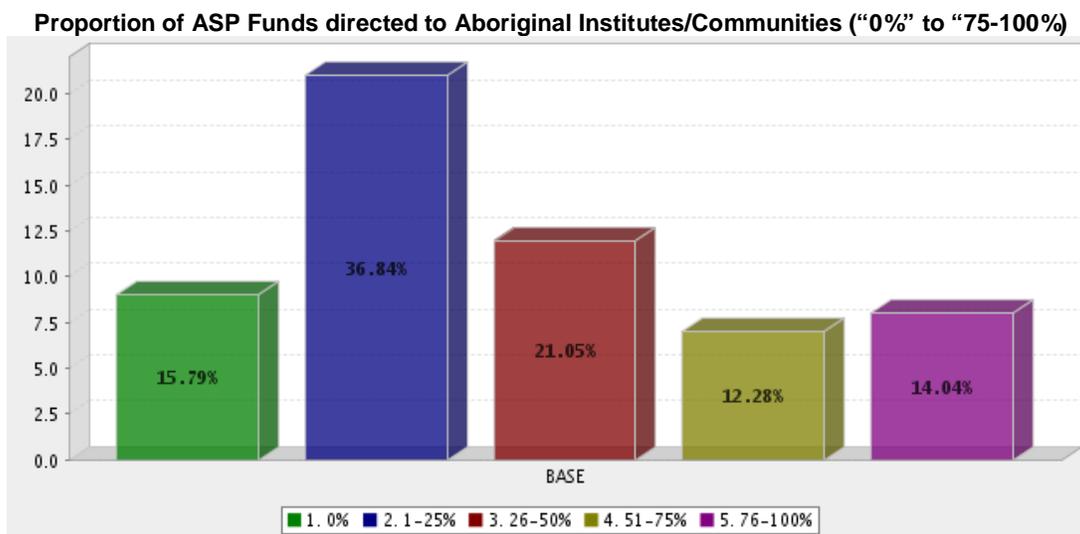
Question 28

From your experience with various 2007 Strategy program elements and projects, what proportion of Ministry funding to public post-secondary institutions under the following program elements was directed to Aboriginal institutes or communities?

It should be noted that the response size for this question was relatively small (n=43 to 57) and in the comparisons of respondent groups only three were of sufficient size to analyze (First Nations, public post-secondary institutions and Aboriginal communities).

a) Aboriginal Service Plan funding

Of 57 responses to this part of the question, 52.6% indicated that zero to 25% of ASP funds were directed to Aboriginal institutes or communities. Over one-quarter (26.3%) indicated that 51% to 100% of such funds were directed to those entities.

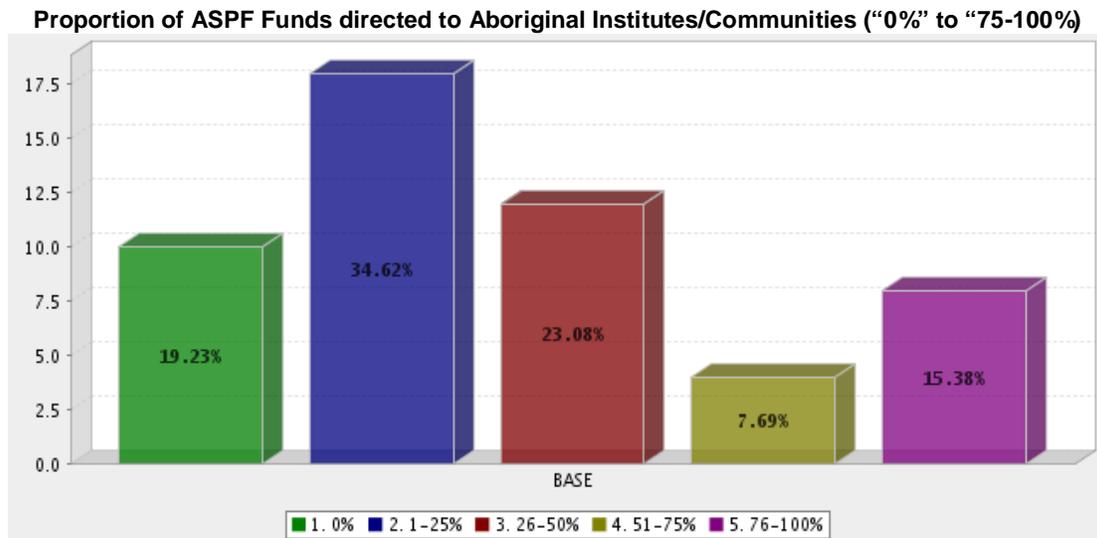


As indicated, a comparison of respondents for this question is confined to the three groups with the most responses. In terms ASP funding being directed to Aboriginal institutes and communities, fifty percent of First Nations respondents indicated zero to 25% of such funds were so directed, and 25% of First Nations respondents indicated 51% to 100% were. Just under 46% of public post-secondary institution respondents indicated that zero to 25% of ASP funds were directed to Aboriginal institutes and communities; 39.4% of this group reported that 51% to 100% of these funds were so directed. The numbers for Aboriginal community respondents were 55.2% and 17.2% for zero to 25% and 51% to 100% of funds, respectively.

It should be noted in the case of ASP – which is discussed in the body of this report – that the Ministry did not require institutions to report on how much ASP funds were transferred to Aboriginal community partners.

b) Aboriginal Special Projects Fund funding

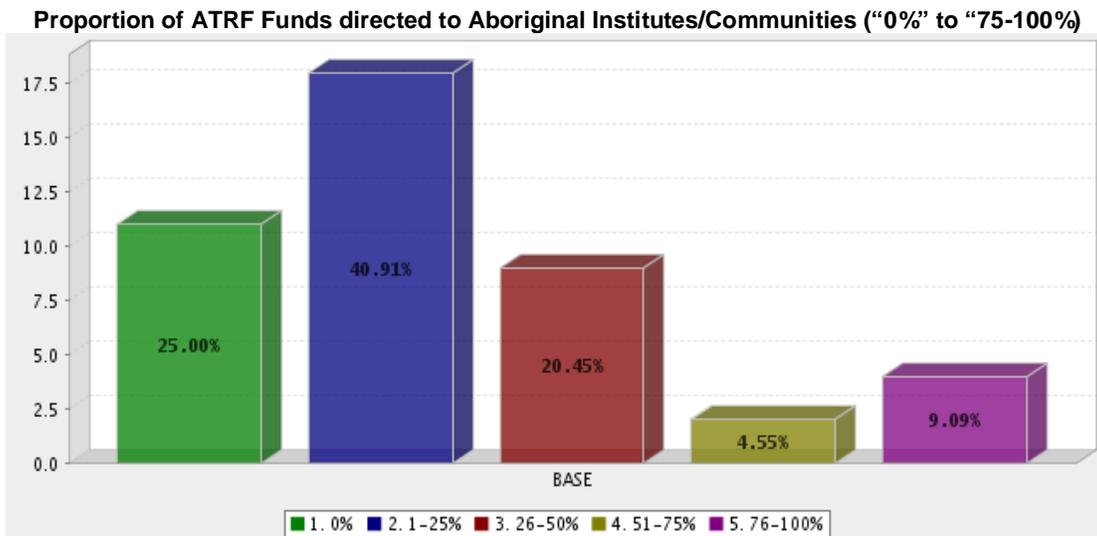
Of 52 respondents, 53.9% indicated that zero to 25% of ASPF funds were directed to Aboriginal institutes or communities, while 23.1% indicated 51% to 100% of such funds were directed this way.



Just under 49% of First Nations respondents indicated that zero to 25% of ASPF funding was directed to Aboriginal institutes and communities; while 48.1% of Aboriginal community respondents and 44.8% of public post-secondary institution respondents indicated the same. While 34.5% of public post-secondary institution respondents reported that 51% to 100% of ASPF funding was directed this way, the figure was 20.7% and 18.5% for First Nation and Aboriginal community member respondents, respectively.

c) Aboriginal Transition Research Fund funding

Of 44 respondents, 65.9% indicated that zero to 25% of ATRF funding was directed to Aboriginal institutes or communities; 13.6% reported that 51% to 100% of these funds were directed in such a way.

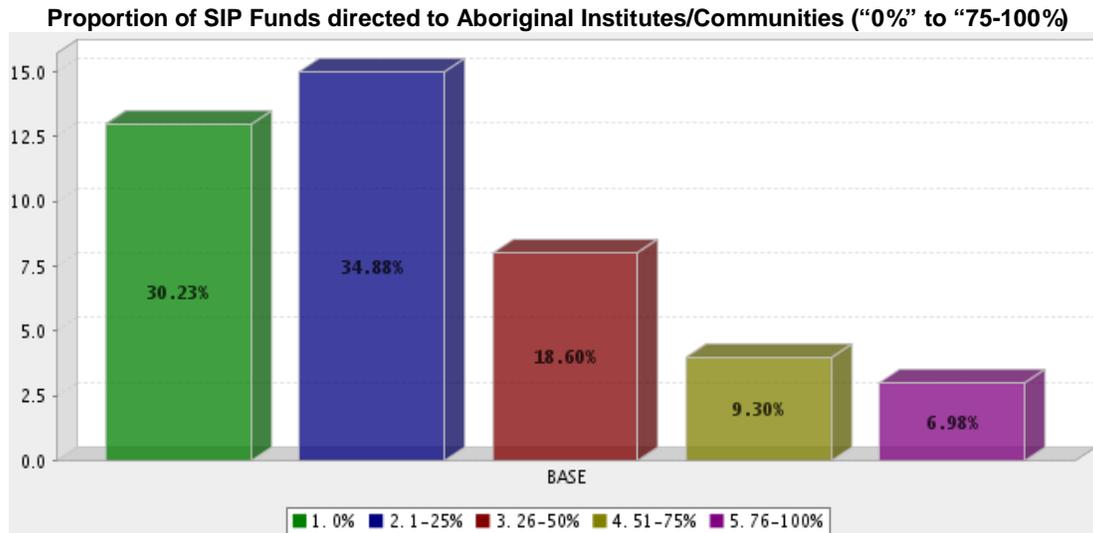


The numbers were relatively low for the ATRF funding because it only involved three public post-secondary institutions. Thus 72.7% of public post-secondary institution respondents indicated that zero to 25% of ATRF funding was shared with Aboriginal institutions and communities. Small proportions of each of the three respondent groups reported that 51% to

100% of ATRF funding went to such respondent groups – 15.4%, 18.2% and 8.3% for First Nations, public post-secondary institutions and Aboriginal community members, respectively.

d) Strategic Investment Plan (Targeted) Seats funding

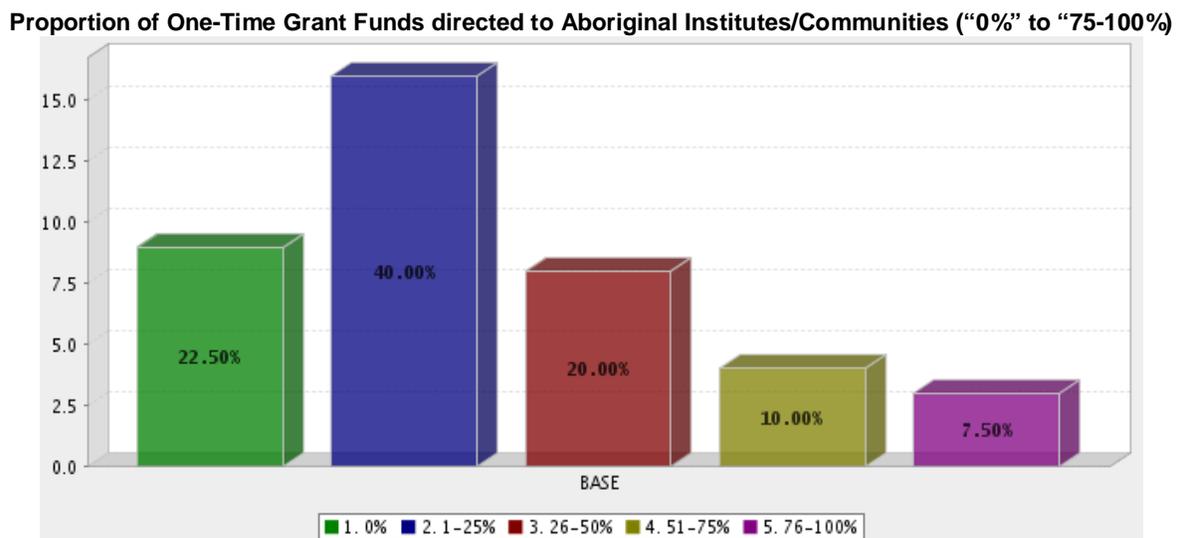
Of 43 responses, 67.1% indicated that zero to 25% of SIP funding was directed to Aboriginal institutions or communities; and 16.3% said that 51% to 100% of these funds went to Aboriginal institutions or communities.



In terms of respondent group differences, the patterns of responses related to the SIP were similar to that for the ATRF program.

e) One-Time Grant funding

Of forty responses, 62.5% reported that zero to 25% of One-Time Grant funding went to Aboriginal institutions or communities; while 17.8% of respondents indicated that 51% to 100% of such funding went these entities.



There was not much difference among the three largest respondent groups – more than sixty percent in each case indicated that zero to 25% of One-Time Grant funding was directed to Aboriginal institutes and communities; and 8.7% of First Nations and Aboriginal community respondents and twenty percent of public post-secondary institution respondents reported that 51% to 100% of this funding was passed onto those entities.

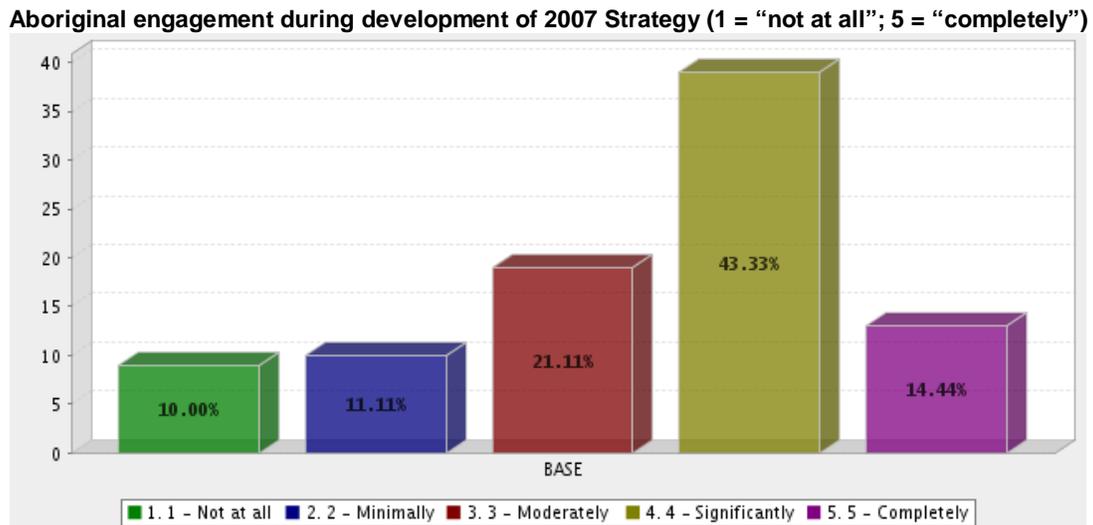
Question 29

To what extent were Aboriginal communities/partners engaged and participating in the various stages of the 2007 Strategy program elements?

Again, because of lower sample sizes, only the three largest respondent groups are compared for each part of the responses to this question.

a) During the development or conception of an initiative or project

Of ninety responses, 21.1% indicated they were not involved or were minimally involved during the development or conception of Strategy initiatives or projects. Almost sixty percent reported that they were involved to a significant extent or completely.

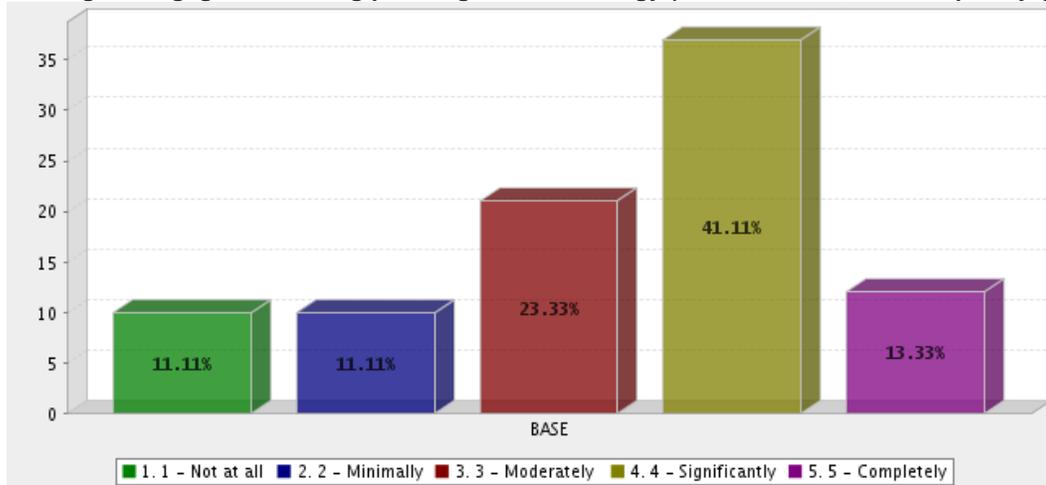


There was a large divergence between the three largest groups of respondents on this part of the question. Thirty-seven percent of respondents from First Nations and 35.1% of Aboriginal community members indicated they had minimal or no involvement during this stage of Strategy initiatives or projects. This compares with 9.1% of public post-secondary institution respondents who indicated the same. On the positive end of the scale, 69.1% of public post-secondary respondents indicated Aboriginal communities/partners were involved to a significant degree or completely at this stage.

b) During the planning of an initiative or project

During the planning of a Strategy initiative or project, 22.1% of the ninety respondents said they were not involved or only minimally involved, while 54.4% indicated they were significantly or completely involved.

Aboriginal engagement during planning of 2007 Strategy (1 = “not at all”; 5 = “completely”)

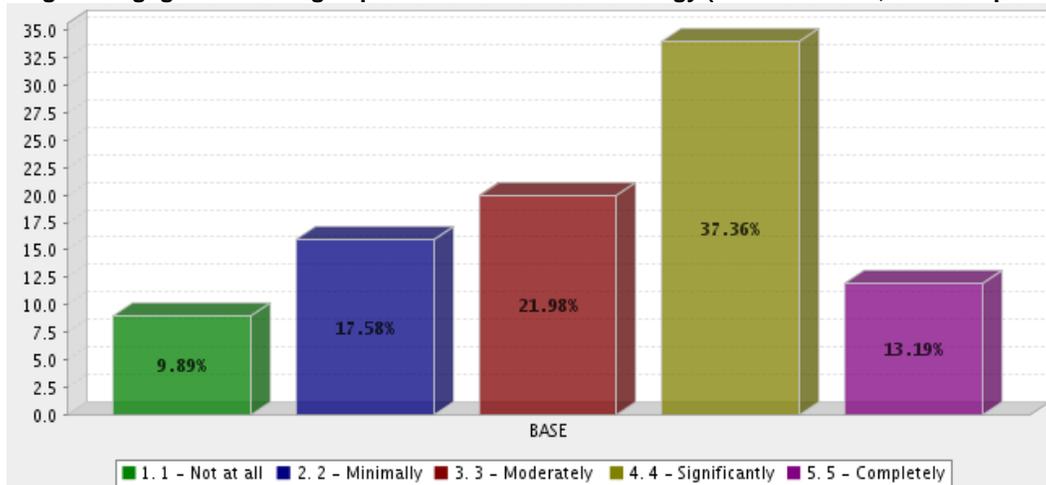


During planning stages of Strategy initiatives or projects, forty percent of First Nation and 36.1% of Aboriginal community respondents indicated they were not involved or only minimally involved; 9.1% of public post-secondary respondents indicated this. Conversely, 68.9% of the latter group indicated significant or complete involvement of Aboriginal communities/partners, while 44.4% and 38.9% of First Nation and Aboriginal community respondents, respectively, did so.

c) During the implementation/delivery of the initiative or project

Of the 91 responses, 27.4% and 50.6% indicated they were not involved or minimally involved and significantly or completely involved, respectively, during the implementation/ delivery of a Strategy initiative or project.

Aboriginal engagement during implementation of 2007 Strategy (1 = “not at all”; 5 = “completely”)

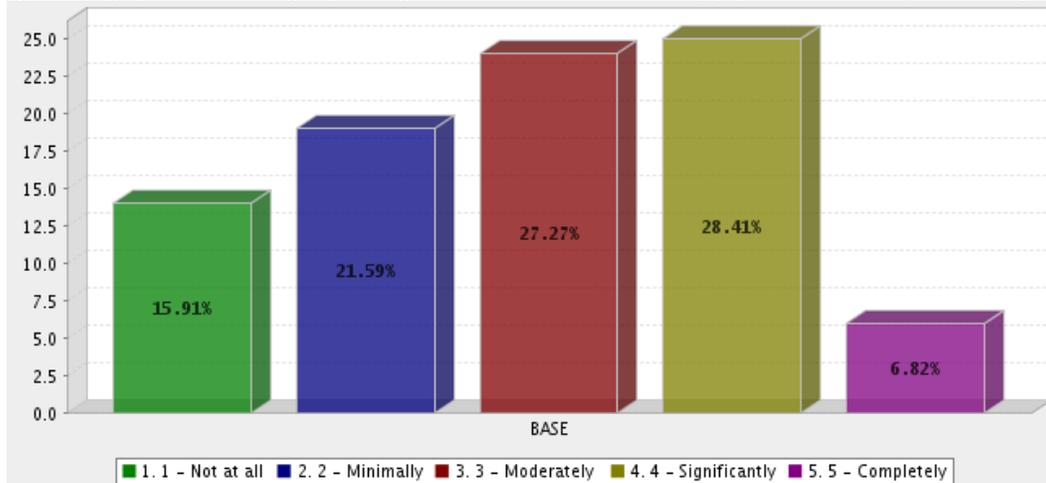


During implementation/delivery, forty percent and 43.3% of First Nations and Aboriginal community respondents, respectively, indicated that they were not involved or minimally involved; in comparison, 16.1% of public post-secondary respondents reported this level of involvement. The pattern was similar on the positive end of the scale, with a higher proportion of public post-secondary institutions reporting significant or complete involvement of Aboriginal communities/partners.

d) During the reporting and evaluation of the initiative or project

Of 88 responses, 37.5% indicated no or minimal involvement during the reporting and evaluation of a Strategy initiative or project. A similar proportion (35.2%) reported that they were involved to a significant or complete extent.

Aboriginal engagement during reporting/evaluation of 2007 Strategy (1 = “not at all”; 5 = “completely”)

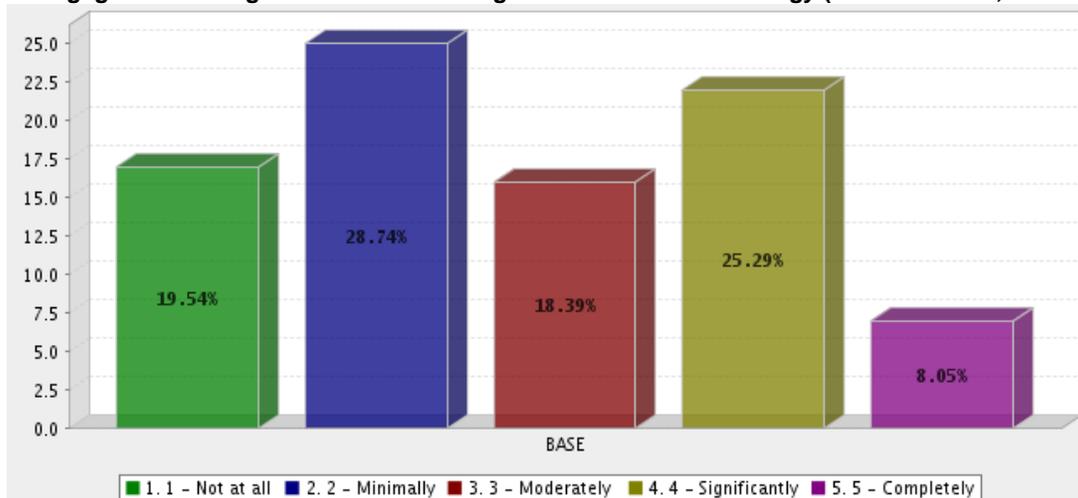


As was the pattern with overall responses, even higher proportions all three respondent groups indicated no or minimal involvement during reporting and evaluation of Strategy initiatives/projects: 45.6% for First Nations; 52.8% for Aboriginal community members; and 25.9% for public post-secondary respondents. The same was true on the positive side with less of each group reporting significant or complete involvement of Aboriginal communities/partners than for the previous parts of the question.

e) In decision-making on allocation of funding

Of 87 responses to this part of the question, 48.3% said they were not involved in decision-making on allocation of funding of a Strategy initiative or project or involved minimally. One-third of respondents indicated they were involved at this stage to a significant extent or completely.

Aboriginal engagement during decisions on funding allocation of 2007 Strategy (1 = “not at all”; 5 = “completely”)



A higher proportion of responses for all three respondent groups indicated there was no or only minimal involvement in decision-making on the allocation of funding for a Strategy initiative or project: 57.8% of First Nations; 38.5% of public post-secondary institutions; and sixty percent of Aboriginal community members. Still, almost 27% of First Nations respondents indicated that Aboriginal communities/partners had significant or complete involvement in decision-making on funding allocation; the proportions were 22.9% and 44.2% for Aboriginal community and public post-secondary respondents, respectively.

Question 30

Please identify any other funding programs or initiatives outside of the 2007 Strategy that contribute to its goal of closing the educational gap for Aboriginal learners.

The 41 individuals who responded to this question identified numerous sources of funding within the following categories: Band/First Nations and other Aboriginal organizations (e.g. FNEESC, IAHLA); federal government; provincial government; public post-secondary institutions; K-12 schools/ school districts; and private sector donations.

In addition to the well-known Aboriginal post-secondary, labour market and health funding provided by federal (i.e. Metro Urban Aboriginal Strategy, Post-Secondary Student Support Program, Indian Student Support Program, Office of Literacy and Essential Skills, Aboriginal Health and Human Resources Initiatives, Aboriginal Skills for Employment Training Strategy) and provincial (Labour Market Agreement, Community Adult Literacy Program, Industry Training Authority trades funding, other ministries) governments, respondents identified public institution-specific funding projects, Band's raising their own funding, private sector donations, professional associations such as the Applied Science Technologists and Technicians of BC, Canada Council for the Arts for support of the Aboriginal Music Labs.

A community respondent provided examples such as "\$500,000 in non-government endowment funds specifically targeted for Aboriginal students (\$25,000 per year)."

A number of respondents commented on the need for "targeted" and sustained funding for Aboriginal post-secondary education.

Question 31

Please provide any comments regarding the 2007 Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education Strategy that you would like to add.

The comments from 62 respondents reflected the following most common themes:

- The 2007 Strategy was good value and effective and should be continued in some form (n=10)
- There needs to be more financial support for Aboriginal post-secondary students (n=6)
- The ASP initiative was beneficial and should be continued (n=5)
- There was no or little input from our Aboriginal community to the public post-secondary institution in our region (n=4)
- Elders and Elder programs have been very valuable additions to our institution (n=3)
- The ASPF should be re-introduced and is particularly useful for smaller institutions (n=3)
- A lack of awareness of the Strategy and its components (n=3)

All single responses included, for example, the central importance of relationship-building, the need for holistic approaches, the importance of targeted funding, etc.

Question 32

If you did not cover this in the previous question, please indicate any recommendations you might have for a new Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education Strategy that will be launched in the near future.

Sixty-eight respondents replied to this question.

While the most common theme was related to different kinds of funding for Aboriginal post-secondary education, the other most common responses related to the following themes:

- The need for public post-secondary institutions to more involve Aboriginal-controlled institutes, First Nations, and Aboriginal students (n=7)
- The ASPF should be re-introduced (n=7), and ASP should be continued (n=2)
- The need for greater accountability, clearer parameters and performance measures, and regular reporting for public funding provided for Aboriginal post-secondary education (n=4)
- The need to increase the awareness of Aboriginal post-secondary education funding and programs among Aboriginal students, institutes and communities (n=4)
- The need for more emphasis on relationship-building, respectful dialogue and partnership development among Aboriginal communities and institutes and public post-secondary institutions (n=3)
- The need for much more community-based, local programming for Aboriginal communities and learners (n=3)

The funding issue was raised by respondents in relationship to various needs:

- More funding is needed for Aboriginal students, including “older” students (n=4)
- More funding is needed for Elders in Residence programs (n=4)
- Funding for Aboriginal post-secondary education should be long-term, stable and predictable (n=4)
- More funding is need for Aboriginal language and culture programs (n=2)
- Aboriginal-controlled institutions should be considered for operating funding (n=2)
- More programs should develop a traditional way of learning and Indigenous pedagogy (n=2)

Single responses regarding funding suggested: the need for an Aboriginal FTE funding model; specific funding should be made available for building partnerships; funding to public institutions should require that they consult and collaborate with Aboriginal communities including shared decision-making and direct funding; and Aboriginal post-secondary funding should be provided to base budgets of institutions.

Examples of other non-funding (single) responses were: to make Aboriginal representation on public post-secondary institution boards mandatory; the need for stronger links with the K-12 system; and the need to continue to work on eradicating racism in public post-secondary institutions.