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Admission Policy Review: Strengthening Indigenous In-Community Training Programs

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Abstract

Canada's colonial past significantly impacts prospective Indigenous student postsecondary enrollment. For the past fifty years, postsecondary institutions have focused on assimilation and cultural renewal. One assumption is Indigenous learners share similar educational experiences including ease and access to westernized high school programs with a credit or term system and ease and access to transcripts and criminal records checks often required for postsecondary admission. This Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) addresses the Problem of Practice (PoP) in admission procedures that do not consider Indigenous knowledges, experiences, and criteria for entry into postsecondary programming in SMH Department at LAC College. As an academic manager in SMH Department and facilitator of college career programs in Indigenous communities in central Canada, I explore the organizational context at LAC College and propose a solution to the PoP. This OIP includes a review of LAC College's admission policy and implementation of an Indigenized admission process. Adaptive and distributed leadership perspectives are the approaches utilized in this OIP. The Critical Paradigm is the underlining perspective, and the voices of Indigenous colleagues and educational partners inform my perspectives in this OIP. I will conclude by discussing the Hiatt 2013 ADKAR change theory and evaluation plan utilized in this OIP.

Keywords: Utilization Focused Evaluation, Critical Paradigm, Distributed Leadership, Ethical Leadership, Truth and Reconciliation, Indigenous admission criteria, In-Community Training.

Executive Summary

The past three years reaffirmed the existence of systemic racism and urged leaders across postsecondary, public safety, healthcare, and other systems to reconceptualize what inclusion, equity, and diversity means within their organizations (Government of Canada, 2022). The discovery of missing Indigenous children found in unmarked graves across Canada and the barriers to access health services and education during the COVID-19 Pandemic, particularly among people of color, emphasized further work needed to combat racism and oppression (Lowrie & Malone, 2020). I explore the Problem of Practice (PoP) - admission barriers among Indigenous learners within in-community training in the SMH Department at LAC College. The names of the post-secondary institution and the department have been anonymized with the pseudonyms LAC College and SMH department. The Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) aims to develop an Indigenized admission process and admission tools for on-demand postsecondary training which integrates Indigenous organizational frameworks and knowledges to support reconciliation and deepens an understanding of Indigenous partner admission standards for stronger Indigenous-Settler relationships.

In the first chapter, I provide a detailed context of the PoP. I describe my organizational position, leadership lens, perspectives, and agency which provide the foundation for understanding my approach to the PoP. Furthermore, I delve into the social and political factors related to equity, diversity, inclusion, and decolonization which contextualize the PoP. I also discuss the Critical Paradigm, cultural factors, and organizational goals that are relevant to the PoP. To ensure a comprehensive understanding, I share relevant internal and external data, economic, social, technological, and environmental factors along with guiding questions that frame the priorities for the change process. This chapter frames educational and economical

Calls for Truth and Reconciliation which highlights the importance of this work. Lastly, I discuss leadership contexts, tensions, and personal reflections that impact my role in this OIP, offering deep insight into my thought process and decision-making.

Chapter two outlines the approach to leadership for enacting change and identifies the limitations of the plan. This section includes the leadership strategies and techniques employed to facilitate change. Additionally, the chapter includes potential barriers or constraints that impede the successful implementation of the OIP. I introduce adaptive, distributed, and ethical leadership approaches considered for this OIP. I provide an outline of Hiatt's 2013 ADKAR Change Theory and the steps applied in the change process. The section includes key concepts and principles of the ADKAR Change Theory and how to facilitate and integrate change in the PoP. I include Indigenous perspectives shared from Indigenous educational partners and colleagues that frame the cultural lens impacting our Indigenous student and partner audiences. I include three solutions to address the problem which are: (1) conducting an admission policy review and creating an Indigenized admission process, (2) conducting a prior learning and assessment policy review, and (3) developing a long-term plan to include a repository of Indigenized evidence-based samples for admission into college programs. The preferred solution involves conducting a review of the admission policy and the development of an Indigenized application process. I explain how I chose the preferred solution as the most appropriate course of action to address the problem within the PoP. I also discuss the strengths and potential weaknesses associated with implementing this solution. One weakness is the influence of personal biases or assumptions which may lead to incomplete information. It is important to identify multiple sources of information and consult with experts to gather a comprehensive

understanding of the admission policy at LAC College. I conclude this chapter with ethical considerations for care, boundaries, and social justice.

In the third chapter of this Organizational Improvement Plan, I provide a comprehensive overview of the plans for implementing, communicating, monitoring, and evaluating changes, which I discuss from a critical lens and use of Hiatt's (2013) ADKAR Change Theory. To further support the practical application of these concepts, I include sample tools to assess readiness and address knowledge gaps among participants. I draw on Patton's (2013) Utilization Focused Evaluation framework and create an inquiry cycle. I have also adopted Markiewicz and Patrick's (2016) participatory monitoring and evaluation tools. To conclude, I provide next steps and future considerations that extend beyond the OIP. Next steps include reviewing prior learning and assessment recognition policies, strengthening strategic planning for in-community training with an emphasis on reciprocity of knowledge sharing, and developing training tools for academic managers who work and collaborate with Indigenous partners within in-community college career programs.

Acknowledgements

To all my professors at Western University, thank you for your openness to have important and difficult conversations in higher education. I am especially grateful to Indigenous partners, students, and colleagues whose stories and experiences inspired this Organizational Improvement Plan. I hope this work supports and strengthens educational pathways within in-community training. My sincere gratitude to Dr. Beate Planche for your insight and guidance during the writing process in the final year of my studies. To my son Khufu-Thomas who has been patient and my light during this entire three-year journey. Thank you to the Ekenna family for your friendship and unwavering support throughout this process. Thank you to my parents, extended family, friends, and mentors who encouraged me to pursue my career passions. To my colleagues in the EdD program, I am appreciative for the conversations throughout this journey.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Acronyms

ADKAR   Awareness, Desire to Change, Knowledge, Assess, Reinforce

BIPOC   Black, Indigenous, People of Color

Comms   Communications

CPd   Critical Paradigm

FNMI   First, Nation, Inuit, Metis

Ist   Indigenization Strategy

KmP   Knowledge Mobilization Plan

OIP   Organizational Improvement Plan

PAC   Program Advisory Committee

Program A   Pseudonym given to anonymize program and ties to institution.

Program B   Pseudonym given to anonymize program and ties to institution.

Program C   Pseudonym given to anonymize program and ties to institution.

Program D   Pseudonym given to anonymize program and ties to institution.

SMH   Pseudonym given to anonymize department.

VPA   Vice-President of Academic

Definitions

Academic Charter: LAC College's (2014) governance document that outlines goals operationalized in individual departments or programs.

Decolonial inclusion: Gaudry and Lorenz (2018) define this as the overhaul of the academy to reorient knowledge production based on a new balance of power relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people that transforms postsecondary institutions into something new.

Decolonization: the overhaul of power, knowledge, and organizational structures as coined described by Willmott (2005) in the context of this OIP where knowledge production requires a reorientation and discussions of power imbalances between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people that transforms postsecondary institutions into something new.

Dialogic: "processes where action follows dialogue, illustrating conversational-based activities where new possibilities emerge" (Hastings & Schwarz, 2022, p.120).

First-Order Change: Zsebik (2008) defines this change as incremental, linear, and reinforced by tangible, verbal interactions with stakeholders involved.

In-Community: LAC College career programs that take place within an Indigenous community. Communities identify student support coaches, educational managers, counsellors, and other support services to collaborate with learners and the LAC College Academic Manager, Coordinators, instructors, and advisors.

Indigenization: defined by Gaudry and Lorenz (2018) as inclusion, reconciliation, and decolonization.

Indigenous inclusion: Gaudry and Lorenz (2018) define this as policy work that aims to increase Indigenous students, faculty, and staff in postsecondary environments.

Mamàhtawisiwin - The Wonder We Are Born With: An Indigenous Framework that fosters a sense of belonging within Indigenous communities focusing on the success for all developed by the Government of Manitoba (2022).

Onboarding: not withstanding pre-onboarding related to immersion into a new organization by completing appropriate paperwork, welcoming of new hires, this term is focused on role specific training and ongoing supports needed when adaptive processes are required to address student and community needs as they arise in college contract training programs related to physical, social, emotional, technological, and environmental needs and changes as they arise.

On-the-land-learning: definition adopted from Dakota knowledge keeper from a partner organization as a land-based approach to learning that has a critical, physical, mental, and spiritual connection to the land as part of one's Indigenous identity. This can include first language in core academic subject areas and activities conducted on the land to create meaning among Indigenous student audiences.

Reconciliation: In the context of educational policy, the Truth, and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015) defines this as a vision that not only recognizes Indigenous knowledges, but imbeds knowledge, values, and ideals within decision making, organizational discourses, adoption of full allyship, scholarship of Indigenous works, and a complete transformation of organizational culture that reconciles past and present relationships with European-created knowledge (pp. 7-11).

Reconciliatory inclusion: Gaudry and Lorenz (2018) present this as a vision that recognizes Indigenous knowledges and imbeds knowledge, values, and ideals within decision making, and organizational discourses. Also, reconciliatory inclusion involves and adopts full allyship, focuses on scholarship of Indigenous works, and is a complete transformation of organizational

culture that reconciles past and present relationships with European-created knowledges and

Indigenous knowledges.

Second-Order Change: Zsebik (2008) defines this change as non-linear and transformational in

how stakeholders in the future state of the organization perceives experiences and processes.

Chapter 1: Problem Posing

This Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) provides an approach to strengthen admission processes in the delivery of college career programs within Indigenous -First Nation, Metis, and Inuit communities at a Canadian postsecondary institution in central Canada. From hereon, the postsecondary institution is referred to as LAC College. The name of the college has been anonymized. The goals presented within the OIP align with Truth and Reconciliation (2015):

- Call to Action 10 (ii) "[Improve] education attainment levels and success rates" (p.7).

- Call to Action 11 "Provide adequate funding to end the backlog of First Nations students seeking a postsecondary education" (p.7); and

- Call to Action 62 (ii) "Provide the necessary funding to postsecondary institutions to educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms" (p.11).

Bacchi and Goodwin (2018) indicate that structures and objectives are assumed norms and accepted truths. As such, the practice of decolonization is a move away from describing leadership approaches in colonial language. In this OIP, I explore the creation of an Indigenized admissions policy framework to further strengthen Indigenous student access and retention in the SMH Department at LAC College. SMH Department is a pseudonym provided to anonymize the academic unit at LAC College.

Positionality and Lens Statement

I am a change initiator and an academic manager. My role focuses on processes and operational needs such as leading, observing, coaching, and enacting LAC College's current 2014 Academic Charter. My responsibilities also include scheduling and managing faculty

workloads, staffing, and budgeting. I report to the Dean of SMH Department. Further to, I

manage and implement four on-campus, distance education, and community career programs. I

am one of three academic managers with one of the largest portfolios at LAC College that

delivers in-community training with a range of eight to sixteen community training programs per

year. There are twenty-seven faculty who report to me. I am a member of a cross-functional team

within, in-community programming which includes the Dean of Community Development,

Director of Indigenous Affairs, community coordinators, and cultural and student advisors. I sit

on a variety of college-wide committees. There are two academic coordinators in Community

Development who collaborate with me within in-community training programs. Both

coordinators report to the Manager of Community Development and the Dean of Community

Development. Figure 1 depicts the organizational structure within SMH Department at LAC

College.

Figure 1

SMH Department Organizational Structure
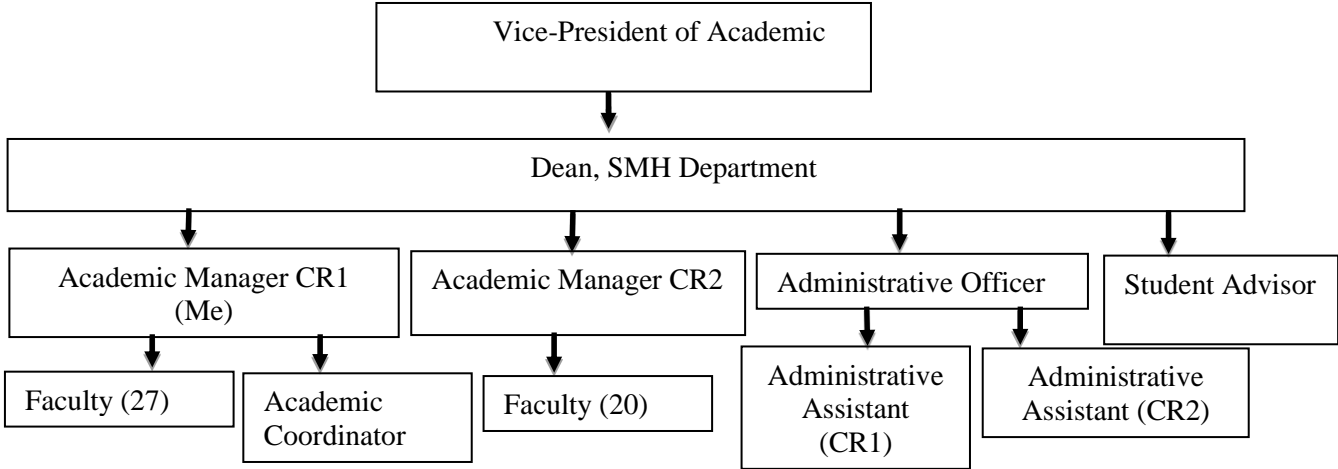
Note. This figure depicts the direct reports within the SMH Department at LAC College.

Agency

As a change agent, I collaborate with multiple internal and external stakeholders. I collaborate with Indigenous community partners which usually consists of an in-community educational manager or director and coordinator. I report to the Dean of SMH Department. Change participants within the OIP include Indigenous learners, Indigenous and non-Indigenous instructors, coordinators, Indigenous registration personnel, and Indigenous community members. Change implementers include the Dean of SMH, Dean of Community Development, Vice President of Academic, personnel within the Office of the Registrar, student support staff, and Indigenous Community Post-Secondary Partners. Managers and coordinators within Community Development work with the Dean of SMH Department and I to establish contracts. Coordinators and Indigenous Student Wellness Advisors offer cultural supports to Indigenous LAC College students. Staff within Community Development and SMH Department establishes performance goals and targets for in-community programming. Personnel within the SMH Department implements, coordinates, and manages contracts. Coordinators facilitate weekly meetings with Indigenous Community Education Departments. Internal and external Indigenous partner voices are integral to the PoP as change impacts their communities. LAC College and Indigenous Partner support staff also implements programming. They provide academic, social, health, and emotional support where needed. Weekly meetings take place with implementers. All stakeholders described are participatory in decision making at various times of program delivery to ensure that students thrive, are resilient, and are overall successful. The following section provides an outline of social and political factors that emphasizes the need for an admissions policy review for in-community program delivery.

Social and Political Factors

A guiding document for this OIP is LAC College's 2018 Indigenization Strategy (ISt). The primary goal of ISt (2018) is to instill competency through the acknowledgement and respect of Indigenous cultures while decolonizing the institution for the betterment of Indigenous Peoples in Canada. Indigenous student success is directly tied to Indigenization in postsecondary education. Indigenization is about removing barriers that prevent Indigenous students from thriving academically, socially, and emotionally during their postsecondary experiences. In 2016, LAC College worked with over 32 faculty and staff across campuses and 14 Indigenous communities to reflect on barriers to student success, what success looks like, and what needs to be done. In 2021, a performance balance score card was created to address Indigenous student engagement, retention, and success. In 2022, community coordinators, instructors, and I were asked to draft a report on Indigenous student success, performances, barriers, and Indigenization processes and success in the SMH Department. The recommendations, strategies and successes outlined in the report were well received by the Director of Indigenous Affairs. Data included in the report came from day-to-day interactions with students, coordinators, faculty, student support coaches, deans, directors, admissions personnel, advisors, and in-community educational management staff. The recommendations of my colleagues and I will frame the implementation of the OIP. To better understand my worldview and this PoP, I will discuss equity, diversity, and inclusion in the context of decolonization.

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Decolonization

McGowan et al. (2020) reminds me that decolonization is a system disrupting dynamic. For just over three years, I engaged and collaborated with Indigenous elders and educational partners across nine Indigenous communities who work with LAC College. Indigenous partners

are aware that improvement to community training is deeply rooted in student engagement in learning and see opportunities for Indigenizing programming to include First Nations community knowledges and experiences. Busch (2017) indicates that higher education is an economic investment in self and one's community. Educational leaders within the provincial government supports this idea and seeks to create employment opportunities by increasing postsecondary enrollment through funding sources provided for in-community programming. Educational attainment is a means towards creating future Indigenous owned businesses and a mechanism towards self-government. Busch (2017) also argues that education constructs self-identity and exposes learners to a wide range of political views. Indigenous learners are presented with opportunities for critical thinking around policies, programs, and technologies. Student beliefs and understandings of the world are complex and require a critical lens. As such, an emancipatory lens informs my understanding of the world. Firstly, as a black, cisgender, academic manager, past faculty and curriculum developer, and scholar, with ancestral ties to former colonized subjects in the Caribbean, my connection to my work and Indigenous communities provides an intersectional lens. Secondly, my work, partnerships, and relationships with Indigenous and Non-Indigenous colleagues, educators, students, academic managers, and students also informs my research and understanding of the problem. Thirdly, research collected from internal college data on Indigenous student graduation, retention, attrition, immersion, satisfaction, post-graduate employment, and credentialing at LAC College also informs my understanding. Lastly, day-to-day implementation of admission, student evaluation, academic progression, and prior learning and credit transfer policies also informs my work in community program improvement. Now, I will discuss my leadership lens.

Leadership Lens

My personal leadership lens is experiential and is based on transforming inner attitudes of practice, knowledge, and leadership. While Basham (2012) describes transformational leadership as the ability for leaders to develop and communicate a vision and strategy to encourage and develop change based on strong values, high standards, inspiration, collaboration and trust, my day-to-day practice is often more reflective, disruptive, and egalitarian. I ask questions around decisions related to admission, scheduling, enrollment, student progression, academic and social supports with the intent to see students thrive which is more adaptive than transformational. Whitney (2020) shares that adaptive leaders are effective because it is an egalitarian approach based on collaboration and relationships with multiple stakeholders who are also leaders. Adaptive leadership is essential for this OIP's success. My colleagues and I acknowledge there are often changing circumstances such as modes of delivery due to health guidelines from Chiefs and Councils. For an improvement plan to succeed, collaboration, time for planning, mutual understanding and expertise will be needed to address the PoP. A Critical paradigm grounds this work and is discussed further in chapter one. Adaptive and distributed leadership are adopted in this OIP. Both leadership approaches align with the Critical paradigm and are discussed in chapter two. Next, I will discuss the organizational context of the proposed improvement plan.

Organizational Context

LAC College has a hierarchical top-down leadership approach. The structure of the college includes a board of governors who advise and evaluate the performance of its president. A Vice-President of Academic leads and collaborates with a team of deans and directors. Deans oversee programming and manage academic chairpersons. Academic managers and coordinators work closely together, but academic managers oversee the work of faculty. The imagery used to

symbolize my role as a organizational cultural interpreter is a bridge with multiple exchanges of ideas and information sharing from multiple internal and external education units and stakeholders. The bridge represents a functional approach to leadership. The assumptions of hierarchical structures are that processes and functions are enacted by all units based on similar ideologies. Another assumption is there is social stratification taking place for mutual agreement on policies such as applications, transcripts, and credits as acceptable forms of evidence of academic readiness for program entry. In contrast, Indigenous leadership approaches to postsecondary programming across Indigenous communities in the province suggest a more cyclical and interconnectedness to leadership, where academic managers examine spiritual, physical, emotional, and mental wellness and readiness for programming and implementation. Both views are enacted through community identification of program needs, examining how language and land-based education is incorporated into curriculum and finding balance of fulfilling the main purpose of programming which is to build capacity and skills within distinct Indigenous communities.

The metaphor of a bridge between two distinct worldviews suggests that leadership must maintain authenticity in being open with expectations and systems where leaders can arrive at a mutual point of understanding. In doing so, we avoid what Jameson (2020) refers to as power struggles, competition over resources, and turf battles. My colleagues in the SMH Department, Community Development, Indigenous Affairs, and I operate from a critical lens where there is an openness and readiness to build bridges within an overall organization that is more structural in nature due to how policies are sometimes interpreted. Hiring, performance appraisals, and course offerings are determined in collaboration with Indigenous community parties who choose to participate in these functions. However, admission, program progression, and prior learning and

assessment recognition policies are not always easily understood or administered in the same way across departments, pulling coordinators and academic managers into multiple worldviews and directions. As a result, Indigeneity and what that means in organizational leadership is an issue of tension. However, there are opportunities for open dialogue about reconciliation and a collaborative approach to leadership ensures Elders and Indigenous leaders, and staff are in positions of power to make decisions that are in the best interest of their communities to support Indigenous student success in college career programs.

In-community programming provides Indigenous students with access to educational programming, so they do not have to move from their communities. Compared to traditional programming in urban centres, this type of programming has achieved notable retention rates. At LAC College, Indigenous and non-Indigenous students can attend continuing education courses to obtain a missing course or to prepare for their program through preparatory training when time allows which has led to remarkable successes in graduation and retention rates. However, in-community programming is often tied to funding that may be confirmed within a matter or days or weeks before programming is expected to begin. This OIP considers the context of programs in the SMH Department that requires academic managers, admission staff, students, and Indigenous partners to adapt admission criterion from a holistic Indigenous lens that examines comparable experiences, particularly when there is limited time for program preparation.

The Critical Paradigm

The Critical Paradigm (CPd) is the underlining view of this PoP. The CPd analyzes structures of power and powerlessness. Willmott (2005) shares that decolonization is a theory within the CPd with emancipatory interests of power, knowledge, and structures. Tsoukas and Knudsen (2005) defines the CPd as an organizational view that resists practices that seek to

maintain dominance. Leaders with a CPd approach seek to emancipate subjects who have become voiceless in decision-making and access to resources that lead to one's own self-determination. Mumby (2005) further describes the CPd as a dialectical approach to critically reason and to find solutions based on truth when conflicting ideas emerge. Dialectical thinking involves ongoing conversations and reflections of all participants. Mumby (2005) suggests the CPd challenges the status quo of institutions, criticizes processes and seeks transformation that empowers those most vulnerable and at risk - the work of adaptive leaders. The CPd within this PoP critiques systems, policies, and processes at LAC College that keep marginalized student populations from achieving academic success. Applying this paradigm allows Indigenous voices, Knowledge Keepers, change agents, and implementers of change to become active leaders in creating policies - the end goal of distributive leadership. The voices of Indigenous Knowledge Keepers, change agents, and implementers become active leaders and participants in planning change. Thus, the Critical Paradigm serves to create responsible, autonomous environments that recognize various forms of knowledge, values, leadership styles, and preferences. Strengths of this paradigm include participation of Indigenous Knowledge Keepers, change agents, change drivers and implementers of change as decision makers. For example, Indigenous partners establish schedules and timelines for programming with SMH Department staff which traditionally belongs under the scope of the Office of the Registrar. Conversations around fairness and access to programming are ongoing and part of day-to-day conversations between staff in Community Development, SMH Department, and the Office of the Registrar. Theoharis (2018) explores stagnation in change processes and the intersectionality of white privilege, educational leadership, and agency. Additionally, Theoharis (2018) indicates that the lack of institutional preparedness to confront difficult conversations about race and access to education

by people of color is about the unwillingness of academic leaders to disrupt the status quo of power and privilege. As a change initiator, my role is an institutional interpreter of processes, needs, wants and policies which includes conversations around race, power, access to education, and inclusive and equity-based programming. Partners determine costs such as human resource supports needed for each contract. Partners work with Indigenous Affairs and individual schools to determine delivery models and methods.

Criticisms by functionalists within educational units at LAC College are that institutions must remain accountable to the public in implementing similar admission requirements and structures for Indigenous learners; institutions must continue to make money; and must set targeted deadlines to remain fair. This is an area that requires an evaluation of organizational readiness. McKnight and Glennie (2019) indicate that change planning requires focused and deliberate work on building awareness which in turn brings staff to agree with a future vision environment. Further to, McKnight and Glennie (2019) share that building awareness for the need for change reduces stress, anxiety, resentment, and pushback. Kezar and Eckel (2002) explain that institutional needs are contextual to understand collegial and managerial cultures and negotiation and governance approaches to leadership. Finally, Harris (2015) suggests that educational policy is not performative nor is it about human resources. As such, examining the problem requires cooperation and reciprocity of knowledge and information sharing to move change processes along. I acknowledge implementers such as the Vice President of Academic, Dean of Community Development, Dean of SMH Department, and Indigenous postsecondary partners are the primary decision makers in moving the improvement plan forward and my role will be to initiate conversations and support the development of a collaborative framework to drive change forward.

Western universities and colleges assume that Indigenous leaders, learners, and educational partners share the same goal, lens, culture, knowledge, and beliefs. Champagne (2015) suggests traditional worldviews and knowledge continue to influence Indigenous peoples in terms of their actions and community relations. Furthermore, Champagne (2015) indicates that higher education institutions must stop treating Indigenous Nations and their knowledge(s) as extinct. Therefore, the goals of education must match the goals of Indigenous local communities. At LAC College, the Vice-President of Academic oversees change to policies around admission, prior learning, credit transfer, and other policies. LAC College has a robust design of institutional goals outlined in its Academic Charter (2018), Indigenization Strategy, and Strategic Plan which are shared to build awareness and training though all-staff annual staff professional development and within smaller inter-departmental professional development. The following priorities have been identified within LAC College's (2017) Academic Plan that align with this OIP: (a) additional contract training, (b) improved student retention through to graduation, and (c) improved efficiency within current programs.

Cultural Factors & Human Resources

Onboarding of all new staff is divided into three parts which are general onboarding from the human resource department, SMH Department onboarding of faculty and non-faculty, and manager training for middle and senior managers. There is no current formal onboarding for academic managers in community contract training. Departmental training varies from a 'this is the way things have been done mentality' to trial and error, to the use of onboarding checklists shared by the human resource department. However, organizational support mechanisms are in place for all learners at LAC College. These supports include a student advisor, dean, academic manager, and administrative staff across each department or program area. Academic student

supports are considered an independent unit and its services include academic tutoring, writing and technological supports, and professional development for faculty and staff. There is a dedicated student association office, cultural centre, and international department and an Indigenous Affairs office. There are Program Advisory Committees (PACs) for each program discipline and specialization that meet three or more times a year. Faculty are industry experts in their fields with 25% or less coming from a teaching background. There are no faculty in SMH focused on any research during the three years of preparing this OIP.

Equity and Social Justice Factors

There is a form of politicization of education around race and ethnicity in postsecondary programs. Of a team of twenty-six senior and middle level managers across LAC College, five identify as individuals within Black, Indigenous, and People of Color populations (BIPOC). Ninety percent of SMH Faculty are non-Indigenous of White-European descent. Administrative personnel, administrators, and faculty have worked together for over a decade across departments with strong professional relationships. Austin and Jones (2015) indicate "one must learn the institutional legends and stories that help them understand certain rituals and symbols… differences in both local and institutional culture have influenced [college] governance" (p. 61). Being a new academic manager, understanding past and current relationships and their complexities can be challenging and building external relationships within Indigenous communities adds another layer of complexity. While there are personal parallels between the political, social, and colonial histories of Indigenous people and I, there are limitations to parallels. I am self-aware and use caution around making comparisons to Indigenous experiences. This can be perceived as insulting to unique Canadian First Nations Peoples' experiences, histories, cultures, and spiritual practices. However, relationship-building is at the

core of this OIP which is viewed through the lens and contexts of equity, diversity, and social justice which involves engagement of community partners. Tapsell and Woods (2008) call this type of engagement system disruption - a new form of engagement or *panarchy*. Panarchy involves governance models of collaborative councils of Elders and traditional knowledge holders who provide contexts around traditions, histories, and goals for their respective community. Additionally, focusing on the goal of providing pathways for postsecondary education to promote resilience and thriving is an area for conversation in which all stakeholders can engage. Engaging in activities that prioritize local governance initiatives translates into local sustainable development and higher levels of global sustainability (Chanza & DeWit, 2016). Providing onboarding supports and training to academic managers, coordinators, student support coaches, admissions specialists and clerks, Registrars and associate Registrars, and other staff collaborating with Indigenous partners works towards achieving local sustainable development because an educated Indigenous workforce improves livelihoods for one's entire community.

Leadership Problem of Practice

Austin and Jones (2015) found that higher educational governance consists of four components: interdependence between organizations, a network of members and shared resource, agreed mutual trust, and the balance of autonomy and influence of government jurisdictions. Indigenous Chiefs and Council Members identify academic programming needs within their respective nations and are led by identified Indigenous educational managers. Funding is provided to LAC College from communities. When considering this type of governance model, one must consider how each role and department functions to provide leadership, management, and governance in community training programs (e.g., academic policy implementation).

The current admission, prior learning and assessment recognition, and program progression policies present significant barriers to Indigenous student enrollment and academic achievement in LAC College's community training programs, particularly around improving Indigenous student immersion experiences and impact on retention and graduation rates. LAC College employee surveys from 2020 to 2022 indicate a lack of understanding of the college vision, particularly around community training and how Indigenization strategies are implemented within programming. Limited supports were one of the top two areas of concern for academic, non-academic, and managerial staff (LAC College, 2022). Limited to no supports in contract training are a point of frustration for staff across admissions, recruitment, marketing, registration, academic departments, and academic advising units. A lack of understanding of how policy is implemented from a holistic approach to organizational management leads to delayed decision making and high rates of program withdrawal. Furthermore, a lack of clarity and differing values on policy implementation are areas of concern. While there are program successes among First Nations, Metis, and Inuit (FNMI) learners at LAC College, FNIM populations are at a higher risk for not completing a postsecondary program across the province. Thus, the key question addressed in this OIP is what approaches, key considerations, and planning are needed to evaluate LAC College's current admission standards to better acknowledge and evaluate prior Indigenous knowledges, experiences, and selection criteria?

Framing the Problem of Practice

Usher and Pelletier (2017) reports that Indigenous learners are the most underrepresented groups in higher education in the province. Until the early 2000s, Indigenous perspectives and worldviews were not recognized in Canadian education systems (Friedel, 2010). This lack of reciprocity and acceptance of Indigenous knowledges is racist, classist, and elitist in nature.

These perspectives lead to demotivation, high attrition rates, and low postsecondary participation among Indigenous learners. Jones et al. (2012) indicate distributed leadership is an essential approach to transform systemic structures that are barriers in postsecondary achievement. A distributed leadership framework supports change management processes to bridge agency and structure. It will take internal and external stakeholders to address political tensions, economic histories, social determinants of health, technological barriers, and environmental factors to improve Indigenous student success in college career programs.

Busch (2017) argues economic factors drive educational attainment. Indigenous student enrollment at LAC College improves economic livelihoods and governance in Indigenous communities. As part of Truth and Reconciliation, academic leaders must keep in mind that any initiative to improve retention must not be another way to take advantage of any Indigenous community served for monetary gain. As part of my role, trust and relationship building is essential. Collaborative approaches to leadership reduce conflict and bias among learners, faculty, Indigenous partners, administrative staff, academic managers, and manages perceptions.

Political Factors

There are three political factors affecting Indigenous student enrollment and retention at LAC College: postsecondary funding, band or sponsorship funding, and public perceptions. Though 40% of the provincial population is located outside of a major metropolitan area only 15% of available provincial dollars are available across three of the other institutions that deliver programming in remote or northern Indigenous communities (Usher & Pelletier, 2017). This makes it challenging to provide health and wellness supports. Also, sponsorship dollars from Indigenous bands are often not determined until June of a calendar year. This creates poor immersion and relocation challenges for Indigenous learners. Finally, student public perception

is negative when Indigenous students arrive late at a program. The perception is that students who arrive late are unprepared, disinterested, and unmotivated. Limited preparation for Indigenous educational departments and LAC College creates burnout, anxiety, and scrambling to get a program started and implemented within a community.

Economic and Social Factors

Health, homelessness, poor housing, and residential school systems continue to have significant impacts on Indigenous economic livelihoods. One debate in higher education is that postsecondary institutions cannot be all things to all people. However, Mackinnon (2014) suggests that all institutions conduct engage stakeholders to move institutional goals forward. LAC College seeks to provide experiential learning, multiple pathways, and accessible learning which translates to increased graduation rates, a return on provincial investment in job creation and succession planning. This vision is enacted through college support services, the use of innovative technologies, research, or work-integrated learning, and hiring and training in equity, diversity, and inclusionary practices.

Environmental Factors

Currently, 80% of the homeless population in the province are Indigenous youth. Giancarlo (2020) reports the residential school system was exploitative and led to lasting social challenges still present in the province and Brownwell et al. (2018) assessed 1058 youth in the provincial health and social services sector and reported that Indigenous youth are at risk for poor health, education, and social outcomes. Additionally, Indigenous youth are at a higher risk of entering the child welfare system, to be incarcerated, or were at a higher risk of suicide. Furthermore, Brownwell et al. (2018) found that Indigenous youth, ages one to twenty-five suffered from high rates of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) which has been linked to

cognitive disabilities. Therefore, improving access to medical treatment, housing conditions on or off reserve, and improving access to transportation to postsecondary improves educational attainment among Indigenous youth (Bougie & Senecal, 2010).

Technological Factors

Technological factors are an area for exploration in the envisioned future state at LAC College in teaching and learning particularly around a process for Indigenizing curriculum and use of appropriate delivery methods. Afifi et al. (2018) examines technological factors in the Indigenization of curriculum. The study implements a feedback loop using storytelling or two-eyed seeing to improve student performance. Strong relationships with instructors are a motivating factor for success. Reedy (2019) also provides a strong framework for designing Indigenous online education programs which include cultural artefacts, imbed educational equity in the curriculum design process, and include storytelling or yarning as part of student engagement. Reedy (2019) specifies that a well-designed online program or course includes opportunities for connections, relatedness, academic supports, strong teaching presence, building cultural identity, and including minimum digital literacy in instructional design. This topic may be explored as a future area of consideration that extends beyond this OIP.

In the early 2000s, success was quantified as Indigenous student postsecondary completion (Street et al., 2020). Today, Indigenous student success is defined as educational policies that work for Indigenous students (Street et al., 2020). Indigenization strategies must be imbedded into program development, design of evaluations, hiring of Indigenous faculty and support staff, and must involve Indigenous board representation. Fairlie et al. (2014) examined achievement levels among Black-American, Latin-American, and Native-American learners and found that achievement gaps are smaller in classes taken with Black, Latin, and Native American

instructors. Students obtained better grades, were less likely to drop a course, more likely to pass a course, and more likely to have a grade of at least B (Fairlie et al., 2014). Instructors from respective minority communities were strong role models and as such, minority learners tended to perform better as they interact with the instructor. However, homogeneity of classroom compositions has an adverse reaction resulting in lower achievement rates related to classroom management, teaching, and learning practice. Therefore, key emphasis on EDI hiring practices is key in placing instructors in courses where Indigenous learners may underperform. This is another factor worth exploring as a future consideration beyond this OIP.

Relevant Internal & External Data

LAC College's cultural values are practical learning experiences, up to date programming, and collaboration with community, government, and other institutions. These values foster work-integrated learning opportunities, curriculum ties to labour market needs, industry engagement, and increased opportunities for employment post-graduation. For example, learner success is based on up-to-date courses, overall quality of instruction, up to date programming, preparedness for employment, value attained to cost of program, practicum experiences, and helpfulness in attaining employment post-graduation. These are categories evaluated annually through performance metrics by a third-party evaluator outside of the college. To date, LAC College has a strong graduation rate of 90% with increasing enrollment numbers of international students. Overall, Indigenous students are performing better than in previous years which are reflected in graduation numbers. However, Indigenous learners continue to have the highest overall attrition rates at the college. Indigenous learners enrolled within in-community training have higher graduation rates, however, attrition rates in the SMH Department are 50% to 60% higher. High attrition rates within the SMH Department are linked

to program readiness and limited social, economical, and wellness supports. However, a primary barrier for prospective learners in the SMH Department is access. A student may have had gaps in education or may have graduated from a high school in their community. Without a transcript that is submitted to the province, the transcript provided from the community or directly from the high school may not be accepted. Similarly, a student may have not completed high school, but was successful in completing a college transfer program and has gone on to complete a college or university certificate. However, their previous high school credential is still requested and without the high school transcript, the student may be denied admission to a program. If students have a positive remark on their criminal record check, a student may not be admitted to the program. In these cases, coordinators, or I along with Indigenous educational partners will investigate when the incident took place, what occurred, and whether this will prevent the prospective learner from obtaining accreditation from a licensing body. In cases where the incident took place a decade or so ago and there are no recurring incidents where the prospective student has gone on to gain further employment or education and is recommended by the community and are approved by the accrediting body, these learners may be denied admission into a program and may be asked to provide a letter from an employer indicating they are willing to have the learner onsite. This creates issues around bias, confidentiality, and demotivates prospective learners. Deans and I often advocate on the behalf of the community and learners in this situation through admission through exceptional circumstances. However, if a student in these scenarios presented are made to jump through hoops, delayed admission creates an awkward immersion experience for new learners, a lack of motivation and a sense of bias which often leads to higher rates of program withdrawal.

Statistics Canada (2021) reports from 2016 to 2020, Indigenous labour market participation was consistently 10% behind non-Indigenous Canadians who had less than high school or a completed postsecondary credential. Additionally, employment in management, natural sciences, law, education, government, sales, and trades industries saw just under six percent participation of Indigenous Canadians in contrast to 94% of non-Indigenous Canadians between the ages of 15 and 25 years of age and older (Statistics Canada, 2021). To compound the issue of Indigenous graduate labour market participation, 32% of First Nations people living off-reserve, 30% are Metis, 19% are Inuit and have one or more disabilities that interrupt daily activities (Hahmman et al., 2019). One in three FNMI people living off reserves have a disability. Finally, suicide, low academic achievement, limited labour market participation, high rates of disability, and mental health challenges continue to impact future sustainable livelihoods among Indigenous Canadians.

Guiding Questions

LAC College is a publicly funded institution that offers over 50 certificate, diploma, and advanced credential programs for over sixty years. Usher & Pelletier (2017) reports that there were 7,748 potential Indigenous postsecondary learners in the age 19 to 34 category in three regions of the province who had the option to attend any of the five postsecondary institutions in the province. However, in 2018 Indigenous student enrollment was 14.5% of all enrollments at LAC College in regular and contract training programs (LAC College, 2019). LAC College's (2021) SMH Department Report, lists that 27% of all learners in distance education, contract training, and on-campus programming self-reported being Indigenous. Additionally, LAC College's (2021) Program Indicator Report for the SMH Department lists attrition rates as 70% in Program A, 58% Program B, 36% in Program C, and 50% in Program D. This means student

completion rates have been between 23% and 62% in 2021 - well below the target of 80% set by

the college. Furthermore, LAC College's (2022) Graduate Follow-Up Survey indicates that

Indigenous graduates reported being less likely than other graduates to be working full time –

11% lower than the overall college average. However, 93% of Indigenous students surveyed

were likely to recommend LAC College to family or friends (LAC College, 2022). Academic

managers or change agents like me must collaborate with various units to increase Indigenous

student enrollment, retention, success, and graduation rates by 2025. There are three questions

that emerge about this problem of practice. The first question is what challenges emerge from the

main problem? One main problem is that the current admission policy demonstrates an

imbalance of power. This matter is unresolved as Indigenous prospective learners as subjects and

their experiences are missing in policy. The current policy indicates that all prospective learners

including Indigenous students must follow socially produced forms of knowledge deemed

acceptable from a western lens. The second question is what potential factors or phenomena

contribute to and influence the main problem? Transfer credits, work-integrated learning, mature

student options, and all student academic standing are governed through additional policies as

instruments that shape the expectations and conduct of students entering a career program and

their academic process throughout their time at the college. The issue of this policy also impacts

student motivation in that learners who do not see that their knowledge is recognized may not

want to participate in higher education. Even if accepted into a college career program through

upgrading, Indigenous learners may suffer from imposter syndrome or a sense of illegitimacy in

higher education. Finally, the missing object and subject of Indigenous knowledge evaluation

further weakens relationships with Indigenous prospective learners, Indigenous communities,

and higher education institutions. The Office of the Registrar may seek to enforce the admission

policy if there is no understanding of Indigenous student skills, experiences, and ways of arriving at constructed knowledge. Lastly, what potential lines of inquiry stem from the main problem? Academic leaders must think outside of the box and consider land-based education and other Indigenous knowledge construction processes in lieu of entry requirements. A review of the current admission policy in partnership with Indigenous partners to develop an Indigenous admissions tool is one area for exploration in the SMH Department. This work requires strong leadership focused on changing the current admission processes for in-community programming in the SMH Department.

Leadership Focused Vision for Change

To address policy shifts to support Indigenous student retention, stakeholders must review and update academic admission, progression, and prior learning and experiences policies. In turn this provides clarity within the SMH Department to better support Indigenous student experiences. Collaboratively, we must work to decolonize structural ways of how knowledge and schooling is defined. Fallon and Paquette (2014) indicate that postsecondary institutions are not prepared to legitimize First Nations knowledge. This form of intolerance and avoidance of Indigenous authority is one barrier in addressing Indigenous student success. However, Blaschke at al., (2014) indicate that "government or the [institutional] advisory board [takes] the lead initiative in constructing an agenda of strategic issues" (p. 716). This includes change agents such as Dean of SMH Department, Dean of Community Development, the Vice-President of Academic, and Indigenous partners at LAC College.

Envisioned Future State

One intended outcome is shared leadership which is necessary in the change initiative. The social outcome for change is tied to the college's institutional strategic plans (e.g., EDI) and

commitment to Truth and Reconciliation (2015). One pressure identified by Louvel (2013) is the "institutional environment" and "task environment" (p, 672). While the Registrar, vice -president of academic, and policy and planning offices are responsible for policy changes at our respective institutions, academic managers or coordinators are responsible for fulfilling tasks and managing resources. There may at times be conflicting ideas of what the outcomes should look like. As such, managing and discussing what those outcomes look like across the institutional environment will be key to gaining understanding and traction towards formalizing what change is, and what tasks may look like, and who would complete them. The vision for change is to see updated admission tools and processes that respect and recognize multiple pathways and knowledges particularly among First Nation, Inuit, and Metis learners.

My envisioned future state would involve a robust understanding of students' needs in each Indigenous community. This key information influences community programming. Having streamlined processes that reflect the needs of Indigenous learners supports academic managers in academic advising and student retention initiatives. Collaboratively, it will be important to establish indicators of success and to support progress using continuous quality mechanisms. For example, evaluating systems and policies that keep marginalized students from achieving success is an ongoing process in a future desired state of the organization.

Priorities for Change

Stensaker (2015) argues that change agents must understand the histories and dynamics of institutional departments to be able to explain the need for change. I tend to view change processes in higher education as c*ontinuous learning*. Stakeholders such as students, Indigenous partners, government, and staff increasingly call for transparency and accountability to deliver what "*we say we are going to do"*; therefore, change is ongoing and reflective. The approach for

change using the Critical Paradigm allows change agents to bridge gaps in policies that limit access to quality education, fairness in student experience, and a break away from structures of inequality all which support student achievement and retention. LAC College is still developing an identity for its career programs in community training, particularly in departments where there is cross-functional work. There may be multiple actors with distinct identities at any time with strong organizational cultures operating within a hierarchical system that is sometimes unclear while Indigenous systems are also operating with distinct identities with multiple structures of responsibilities. Ideally mapping these systems to understand internal and external characteristics of change processes will be a necessary part of the change design because interpretations vary and can be a cause of tension.

Another important concept is managing conflict and facilitating conversations around the interpretation of admission policies. The topics of knowledge, knowledge sharing, and keepers of knowledge are complex in nature. The current admission policy at LAC College does not consider non-traditional western pathways to access postsecondary education. For example, a high school transcript provided by the province is deemed the acceptable document for admission. Transcripts accessible from LAC College or other well-known institutions are also acceptable. However, transcripts directly provided from the high school within community are not deemed acceptable. An Indigenous colleague at LAC College once stated the word "institution" provides a negative connotation and that it does not capture the idea that knowledge is fluid and is for everyone. The issue of acceptable documentation often leads to delayed programming and the withdrawal of an applicant from a program. Though knowledge varies from nation to nation, there are key commonalities in student academic governance to consider in this OIP. Overall, the social and institutional goals are to see where policy interpretations can

address Indigenous student access, reciprocity of educational structures and practices, and overall success in community training programs. Equity, diversity, inclusionary practices through Indigenous lenses assists academic managers to interpret policies for decision making prior to the start and during program delivery.

Leadership Contexts and Considerations: Macro, Meso, and Micro

Organizational leadership in higher education focuses on transformational leadership, which according to Holten et al. (2017) consistently focuses on positive performance. Indigenous Affairs, Community Development, and SMH Department share beliefs around cooperation, coordination, and problem-solving issues as they arise in contract training. Jones et al. (2012) indicate there is a need to develop more distributive leadership approaches to leading change and as such, leadership contexts are necessary in understanding this PoP. Talib and Fitzgerald (2016) frame macro, micro and meso discourse around diversity, competition, flexibility, and the access and management of resources. Macro discourses in leadership are about topics beyond the institution which include government pay by performance metrics (e.g., increased graduation rates) and change fatigue among faculty. Meso topics within the organization include tensions around the roles of academic managers and coordinators, such as policy interpretation and implementation. However, micro discourse are self reflections around complex challenges in leading change when working in cross-functional teams with multiple departments. To summarize, my vision is to lead incremental changes starting with the interpretation and assessment of prospective candidates into SMH Department programs within in-community programming. My focus is to obtain buy-in, gain co-operation from internal parties who do not see the implications of a loss of relationship with communities, and the lack of reciprocity and respect for Indigenous learners with non-western linear pathways of education. Distributed

leadership is the primary approach to propel the desired change forward which is to evaluate admission processes that create barriers for students entering in-community programming.

Chapter 1 Conclusion

In this chapter, readers were provided with an in-depth understanding of my positionality as a middle manager at LAC College, my level of agency, and leadership lens. A discussion around social, political, cultural, equity, and social justice factors were presented. My vision for change and Problem of Practice was discussed. Additionally, readers were presented with an understanding that academic and community Indigenous leaders, faculty, key internal and external expertise are required as part of ongoing discourse to address policy shifts to improve community training programs and overall Indigenous student success at LAC College. Thus, the question at the heart of this OIP, is what approaches might address the lack of onboarding and encourage the continued support of academic managers to promote Indigenous student retention in contract career programs at LAC College? Distributed leadership builds Indigenous agency within educational units and their respective communities. The process of cooperation is rooted in the ability to work with various bodies who understand First Nation, Inuit, and Metis histories. One limitation is the availability of personnel at LAC College and time to participate in this OIP. Also, Indigenous learners and partners may approach this change initiative with mistrust. As such, an organizational improvement plan requires in-depth planning and development as one seeks to apply a leadership approach and consider a change management strategy to begin working towards change.

Chapter 2: Planning and Development

Reconciliation must inspire Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples to transform

Canadian society so that our children and grandchildren can live together in dignity, peace, and

prosperity on these lands we now share.

--Truth and Reconciliation Commission, *Final Report*

Through ongoing conversations with Indigenous colleagues and partners, there is an

ethical sense of urgency and call for allyship to review admission requirements for Indigenous

learners entering in-community college programs in SMH Department at LAC College. As a

settler to Turtle Island, it is alarming to see Canadian Indigenous labour market participation

rates consistently behind non-Indigenous Canadians. Kovach (2021) offers a critical approach to

change cultural values, interpretations, and application of policy through champions or agents of

change. While established structures help in averting risks, a top-down leadership approach does

not support Indigenous perspectives. In this chapter, I share my approaches to leadership. I

discuss Hiatt's (2013) ADKAR framework for leading change which illustrates the "how-to"

plan for change and the "what" that requires change. I examine the strengths, weaknesses, and

solutions for planning change and offer three potential solutions for this change plan.

Leadership Approaches to Change

Critical theorists seek to create change to balance power dynamics, challenge the status-

quo within institutions, seek transformation to empower those most vulnerable, and to critique

processes that disadvantage the vulnerable. I present how distributed, adaptive, and ethical

leadership work together to advance change at LAC College. Distributed leadership is the

dominant approach proposed throughout this OIP to address the Problem of Practice and is

imbedded in the change process. However, there are critical times adaptive and ethical leadership

approaches are also utilized. These leadership approaches are also examined within Indigenous contexts of the communities served by LAC College through personal reflections captured through conversations with Indigenous colleagues, elders, Knowledge Keepers, and students. Names and locations have been omitted to maintain the anonymity of others.

Distributed Leadership

Distributed leadership defined by DeFlammis et al. (2016) and earlier works of Spillane (2006) are adopted in this OIP as activities designed by organizational members to influence the motivation, knowledge, affect and practice of other organizational members in the service of an organization's core work. Staff within SMH Department enact distributed leadership at varying decision-making levels, including Indigenous partners, Academic Managers, Coordinators, Advisors, and Dean of Community Development and Dean of SMH Department. This may include staffing, developing student learning plans, or enacting delegation and signing authorities to support problem-solution activities. Harris (2015) supports this sentiment and indicates that distributed leadership requires innovation to create solutions and generate knowledge. The leadership team acts as a learning community that must set clear indicators and measures on how to address problems as they arise. Harris (2015) indicates an effective and successful learning community has a robust design, implementation, and evaluation plan which lead to problem-solving. Additionally, Urquhart et al. (2020) utilizes dialogue as part a collaborative mechanism in a learning community. The authors' research in understanding perspectives of Indigenous well-being highlights the importance of language and impact of power dynamics. Collaborative discussions are key to engaging stakeholders through listening, reflecting, trying, and retrying solutions from discussions (Urquhart et al., 2020). From dialogue, tools for implementation and evaluation are created by each community or stakeholder. Habermas (1984) suggests that

effective collaborative and distributed leadership requires honest self-criticism to uncover

colonial thinking and to disrupt thought processes that are resistant to viewpoints of others.

Listening to Indigenous community educational partners strengthens our organizational

relationships and mutual goals. Community partners understand LAC Colleges' admission

standards as well as prospective student strengths, abilities, resilience, work histories,

motivations, and impact on their respective communities. Educational partners know much more

about prospective learner histories and evaluate each learner based on the admission criterion set

by LAC College as well as additional evidence of experience and strengths based on the

requirements established within one's respective community. My colleagues and I in the SMH

Department discuss the prospective applications brought forward by Indigenous partners and

determine the best candidates to move forward in the application process. Gorley (2017)

examined distributed leadership in a study in British Columbia in patient care and found a strong

correlation between effective distributed leadership in interorganizational networks and the

ability to achieve mutual goals showing what was working well and areas for improvement. A

second objective for distributive leaders in higher education is to make decisions that align with

goals of the community and the postsecondary institution. For example, the partner may refer to

a recommendation prepared by the college around academic advising approaches for unique

student circumstances that support student progression. For example, Hallinger and Heck (2009)

explored system-wide distributed leadership and its effect on school improvement in the United

States of America from the context of policy in school-community councils for school-level

improvements. Over time, the researchers confirmed a strong relationship between distributed

leadership and school capacity improvement. Hallinger and Heck (2009) shared that the roles of

distributed leaders included examining student success, student learning, and creating staff

ownership for results. A third objective is that leadership is shared, and leaders and followers are interchangeable. Harris (2013) supports this belief stating, "the reciprocal nature or the practice of [distributed] leadership is considered far more important than the precise leadership role or the particular leadership functions" (p.544). Lastly and in the context of this OIP, distributed leaders emphasize collaboration across departments and communities. The success of this work relies on strong teamwork and relationships.

Adaptive Leadership

Heifetz's (1994) adaptive leadership is used to mobilize internal and external stakeholders to take on challenges. These challenges may include missing admission documents that require onsite supports to assist learners to complete required documentation, and advocacy on behalf of learners with the Office of the Registrar who have other forms of knowledge to demonstrate ability to be admitted to the program outside of traditional documentation (e.g., high school diploma vs. on the land learning). Adaptive leaders seek to diminish the gaps between the values of traditional admission standards to face the realities of Indigenous learners who have had disruption in learning due to health, historical impact of residential schooling, and other factors. Whitney (2020) uses adaptative leadership in youth programs that build resilience and thriving. Dortrait's 2022 research study of the impact of adaptive leadership in Black and Latino student achievement in urban schools lists findings of significant patterns in higher student achievement among schools where staff felt they were heard, appreciated, valued, and were a part of the decision-making process. Heifetz et al. (2009) indicate that effective adaptive leaders follow the process of diagnosing the systemic problem by gathering all participants and seeing them as leaders, mobilizing resources, and working collaboratively within the present systems. In the context of the PoP, change champions view adaptive leadership as an activity of citizenship.

Ethical Leadership

Ethical leadership is required to advocate against practices that limit access to education for Indigenous people. Interestingly, non-Indigenous and Indigenous women are leading change, while Anglo-Saxon men make key decisions on admission requirements. Liu (2017) indicates that leadership and whiteness have long been entwined in educational, social, and political spaces. Liu (2017) shares white men tend to think of all spaces – defined based on geography, physical spaces, linguistics economics, spirituality or otherwise are for them to move in and out as they wish. Ethical leadership is necessary to challenge traditional views and push back on colonial practices. Coulthard (2016) indicates that western political thought attacks and undermines Indigenous leadership abilities with an idea that Indigenous peoples are said to have unsophisticated governing structures and therefore white structures do the leading and Indigenous communities and students do the following. Furthermore, women in leadership roles continue to face micro-aggressions where policy and processes are often re-explained which are not in context of the problem to be discussed. Jean-Marie et al. (2009) shares in their research study on Black women as leaders that race, and gender creates a double jeopardy challenge for Black women leaders. The researchers indicate participants were reluctant to discuss organizational climate, employment, professional development, and wellness due to a fear of reprisal (Jean-Marie et al., 2009, p.565). Ibrahim et al. (2022) describes the complexities of Black scholars and leaders by examining social, human, and institutional capital overall indicating that black academics tend to hold precarious roles for lengthier timelines and often rely on the social capital of others or allies to bring forward initiatives. These conversations then become focused on power politics rather than problem-resolution. For this reason, applying ethical leadership is necessary at times to challenge traditional views on access, documentation,

program scheduling, and progression that do not work for Indigenous learners and the academic supports and managers who are at the forefront of community programming. Our responsibility and accountability are to answer the calls to action on reciprocity, facilitating knowledge building among those concerned with policy, student access, student progression, supports, and retention, as part of this change process. The responsibility is to facilitate knowledge-building and not allow cultural superiority to silence the voices of women in leadership. Having supportive and cooperative allies within the group of decision-makers is crucial for implementing change successfully.

Indigenous Lenses

Decolonization involves an Indigenous lens that emphasizes the removal of hierarchical power structures which control human, environmental, social, financial, and institutional resources that limit access of education to Indigenous learners. As I explore planning change, I reflect on the sentiments shared by the National Indian Brotherhood (1972) that education prepares us for total living and enables us to participate fully in social, economic, political, and educational advancement. Gaudry and Lorenz (2018) believe that postsecondary administrators and academic managers want strong relationships with Indigenous communities but face the challenge of reconciling a way forward in relationship building while institutional cultures that frame policy marginalize and limit access to education among Indigenous learners.

In theory, LAC College's community-based programming focuses on actions that lead to the betterment of the lives of Indigenous learners and their respective communities. Currently, I collaborate with Indigenous partners across eight communities. This work includes Indigenization, defined, and adapted in this PoP by Gaudry and Lorenz (2018) as inclusion, reconciliation, and decolonization. These concepts are defined as follows: *Indigenous inclusion-*

aims to increase the number of Indigenous students, faculty, and staff in postsecondary environments. *Reconciliatory inclusion* – represents a vision that recognizes Indigenous knowledges and imbeds knowledge, values, and ideals within decision making, and organizational discourses. Also, reconciliatory inclusion involves and adopts full allyship, focuses on scholarship of Indigenous works, and is a complete transformation of organizational culture that reconciles past and present relationships with European-created knowledges and Indigenous knowledges. Lastly, *decolonial inclusion* – suggests the overhaul of the academy to reorient knowledge production based on a new balance of power relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people that transforms postsecondary institutions into something new. All three forms of Indigenization are areas to investigate in this PoP and are part of the solutions discussed later in this chapter. I profess that I am not the expert in Indigenization change leadership. This work is best left to skilled Indigenous scholars, academics, Knowledge Keepers, elders, and other participants who can speak to unique experiences and vision forward. My primary focus is to participate in the change leader-follower approach of distributed leadership in the areas of Indigenization through Indigenous inclusion and reconciliatory inclusion. Decolonial inclusion requires strategic and higher-level discourse at a level involving the Vice-President of Academic, Dean of Community Development, Director of Indigenous Affairs, president, board, and Indigenous leaders. My agency in this third point is limited in planning for this third level of change. Pidgeon et al. (2013) recommends that academic managers review academic policies and to ensure relevance, quality programming, and effective delivery and support mechanisms applicable to Indigenous student postsecondary experiences. Also, listening, storytelling, and advocacy are major components of my role in change planning. These functions align with the distributed leadership approach in that as a change initiator, concerns regarding Indigenous

student progression particularly in inclusion in curriculum and postsecondary programming are discussed with Indigenous educational partners, Deans, the Registrar, and Vice-President of Academic. Solutions to increase Indigenous student access, success, and Indigenization of curriculum are brought forward in the context of programming, academic admission policies, and a process of program renewal or creation. Archibald et al. (1995) Tuck and Yang (2012), Barker (2009), and Kirkness and Barnhard (1991) indicate the Four Rs of Indigenous Education are respect, reciprocity, relevance, and responsibility. Currently, Indigenous educational partners initiate requests for programs to be delivered by LAC College in their respective communities. Partners work with coordinators, managers, and I to determine scheduling, closures, pauses, delivery models, and sometimes staffing. Our team's approach is to respect the desired path for delivery, particularly as scheduling and progression operate outside of traditional approaches to program delivery and design. In planning this change process, I have discussed an Indigenized approach to academic advising with Indigenous and non-Indigenous colleagues and partners, the Dean of SMH, Dean of Community Development, and Director of Indigenous Affairs which utilizes the Medicine Wheel as depicted by Kyoon-Achan et. al (2018). The approach examines the emotional, mental. physical, and spiritual well-being of Indigenous learners where LAC College staff and Indigenous partners can identify internal, in-community, and external supports in any of the four areas of Indigenous wellness. This is a tool that could be utilized as part of awareness building to be discussed in chapter 3 of this OIP particularly in the review of program admission and progression policy review. Lastly, leading change is about building relationships which leads to deeper trust among Indigenous students and leaders. In one example of change leadership, Debassige et al. (2022) found that mapping approaches to decolonizing and Indigenizing curriculum requires academic institutions to equip Indigenous Peoples with

resources to do so, and to embrace restructuring of cultural and procedural norms that lead to

Indigenous autonomy. More often, my role is to listen to Indigenous partners and to interpret

change and supports in the context of the current organizational culture within LAC College that

meet the needs of each community. Thus, when considering a plan for change, Black (2015)

shares that effective leadership in higher education requires shifts in internal and external

cultural perspectives. As such, as a change agent, I must look at: (a) identifying internal and

external decision makers, (b) examining collaborative approaches to lead change, (c) considering

the development of a robust design of goals, values, and vision for change, and (d) considering

staff development, and e) activities that lead to actions in the change process.

Framework for Leading the Change Process

One goal of this change process is to work collaboratively with internal and external

stakeholders to honour Indigenous perspectives during each stage of change. Change initiators,

agents, and implementers who collaborate with Indigenous learners and partners must first

develop buy-in and build an understanding of the vision and goal in mind for change. Such a

change process can embed Indigenous leadership and cultural perspectives as part of LAC's

organizational culture around contract training. Thus, Hiatt's (2013) Awareness, Desire,

Knowledge, Ability and Reinforcement (ADKAR) change model is the framework I propose

using for leading change. An ADKAR process examines communicating change, sponsorship of

change, coaching through change, managing resistance, and professional development for staff

as well as reinforcement measures. This framework is currently utilized within LAC College and

new academic middle managers leading change initiatives are encouraged to undergo training

and implementation of the ADKAR model. Key aspects of this framework which helped me to

better understand the value of this choice are Hiatt's (2013) factors that influence success at each

stage of change. For example, the first stage *awareness* asks facilitators to reflect on how

individuals within an organization perceive the problem, messaging around the problem to date,

how information is shared, and to examine the reasons for changing and not changing. When I

consider perspectives of Deans, the Office of the Registrar, Indigenous Affairs, and my own

educational unit, each stakeholder has varied perspectives of the problem and solutions to

address the problem. Key aspects that will help to move change forward include working with

stakeholders on the second stage of change, the *desire* to support and participate in the change.

When stakeholders have a complete understanding of the change, context, and the uniqueness of

Indigenous communities and our learners' experiences, buy-in and support of the vision towards

change is exciting for all stakeholders. Hiatt's (2013) ADKAR is a model that can be used to

identify perceptions of the PoP, evaluates readiness and desire to change. The ADKAR model

aids in developing a framework that utilizes Indigenous and non-Indigenous change tools. Table

1 outlines the elements and factors that can influence a successful change process for this PoP

within Hiatt's (2013) ADKAR model.

Table 1

Hiatt's (2013) ADKAR Elements and Factors Influencing Success

ADKAR Elements	Factors Influencing Success
Awareness: need for change	• Perception of the problem • Credibility of the sender of awareness messages • Circulation of misinformation or rumors
Desire: support and participation in the change	• Nature of the change • Organizational or environmental context for change • Individual personal situation
Knowledge: how to change	• Current knowledge of an individual • Independent ability to gain knowledge. • Access to available resources
Ability: implement required skills and behaviours	• Psychological blocks • Physical or intellectual abilities • Time and availability of resources
Reinforcement: sustaining change	• Degree to which reinforcement is meaningful. • Absence of negative consequences • Accountability system

In addition to considering Hiatt's (2013) ADKAR model, first and second order changes will need to be woven into the change process as part of planning.

First and Second Order Changes

Zsebik (2008) definition of first order change is that it is incremental, linear, and reinforced by tangible, verbal interactions with stakeholders involved. Second order change is defined as non-linear and transformational in how stakeholders in the future state of the organization perceives experiences and processes. Examples of first order change include existing paradigms, current values and norms, and existing knowledge and skills whereas first order change is transforming ways of conducting processes that may conflict with structures, values and norms that have traditionally existed. At LAC College, one first order change considered as part of this PoP concerns administrative decision making – when and who gets to make decisions related to admission requirements, in-progress programming needs, and post-programming needs? What department? Another first order change is when and how Indigenization of curriculum is to be conducted which may alter learning outcomes, assignments, and objectives of programs. A future vision organizational state will involve second order change where Indigenous educational units and LAC College are collaborative partners who equally hold decision making abilities and power in admission and programming as well as the ability to develop programs in partnership from the onset of program creation and/or academic renewal.

Limitations of Change Planning

There are factors outside of my agency and control that impact change planning. First, funding resources are sporadic at times. Indigenous educational funding varies from community to community for a variety of reasons, which include availability, knowledge of opportunities, resources specific to economic and employment gaps at any given time, and timeliness in

accessing resources. This means that at any time, Indigenous educational units and their team members may change depending on programs delivered which may result in different leadership teams and decisions adopted, but not all. Consequently, incremental change is in scope of my role and may occur within the institution. However, a college wide adoption of the change may take years to adopt if at all and is under the responsibility of the Director of Indigenous Affairs and Dean of Community Development. However, I presented the OIP to LAC College's Director of Indigenous Affairs who has indicated a willingness to collaborate on implementation.

Importance of Framework in Change Planning

Hiatt's revised ADKAR (2013) framework is important for the context of making policy shifts to strengthen Indigenous community training. I use the ADKAR framework to discuss the urgency or need for change, building a stakeholder group, developing vision and a strategic priority, communicating the vision, and implementing and evaluating changes. Additionally, Blaschke et al. (2014) indicate advisory boards can take the lead initiative in constructing an agenda of strategic issues. The first step of this OIP is to build awareness of policy shifts that strengthen Indigenous community programming. This step is already in progress. As shared in chapter 2 of this OIP, LAC College conducted a focus group with over 32 faculty and staff across campuses and fourteen Indigenous Communities to review barriers to Indigenous student success and in 2021, a performance balance score card was created to address Indigenous student engagement, retention, and success. In 2022, community coordinators, instructors, and I were asked to draft a report on Indigenous student success, performances, barriers, and Indigenization processes and success in the SMH Department. Areas that required policy shifts included discussion around program progression, admission requirements, and curriculum review. It is anticipated that a committee on this matter will be created to provide oversight and direction on

implementation. The advisory committee's role will be to review existing policies and identify the gaps, inefficiencies, lack of access to programming that led to inequities in college career programming. This includes building awareness and desire among academic units and leaders to address colonial histories towards reconciliation.

Considerations for Building Awareness and Desire

The first two stages of the ADKAR's change cycle are Awareness and Desire. During these two stages, I can take a holistic, relational, centralized, and spiritual approach to change planning. Reano (2020) describes these approaches as follows: (a) holistic – emphasis on interrelatedness between Indigenous communities and local experiences which can include integrating Indigenous knowledges in leading, coordinating, organizing, and planning for curriculum development, (b) relationality – relationships with people and their environments which include the imbedding of land-based education within non-Indigenous curriculum in postsecondary programming, (c) centralization – research conducted and implemented by Indigenous scholars about Indigenous topics, (d) dialectic thinking or ways of knowing - grounding of knowledge within Indigenous cultures and broadly accepted by non-Indigenous scholars and leaders, (e) feedback – continuous loop of processes and procedures that serve Indigenous community interests, and (f) spirituality – incorporating Indigenous spiritual practice into everyday processes through elders, Knowledge keepers, and subject matter experts which may include prayer, smudging, or ceremonies. There may be conflicting ideas of what the outcomes should look like. As such, promoting the desire to change surveys, a review of statistical graduation, retention, and staff turn-over is needed and will be a part of managing the institutional environment. Members of the advisory committee would be given a reflective tool such as a Talking Stick, Wordle, or Reflective Questionnaire to work together as a group inviting

members of their units to participate in the awareness and desire discussion regarding why

change is important. This offers opportunities to utilize components of these described

approaches and change tools that celebrate Indigenous knowledges.

Organizational Change Readiness

Organizational change readiness involves identifying stakeholders who will support

change, building awareness of the change, and identifying key tools and messages to be

communicated. SMH Coordinators, Faculty, Dean, and I have one of the largest portfolios within

community programming and spend hours discussing admission policy requirements. There have

been extensive conversations around the need to move forward in how policy is interpreted and

implemented as well as areas that require updates. Reluctancy is most apparent in the Office of

the Registrar as there is a lack of understanding of Indigenous education. This is not to say that

individuals are unaware of Canada's colonial past nor health and social challenges faced by

Indigenous prospective learners and members in various communities. The lack of awareness

comes from how to implement Indigenous knowledges and systems within existing policies that

make sense in an environment that often views admission and progression as very black and

white. It is also becoming comfortable with not being the key decision maker and sharing

decision making with Indigenous partners who co-lead contract training. Louie et al. (2017)

examines ongoing work to Indigenize education programs at a Canadian institution through

decolonization and shares that postsecondary institutions need to move away from monopolizing

knowledge and communication but emphasizes the need to incorporate Indigenous knowledge.

Liu (2017) reimagines leadership as an ethical practice that is relational, contextual,

collaborative, and political. Two key mechanisms used to discuss readiness for change are

monthly meetings with the Office of the Registrar, Dean of Community Development, Dean of

SMH Department, Coordinators, and I to address concerns. One recommendation from the SMH Dean is to invite colleagues who work on the admissions side of things on a site visit into respective communities to build more awareness of the barriers in policy if interpreted and applied in a linear manner to demonstrate the gaps in applying policy in a system that does not work for most prospective learners in Indigenous communities. Another mechanism is the creation of a readiness survey to determine level of awareness and desire to change, located in Appendix A of this OIP.

For the past two years, there have been ongoing and informal conversations with the Vice-President of Academic, Dean of SMH, Dean of Community Development and Director of Indigenous Affairs, colleagues, and Indigenous educational partners. At this time, no formal proposal has been moved forward. Community contract training will continue to expand and without clear paths around decision making, implementing contract training may continue to have tensions among academic managers and staff. Open dialogue may lead to the creation of stakeholder dialogue mechanisms, discussions on how and where to revise structural policy changes, grading, and credit transfers. One body to consider enacting this OIP is through College Council which consists of five students appointed by the Student Association, five faculty appointed by deans, five staff appointed by union, and five academic managers appointed by the president. The president and Vice-President of Academic are ex-officio or non-voting members. The purpose of the council is to explore issues that face the institution and to provide recommendations and amend policy. The council's primary mandate is to enhance student experiences at LAC College. This work must include senior academic leaders, Indigenous Elders and students, faculty, and the Learning Commons, Indigenous Affairs, Dean of SMH Department, Dean of Community Development, and the Registrar.

Varkey and Antonio (2010) indicate that effective and quality organizational improvement requires the leader to establish a sense of urgency, establish a steering committee, develop implementation plan, pilot, and implement, disseminate the change, and anchor the change which are imbedded within the steps of the ADKAR process to address this PoP. In contrast, Mamahtawisiwin – the wonder we are born with is an Indigenous Framework that fosters a sense of belonging within Indigenous communities focusing on the success for all (Government of Manitoba, 2022). Mamahtawisiwin involves promoting responsibility, finding purpose, and achieving a good balance in spiritual, cultural, physical, and emotional well-being otherwise known as the Good Life. The Government of Manitoba (2022) reports that Mamahtawisiwin is an Indigenous education policy framework developed to support the holistic achievement of FNMI learners to help teachers and academic leaders to support Indigenous learners from their early educational years through to and including postsecondary education As part of change readiness, values of Mamahtawisiwin will be adapted in this OIP for authentic involvement of elders, Knowledge Keepers, students, cultural teachings, and Indigenous experiences and world views. The values of the whole community coming together to support learners as part of Mamahtawisiwin is imbedded in the goals, structure, and terms of reference of the proposed advisory group within this OIP. Another part of organizational change readiness is managing employees in the transition of change which involves assessing team and department dynamics through measuring new learning about the change. The advisory committee will be part of a learning community with members participating in reflections on how policies promote lifelong learning, are rooted in Aboriginal languages and cultures, looks at learning as communal, and integrates Aboriginal and western knowledge. In the next section I examine the organization's change readiness as it relates to first and second order change, and holistic and

Mamahtawisiwin values to implement successful change processes. Selected sample tools are also described to deepen the understanding of readiness within the organization.

Communicating Vision & Change Readiness

Deeper readiness can be accomplished by developing a common shared vision, processes, and inclusive language around Indigenous admission tools and mechanisms. Kezar and Holcombe (2017) validate this point indicating that shared leadership is authentic and thoughtfully created where participants in the change process feel empowered and are focused on fairness, problem resolution, and builds ongoing structures of shared decision making. As such, communication change and change readiness are a process and involves the inclusion of a sub-committee of College Council, SMH Coordinators, Dean of Community Development, Dean of SMH Department, the Vice-President of Academic, and I. Deeper readiness can also be accomplished by building a sense of urgency and awareness by discussing strengths, weaknesses, opportunities for improvement, and threats to programming if the problem is not addressed (SWOT). This could be completed in a sharing circle or through an agreed upon and familiar platform with each individual community. Indigenous stakeholders would also be asked about their desire for change and what change could look like at the institution. This information would be collected via storytelling and can involve alumni or current students. This feedback can be consolidated in a SWOT analysis report and shared with the Registrar, Coordinator, Vice-President of Academic, Dean of Community Development, Dean of SMH Department, Director of Indigenous Affairs, Academic Advisors, and I. The purpose for this change is to bring forward the issue of how policy shifts in admission and progression can strengthen Indigenous community programming particularly in Indigenous student attrition, retention, and supports. Table 2 provides sample tools and mechanisms for building further awareness.

Table 2

Sample Tools to Build Awareness

Stage	Discussion Tools	Feedback Loop	Sender	Stakeholders
Building Awareness • Communicate gaps in current admission policy. • Discuss interpretations and limitations that create barriers for Indigenous student access in contract training. • Discuss alignments to academic charter, strategic plan, Indigenization Strategy **Message**: discuss need for change, and awareness of understanding for change	• Awareness Survey (see Appendix B) • Admission Policy • Special Circumstances for Admission Document • Program Schedules • Academic Charter • Strategic Plan • Indigenization Plan	• Awareness Survey Results • Desire for Change Survey Results • Minutes from Discussion	• Change initiator – (Me) • SMH Dean • Dean of Community	• Academic Manager (me) • Dean of Indigenous Affairs • Director of Indigenous Affairs • Manager of Contract Training • Contract Training Coordinator • Associate Registrar • VPA • Registrar • Contract Training Faculty • Alumni • Student Advisor • Student Association • Learning Commons Director

Note. Adopted from Hiatt's (2013) ADKAR Model

Strategies and Solutions to Address the Problem of Practice

Priority needs to be given to the examination of strategic solutions that address gaps and issues with policies that weaken community programs offered by LAC College. Black (2015) indicates that effective collaborative leadership models are driven by established networks from a non-hierarchical model, are evidence-based, and retain accountability across various departments. Additionally, Basham (2012) indicates that effective leaders update and refine strategic plans, policies, procedures, and learning environments which transform institutions. Sabir (2018) recommends organizations conduct diagnostic evaluations to identify problem areas

in companies before they become worse for quality assurance. I propose and describe three solutions:

1. Conduct a review of Admission Policy B71 (2017) to lead to the creation of an Indigenized admission tool.

2. Conduct a review of the Indigenization Strategic Plan (2018) to identify a process to recognize prior learning and assessment of Indigenous learners using the Prior Learning and Assessment Recognition Policy (2007).

3. Develop a long-term plan to include a repository of Indigenized evidence-based samples for admission into college programs.

Following each presented solution, I consider their strengths, weaknesses, and levels of impact and cost to change to determine the best solution for change.

Solution 1: Conduct Admission Policy Review and Create Indigenized Admission Tool

Collaboration with an emphasis on resolution-focussed principles needs to be a part of the planning for change. The first proposed solution is a strength-based Indigenous perspective model. The first stage would seek to identify how Indigenous partners perceive the problem. Then, Indigenous partners will lead and collaborate with LAC College stakeholders from SMH Department and the School of Community Development to identify areas where there may be misinformation. Next, a committee of practitioners would be developed with a term of reference created. Participants from three or more partner sites as well as coordinators, academic managers, registrations clerks and the Registrar, Vice-President of Academic, Indigenous Student Alumni, SMH Faculty, Dean of SMH Department, and Dean of Community Development would be participants. Members will work to identify goals of the partner or community, goals of the institution, identify gaps in current processes, develop a critical path on

areas of the policy requiring updates or revision. The review of the admission policy will lead to a re-interpretation of how the admission policy is implemented including pre-admission, admission, and post-admission procedures and practices. Moreover, this review will lead to the creation of an Indigenized Admissions Tool. Strengths of this solution include that there is a targeted goal. The work conducted is a collaborative effort involving Indigenous stakeholders, including LAC academic managers and alumni. Stakeholders come together to share their experiences, discuss barriers, and identify limitations Indigenous students face in attempts to access post-secondary programs. All efforts are aimed at improving internal college admission processes. The approach is focused on problem-resolution. It is a solution that will examine multiple perspectives and knowledges which could lead to longer term change that transforms the entire institutional understanding of what constitutes prior knowledge from Indigenous perspectives in the province. The future state of the organization would have well-developed Indigenized mechanisms as part of LAC College's admission processes.

Potential constraints in making changes to admission policies is that this change requires time and understanding of the need for broad enough interpretation of policy as each community and lens will differ. Indigenous lenses such as oral story telling as a form of meeting admission requirements (e.g., interview), portfolio-based artifact to evaluate skills, verification of on-the-job-learning relayed as core functions and skills related to programming. This can be time consuming and costly in terms of recruitment. Additionally, the decision to move towards making this change will be made by the Vice-President of Academic with supporting voices from the Dean of Community Development, Dean of SMH Department, Indigenous Affairs Director, and the Registrar. Though there are minor costs to build awareness and dedicated time, this change would align with the Indigenization strategy of the institution.

One weakness of this solution is that there will be voices at the table. With so many stakeholder voices, this solution requires adequate time. Additionally, sub-groups may be required to meet one to one with communities with specialized trained staff from Indigenous communities and within the college to speak to the impact of a policy change. Another challenge will be having set-aside time to complete this work as academic managers and staff are already overwhelmed with existing programming and work. Also, governments within Indigenous communities may change from time to time and subject matter experts may move into new and distinct roles over time. There may be a requirement to approach funders, specifically the provincial government about a policy change that may impact transfer agreements. However, the current provincial mandate seeks to include Indigenization strategies across postsecondary institutions and welcome these types of discussions as part of its strategic plan to increase college seats and student retention, particularly among Indigenous learners. The upfront cost would be related to hiring staff focused on this change plan who would work within Community Development and Indigenous Affairs and with various departments at LAC College. Ideally, the change agent would have experience in policy review and would have worked across multiple communities and understand Indigenous perspectives. Technology tools, mileage, and other tools for communication will involve minimal costs.

Solution 2: Conduct Review of Ist Plan to Create PLAR Process for Indigenous Learners

The second proposed solution requires a cross-functional and cross-collaborative approach to policy review. As LAC College endeavours to expand its programs to various Indigenous communities, a deliberate effort to assess the prior learning of Indigenous prospective learners is imperative at present. A review of the Prior Learning and Recognition (PLAR) Policy would involve a committee to provide insight with members from the Indigenous

Affairs Office, academic manager and coordinators from respective school(s), the Registrar and Associate Registrar who sign-off on PLAR applications, Indigenous educational partners, alumni, and Indigenous and curriculum subject matter experts and instructors. This is a systemic change that may take years and the change agent must consider accreditation and credentialing requirements.

One weakness of this solution is that the institution does not currently have dedicated staff with the time and expertise in PLAR. In the short-term, honorariums can be provided from existing program budgets to Knowledge Keepers and elders, but dedicated staffing dollars and allocated time for existing staff or short-term staffing may be needed. One opportunity from this proposed solution is that it would lead to the development of an Indigenized framework for curriculum development and a robust repository of PLAR artefacts or evidence of knowledge, skills, and abilities for students and academic managers that support students who have had non-traditional schooling, and pathways for entering postsecondary education, or who have had gaps in education. For example, a student may have started a program seven years ago and has four or so courses left to complete the program. However, they would need to re-start the program as they are no longer within the five-year window for program completion. They have worked in the field during this time and may have become a manager and have skills that are not currently known nor documented as PLAR evidence. Learners opt to enter community programs because they are unable to move to urban campuses as they have eldercare, childcare, or other responsibilities or lack the social and community supports otherwise found in their respective communities. These resources become sample evidence that could be used as part of a student PLAR application for admission or recognition of existing learning to promote student progression in career programs within SMH Department. All departments at LAC College are

asked to incorporate Indigenous knowledge and experiences in curriculum to be led by academic managers. However, no formal evidence tool or framework exists to support academic managers in this process. Therefore, Indigenization is surface level and involves having a handful of guest speakers, activities, and celebrations that occur throughout the year. SMH Department, Indigenous Affairs, and Community Development have begun developing a framework when asked to mobilize units to support partners in Indigenization curriculum when requested in contract programming.

One consideration for this solution is to examine the impact of potential staff burn-out. When coordinators, instructors, and academic managers are not granted time and space to address the increase in community programming and to review student issues, one being recognition of prior learning staff discontent and staff turn-over may occur. However, there is dedicated support from the Dean of SMH Department and the Dean of Community Development who were able to successfully secure temporary funding for a term coordinator to focus on increased program delivery and Indigenization. I anticipate that with the increase in staffing, this solution is more feasible. While I possess a curriculum development background and have been successful in hiring instructional staff, and have worked with coordinators, Knowledge Keepers, elders, and subject matter experts, this work has been challenging as there are other competing demands in the role of academic manager. This plan involves stakeholders from across 26 Indigenous communities with specialized skills in career disciplines such as public safety, social work, early childhood education, nursing, or other programs offered by LAC College. I anticipate that as I work and mentor new coordinators, they will become change agents particularly in curriculum development as they have the specialized knowledge in distinct career related disciplines and have worked on curriculum projects with me. This work is for future

consideration as it is anticipated to take two to three years to complete and involves work from the Learning and Innovation who provides professional development, faculty instructional supports, and curriculum development and design supports. While I may be an initial participant, this system change would be institutional and therefore potentially out of scope in my decision-making abilities. This work may occur later. This OIP may inform this solution forward through other units and decision-making bodies.

Solution 3: Develop Indigenized Repository of Evidence-Based Admissions Artifacts

The third proposed solution is to develop an Indigenized repository of evidence-based admission artifacts to utilize in exceptional circumstances. Strengths of this solution include increasing Indigenous representation in higher education, sharing Indigenous knowledge and cultural practices, and counteracting systemic barriers that have historically prevented Indigenous people from accessing postsecondary programs. Additionally, artefacts can be utilized across multiple disciplines at LAC College and Indigenous communities. One weakness to this solution is challenges in determining what constitutes an appropriate admission artifact in an Indigenous context. Also, discomfort is a normal response when sharing personal or cultural artifacts with an institution because of concerns around ownership and control of the repository, particularly if they are managed by a non-Indigenous person or institution. There may be a lack of resources to maintain the repository. Additionally, who is responsible for the upkeep?

There are challenges and considerations when creating an Indigenized repository. An Indigenized repository of admission artifacts could foster an inclusive and equitable learning environment for Indigenous postsecondary learners. It could support the development of culturally responsive admission practices and policies and build stronger relationships between Indigenous community members and LAC College. However, the task at hand requires time,

staff, in-community resource personnel and potential funding. There may be challenges in navigating diverse cultural protocols and practices when collective artifacts are from different communities. There may be resistance to change from non-Indigenous stakeholders who are not familiar with Indigenous ways of knowing and learning. Furthermore, there may be concerns around cultural exploitation of Indigenous knowledge and artifacts. The review may need to be completed if Indigenous educational partners see this as a viable solution. This solution may be a second order change that first requires an in-depth look at the admission tool, prior learning, and assessment then the development of a repository of artifacts.

Preferred Solution

There are three solutions presented in this OIP – the review of LAC College's B17 admission policy and creation of an Indigenous admission tool, the review of LAC College's prior learning and assessment policy to develop an Indigenous student PLAR process, and the review of LAC College's Ist Plan and creation of an evidence-based Indigenous repository of artifacts for admission purposes. The preferred solution is the first described earlier which is a critique how the current admission policy is interpreted and implemented which would lead to an understanding of the gaps and creation of a holistic Indigenous admissions tool to support exceptional circumstances of learners who do not meet traditional pathways for admission. I acknowledge that different colleagues and stakeholders are at various stages of understanding this PoP and anticipate a range of psychological responses to change. Black (2015) suggests that successful leaders in a collaborative model "establish networks in a non-hierarchical manner, while retaining accountability, and evidence-based approaches which demonstrate what does and does not work" (p.57). Black (2015) further notes five practices of exemplary leaders which are model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage

the heart. Currently, my colleagues and I in SMH Department are reviewing applications from a holistic approach which includes applicant interviews, supports to document gathering, and working with partners to advocate on learners' behalf who have no documentation due to gaps in education. I have engaged in difficult conversations with the Deans of the SMH Department and Community Development, registration personnel, and four Indigenous educational partners to inspire change around non-western processes for admission selection criteria. A desire for change occurs when open discussions, analysis and understanding of the strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities for change emerge (Hiatt, 2013). A trial and review of proposed tools is required to evaluate feasibility of use which sets the tone for a new or revised admissions policy. The intent is to provide ongoing supports that strengthen community contract training by providing further access to education. In the long term, this solution may inform other policy changes in prior learning and assessment, as well as the evaluation of student learning. Table 3 depicts three options: (1) human and financial resources, (2) implications on time, and (3) organizational impact. Readers will note, the preferred choice is to create an Indigenous admission tool as the solution requires the least fiscal impact and is the most manageable task as it does not require additional specialized knowledge. LAC College coordinators, members of Indigenous Affairs, and participating Indigenous educational units have indicated they would support this solution and tool.

Table 3

Potential Solutions and Organizational Impact

Considerations	Solution 1: Creation of Indigenous Admission Tool	Solution 2: Creation of Indigenous PLAR Processes	Solution 3: Creation of Repository of Artifacts
Human Resources	VPA Academic Manager Registrar Community Partners (3-5)	VPA Academic Managers Deans Human Resources	Vice President of Academic Subject Matter Experts Coordinators

Considerations	Solution 1: Creation of Indigenous Admission Tool	Solution 2: Creation of Indigenous PLAR Processes	Solution 3: Creation of Repository of Artifacts
	Dean SMH Dean Community Development Director Indigenous Affairs Academic Manager (2) Coordinators (2) Alumni Current Students Faculty	Academic Advising Knowledge Keepers Indigenous Educational Partners Faculty SME Curriculum Developers Alumni Current Students	Academic Managers Faculty Accreditation Body (optional) Employers (optional)
Financial Resources	Advisory body with identified human resource personal- limited cost	Recruitment of Knowledge Keepers Recruitment of – mid level costs Indigenous Educational Partners – mid level costs Dedicated term staff/SME/Curriculum Experts – upfront cost may be high but long-term benefits outweigh this cost.	Recruitment of specialized staff to work in cross-collaborative team in specific disciplines may be costly, but highly impactful in the long-run.
Time	Requires time to review policy changes, but is feasible within a one to two-year time	A substantial amount of time to convene meetings with various stakeholders – longer term vision within a two-year time	Brief period to staff, however, this is contingent on funding within Indigenous communities and the college and requires prior work in other policy areas.
Impact	Excellent Result in stronger relationships with communities and higher access and enrollment results	Good Result in institutional transformation of values and culture	Low Result in stronger student experiences & potentially higher retention rates
Preferred choice	#1	#2	#3

EDID and Ethical Considerations

Bingham et al. (2019) found that 80% of individuals facing homelessness were

Indigenous youth. Indigenous women experienced higher rates of suicide and domestic violence.

Key drivers of change must improve social outcomes by securing postsecondary education and

housing. Indigenous students are drivers of change in their education and livelihoods and must

be part of the change process. Access to education remains a barrier for learners who lack stable housing and access to supporting documents such as transcripts. This highlights the need for change to enable learners to demonstrate their prior learning in alternate ways to engage in college programming.

Ethic of Care

As champions for change, it is important to avoid disparaging educational practices in Indigenous communities while sharing and discussing tensions. Academic managers must recognize change agents who can push back against colonial practices and involve Indigenous Knowledge Keepers in planning change. Building awareness for the need for change is crucial to reduce pushback and stress. Criticisms by functionalists within various schools and educational units at LAC College are that postsecondary institutions must remain accountable to the public in implementing similar admission requirements and structures for Indigenous learners; institutions must continue to make money; and must set targeted deadlines to remain fair. McKnight & Glennie (2019) indicate that change planning requires focused and deliberate work on building awareness which in turn brings staff to agree with a future vision environment. Furthermore, building awareness for the need for change reduces stress, anxiety, resentment, and pushback (McKnight & Glennie, 2019). Also, Kezar & Eckel (2002) explain that institutional needs are contextual. Partnerships between Indigenous and educational institutions must address scheduling, timelines, costs, delivery methods, and admission requirements.

Boundaries and Ethical Considerations

This OIP emphasizes allyship and ethics of care. Mitchell et al. (2018) express the allyship as the need to "commit ourselves to collaborating with Indigenous communities to reveal their experiences and often illuminating and counterpoint narratives" (p.351). This OIP

does not include an ethics approval for research. The names of stakeholders are anonymized. Stakeholders use storytelling shared through anecdotes obtained from one-to-one conversations. Guiding principles of the Circle of Care Framework as interpreted by the Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation Family and Community Wellness Centre Incorporated (2006) is in this OIP from an academic support and planning perspective to respond to trauma and promote student holistic health and well-being. Respect, reciprocity, consent, and shared opportunities are key principles when engaging with stakeholders, including elders, Knowledge Keepers, learners, and colleagues. The wishes of Indigenous community educational partners and students will be at the forefront of the methodology used in the planning stages.

Social Justice

Suicide, low academic achievement, limited labour market participation, high rates of disability, and mental health challenges continue to impact future sustainable livelihoods among Indigenous Canadians (Hahmann et al., 2019). Kumar & Tjepkema (2019) indicate that suicide among Indigenous youth is 33 times higher than the rest of Canada. Additionally, Giancarlo (2020) reports wide Indigenous intergenerational impact on postsecondary achievement which is a result of exploitation that has led to lasting health and social challenges that are still present today. Enclosed are sentiments shared by community Indigenous Knowledge-Keepers, Elders, and colleagues. Community A Elder (2021) stated "please keep these contracts going. Continue to push and fight on our behalf" and Community B Knowledge Keeper (2022) stated "you are an ally in speaking up for our community. We are not at the same starting point as others. Education is the key to our survival." On-demand community programming continues to increase in the province, however, as a postsecondary partner, we must ensure that Indigenous communities are obtaining quality programming.

Chapter 2 Conclusion

Postsecondary leaders must consider inclusive and equitable admissions for students who have not taken western educational pathways created by colonial concepts as part of its long-term planning, particularly as they seek to increase Indigenous student enrollment and to operationalize activities that support Truth and Reconciliation. As an academic manager, I have ongoing conversations around quality assurance mechanisms particularly around faculty, curriculum, and student supports as in-community programming is costly to Indigenous educational partners. As such, Indigenous colleagues, partners, and ethical values inform the decision making of colleagues and my colleagues and I offer allyship, collaboration, innovation, solutions-based focused, advocacy, learning communities for knowledge building, and where asked take on the role of follower versus leader. Chapter three outlines how the implementation, communication, and evaluation plans.

Chapter 3: Implementation, Communication, and Evaluation

One of LAC College's 2016 Indigenization priorities is to increase Indigenous student enrollment to postsecondary programs. This OIP is one step towards addressing this institutional goal. In chapter two, you were introduced to adaptative, ethical, and distributed leadership approaches and the need for shifts in LAC College's admissions policy to address the Problem of Practice (PoP) - in admission standards that do not take into consideration Indigenous knowledges, experiences, and criteria for entry into postsecondary programming in SMH Department at LAC College. As indicated in chapter 1, I am an academic manager in SMH Department and a participant and initiator of this change process. The proposed solution is the review of LAC College's admission policy and the creation of an Indigenized admission process and tool. This solution would be a part of the long-term onboarding process for academic

managers, registration and admission clerks, and program advisors to support Indigenous

students entering career programs in the SMH Department. I have proposed the use of Hiatt's

(2013) ADKAR change model for this change process. In this chapter, readers will learn about

the proposed change implementation, communication, monitoring, and evaluation plans.

Change Implementation Plan

As the change agent of this PoP, I must consider organizational cultures and best

approaches to leading change. Kezar and Eckel (2002) discuss Tierney's Perspective on a change

strategy and suggest that change relies heavily on trust, which occurs from long and stable

leadership. Meanwhile, Basham (2012) suggests effective leaders must reflect on shared values,

collaborate using an approach that empowers individuals, examine division of labour among the

group, and allow members to see the group as a place to learn and acquire skills. Currently, LAC

College maintains a top-down approach with few changes to governance structures and includes

cross-functional teams to implement change. There is a fair amount of negotiation and

knowledge building to lead department changes. Figure 2 depicts the current hierarchical

structure at LAC College. At the top of the hierarchy, Section A includes a Board of Governors

whose role is to provide oversight, governance, appoint senior leadership such as a president, and

strategic direction for the institution (LAC College, 2021). Section B is represented by the

President of LAC College whose primary responsibilities include but are not limited to leading

strategic activities that fulfill the mission and vision of LAC College, provide financial oversight,

promote diversity and inclusion, crisis management, personnel management, community

relations, institutional governance, and ensures that college operations are legal and compliant

(LAC College, 2021). Section B also depicts the Vice-President of Academic who facilitates the

review and implementation of academic plans and policies implemented by academic and service

units (LAC College, 2017). These units include program and curriculum specific activities.

Section C highlights the roles of Deans, Directors, and the Registrar. They lead academic and

service activities whereas Section D depicts the role of academic managers, coordinators,

faculty, and support staff who implement academic and service tasks which includes Admissions

and Registration Clerks and Associate Registrars, and educational programs. LAC College's

Human Resource Department includes Human Resource and Payroll Specialists, the Respectful

College Coordinator and Accessibility Advisor. The Student Health and Wellness team consists

of a Director of Wellness, and the Library and Learning Commons, Academic Advisors,

Information Technologists, Learning Specialists, Academic Integrity and Copyright Liaison, and

Faculty Coaches. These roles fall within Section D of academic or service areas. The primary

beneficiaries of this change process are Indigenous students across eight select communities.

These learners are in Section E of Figure 2 as internal stakeholders and Section F is depicted by

external stakeholders such as alumni, Indigenous Educational partners, employers, provincial

government, and Chiefs and Councils. The current managerial culture at LAC College is

responsive and self-reflective with a deep desire to promote Indigenous student access to

programming. All academic policy changes must align with the college's goals, values, and

mission. There are visible change actions tied to professional development. Communication of

policy changes occur through a range of all-staff professional development opportunities to build

awareness of a problem and to provide training that can address gaps in knowledge.

Figure 2

Cultural Perspective
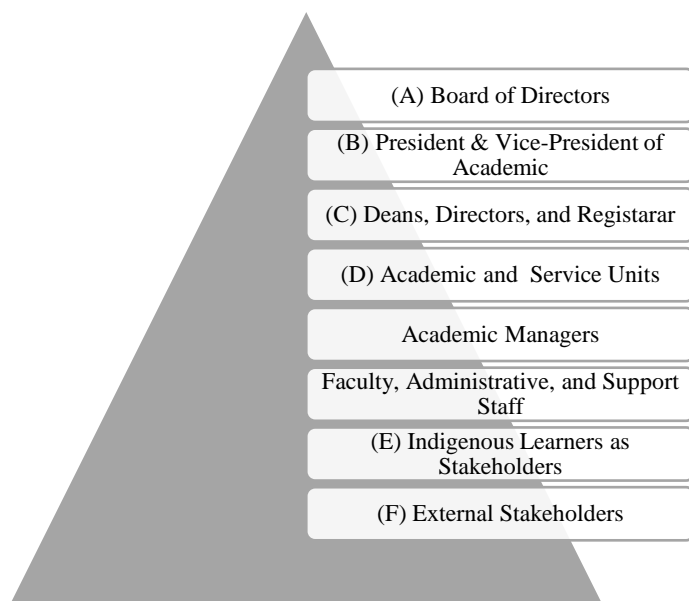
Note. This figure demonstrates the current structural framework at LAC College. This figure is created by the author and adapted from LAC College's 2019 Organizational Chart (LAC College, 2019).

Envisioned Future State & Inquiry Cycle

My envisioned future state of SMH Department is the formalization of an Indigenous admission tool for students in SMH Department. The Critical Paradigm calls for a dialogic approach for change and is the approach taken in this OIP. According to Hastings and Schwarz (2022) dialogical conversations seek to build mutual understanding and make meaning of the options presented to a team, particularly when attempting to lead change in a top-down leadership environment. Additionally, McLeod (2007), Gingell (2010), and Neuhaus (2013) implore the practice of Mamàhtawisiwin which is an opportunity to foster learning, a sense of belonging, and the pursuit for the good life. Hastings and Schwarz (2022) describe the dialogic approach as "processes where action follows dialogue, illustrating conversational-based activities where new possibilities emerge" (p.120). Firstly, a dialogic process encourages active listening

which helps to establish trust and respect of all participants in the conversation and can lead to more meaningful conversations. Secondly, dialogic processes foster mutual understanding which fosters an environment of mutual understanding of experiences. Thirdly, dialogic conversations increase creativity and innovation which emphasizes solutions to problems or challenges. Lastly, dialogic processes strengthen relationships by creating safe, inclusive, and supportive spaces for all individuals to express themselves which leads to trust, respect and deeper collaboration and participation. To move from a top-down approach, implementers of the OIP need a well-established implementation plan.

A successful implementation plan requires knowledge mobilization, communication, monitoring, and evaluation plans. This allows for manageable quality assurance. Chilisa (2020) utilizes Indigenous research methodologies in program evaluations that are transformative and relies on cultural value systems, processes, and storytelling, whereas Weiss (1972) explores methods for assessing program effectiveness in evaluation research based on action research from a social science perspective. Fitzpatrick et al. (2010) use alternative approaches in program evaluation that are also action research based and pragmatic. Similarly, Caffarella and Daffron (2013) utilize the Interactive Model of Program Planning (IMPP) in program planning and evaluation for adult learners also in action research. Lastly, Patton (2013) enacts the Utilization Focused Evaluation (UFE) in practical inquiry and action research. Markiewicz and Patrick (2016) utilizes a participatory framework for monitoring and evaluation. This OIP adopts Patton's (2013) UFE framework because of its participatory and collaborative use and alignment to distributed leadership and its practicality and ease of use in short-term inquiry-based projects. Indigenous approaches in collecting data such as storytelling and mapping prior experiences in

admission criterion are a part of this OIP. Finally, I adopt Markiewicz and Patrick's (2016) monitoring and evaluation framework.

Due to the tensions that exist in addressing this OIP, participation from all collaborators is a necessary component for this implementation. Participants feel that the creation of an alternative admission process is a watering down of requirements of expectations, however, Indigenous partners, coordinators, Deans of SMH and Community Development are supportive of this solution. One of the main tasks will be to build awareness of other ways to evaluate experiences and knowledges and what has worked well within Indigenous communities. I am intrigued by the examples presented to me by Indigenous partners and have learned about ways they have evaluated and short-listed students to enter programming which includes the review of work history, start up businesses, letters from employers, and other evidence-based documents. The inquiry cycle includes the presentation of the problem through data and reports from partners, coordinators, Deans, and I. I have developed a knowledge mobilization, monitoring, evaluation, and communication plan which leads to the creation of the admission tool.

The current situation to be analyzed is the tension with the Office of the Registrar, SMH Department, and Indigenous communities around waiving requirements that may impact obtaining accreditation for some programs, requirements such as high school transcripts and criminal record checks that are not easily accessible given wait times that can take upwards of 6-weeks when programs occur based on funding delaying access to programming. Additionally, the proposed advisory team made up of the Vice-President of Academic, coordinators, Deans, Registrar, Indigenous partners, and students create priority questions that we are attempting to resolve such as *what is happening in the admission process at the program application stage? What inputs do we need? What are the current processes? Is the current treatment sufficient?*

What intervention(s) do we need? Why? Further to, the inquiry cycle utilizes dialogic approaches to discuss the LAC College's organizational climate including skilled and trained personnel needed to register learners during times when there are competing regular programs as well as onboarding tools for community partners. Figure 3 depicts the Inquiry Cycle which has six stages: (1) assessment of context, needs, resources, and awareness; (2) presentation of the problem and relevant internal and external data; (3) convening of a committee to conduct work; (4) creation and implementation of a knowledge mobilization and communication plan; (5) implement proposed solution – an Indigenized admission process and tool; and (6) the development and execution of the monitoring and evaluation plans.

Figure 3

Inquiry Cycle
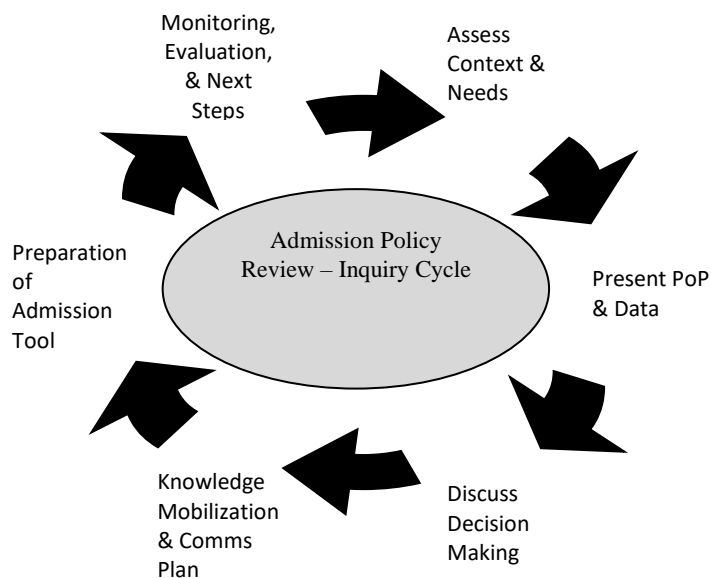
Note. Figure 3 depicts the sample inquiry cycle in this OIP to assessment needs, present problem and associated data which leads to the development of a Knowledge Mobilization and Communication Plan followed by the creation of an Indigenized Admissions Process and Tool. The cycle continues with monitoring, evaluation, and next steps.

OIP Implementation

Steps in Patton's (2013) UFE are: (1) assess organizational readiness, (2) develop evaluation questions and processes, (3) identify areas of inquiry, (4) facilitate knowledge development, (5) gather, organize, and present data, and (6) conduct meta-evaluation for ongoing quality assurance and improvement measures. The purpose of the implementation plan is to address barriers that impact Indigenous student admission into in-community programs offered by the SMH Department. The plan aims to achieve its goals by eliminating these barriers and putting the plan into action, thereby ensuring that Indigenous students have fair and equal access to these programs. The implementation plan includes Hiatt's (2013) ADKAR Change theory, and Markiewicz and Patrick's (2016) monitoring and evaluation framework. Table 4 depicts the proposed implementation plan.

Table 4

Implementation Plan

Stages of Hiatt's ADKAR (2013)	Steps for Implementation Adapted from Patton's UFE (2013)	Inquiry Cycle	Sample Activities	Timeline
#1 Develop Awareness	#1 Assess and Build Organizational/Department Readiness	Assess Context and Need- in progress.	Convene committee. Complete Awareness Profile	May – July 2023

Stages of Hiatt's ADKAR (2013)	Steps for Implementation Adapted from Patton's UFE (2013)	Inquiry Cycle	Sample Activities	Timeline
#2 Determine Desire to Move OIP Forward	#2 Create Processes & Focus Primary Evaluation Questions	Present Problem and Data -in progress	Engage and listen at monthly meetings. Describe the change proposed. Survey participants about their awareness, motivation, and knowledge	September - December 2023
#3 Facilitate Knowledge Building Activities	#3 Identify Areas of Inquiry	Discuss Decision Making	Implement knowledge mobilization plan – see Appendix A	January – March 2024
#3 Facilitate Knowledge Building Activities: Reinforce Change	#4 Facilitate Knowledge building to inform users and implications (KmP)	Implement Knowledge Mobilization Plan	Establish guiding documents.	April – June 2024
#3 Facilitate Knowledge Building Activities: Celebrate Success	#5 Gather, organize and present data; prepare reports and disseminate findings.	Communicate findings and recommendations. Facilitate	Celebrate milestones.	September - December 2024
#4 Use findings and present data for user engagement; disseminate report	#6 Conduct meta-evaluation of use accountability to: learners, community, evaluation team, partners, academic members, and Indigenous Affairs	Monitoring, Evaluation, & Next Steps Return to Inquiry Cycle as needed.	Repeat when necessary to reinforce change	Repeat when necessary to reinforce change

Mitigating Limitations

Potential limitations include lack of support from an accreditation body, potential

provincial government approval, resistance from Indigenous partners, college staff, limited time

and investment in the change process, and concerns around confidentiality. One strategy to

mitigate these potential limitations is the creation of a committee to provide oversight. The

committee would evaluate whether there is a change in credits or program structure that would warrant a review by an accrediting body. Currently, the proposed solution and implementation plan does not include a change to any program structure. Based on the direction from Indigenous partners and committee members, one recommendation is to create supplementary Indigenized evidence of artifacts to strengthen enrollment and admission processes. When considering accreditation requirements, it is important to note that practicum hours and attendance requirements would not differ in community programs. Our team does not need accreditor approvals for this admission policy review.

Another strategy is for Indigenous educational partners, academic managers, and associate Registrars to collaborate and create a *delegation of authority* document. A delegation of authority provides a list of roles and functions of partners and college staff. Additionally, contract training requires faculty and staff with the knowledge and skills needed for this change. New hires would receive newly created onboarding tools and understanding of roles and responsibilities. Lastly, a release of information waiver is available to participants who wish to be a stakeholder in this change process. I use pseudonyms throughout this OIP to protect the identity of people, places, and departments.

Conditions for Success

One factor for a successful change plan is to ensure there is cultural relevance and high engagement with primary stakeholders (Jones et al., 2005). Minthorn (2020) indicates that storytelling builds community. Storytelling honours Indigenous traditions of knowledge sharing and keeping. I anticipate Indigenous partners, coordinators, Deans, and admission personnel will engage in conversations using storytelling to communicate needs and desires to implement change. Champagne (2015) indicates, "Traditional world views and knowledge continue to

inform the actions and community relations of Indigenous peoples" (p.100). Western universities and colleges assume that Indigenous learners share the same goal or lenses of culture, knowledge, and productivity. Therefore, one of the first primary questions to consider when addressing potential policy shifts is how do academic leaders create a framework with an Indigenous lens? Champagne (2015) suggests that the goals of education must match the goals of local Indigenous communities. Kyoon-Achan et al. (2018) includes the Medicine Wheel as part of understanding social determinants of health to examine social, emotional, physical, and mental wellbeing. I discuss social, emotional, physical, and mental well-being in this OIP.

Communities where contract training programs are delivered identify supports across the four areas of the Medicine Wheel. Supports vary and may be limited. For this OIP, I propose the use of the Medicine Wheel to identify admission criterion. In this case, physical supports may include transportation, financial resources or assets, access to technology, connection to a safe space to live and work, as well as an understanding and ability to access documents to pursue educational opportunities. Emotional supports evaluate a circle of care providers are available within Indigenous and LAC College communities. Circle of care providers offer mentorship and guidance when and where needed. Mental supports include a review of success plans that address student challenges that cause distress among learners which includes time management, learning and accommodation plans for students with complex needs and disabilities and understanding of how to advocate for oneself through utilizing policy when needed such as requesting a deferred evaluation. Lastly, students who are connected to a spiritual leader or participate in cultural activities in community or at the college build a sense of belonging and inclusion. Busch (2017) indicates that higher education is an economic investment in self and society. For example, the provincial government seeks to create employment opportunities by

increasing postsecondary enrollment whereas First Nations, Inuit, and Metis bands see educational attainment as a means towards self-determination. For this OIP, I will be a co-facilitator along with Deans and Indigenous partners. I will input data collected as part of a repository of physical resources and supports available in each Indigenous community for career programs in SMH Department. Admission supports and access falls under this area. Mental, emotional, and spiritual supports are additional areas for future considerations. Figure 4 depicts Kyoon-Achan et al. (2018) adapted Medicine Wheel to the Indigenous Culture Based Framework.

Figure 4

Indigenous Culture-Based Framework
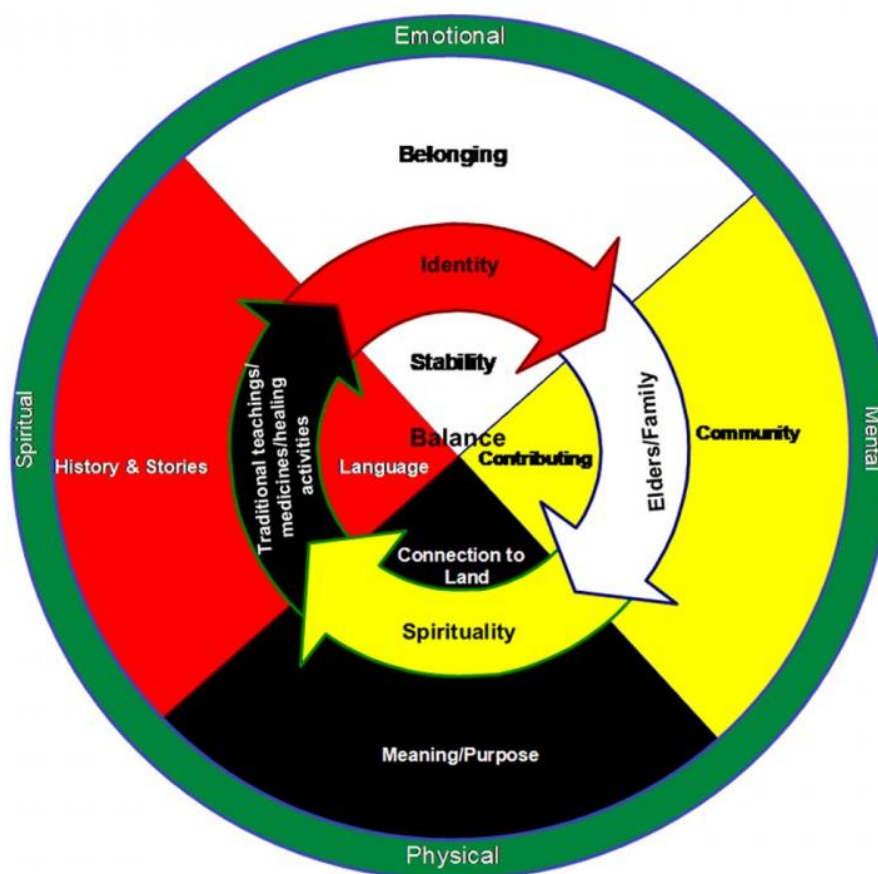
Equity, Ethics, and Social Justice

Indigenous student access to contract programs in the SMH Department is an equity, ethical, and social justice issue. Current leadership issues include decision making and decision processes around admissions into contract training programs in SMH Department. Dilemmas that emerge include adding an admissions tool based on Indigenous knowledges and experiences. There is tension within the Office of the Registrar about who is the primary decision maker, is it registration services, Indigenous partners or the SMH Dean? According to policy, the SMH Dean determines and approves exceptional circumstances for all prospective learners. This is challenged by the current Registrar who indicates that decisions per the admission policy is in the hands of registration services. The value system within registration suggests anything outside of the status quo waters-down the integrity of programming. Jones, Harvey, and Ryland (2012) indicate that there is a need to develop a more distributive and collaborative leadership approach which is a part of dialogical conversations. However, multiple voices in the decision-making process causing delays in student access to SMH programs, delays the registration of learners, delays the onboarding of new instructors, and delays student orientation to their respective programs. By the time a decision is made about prospective learners, some prospective learners become demotivated and disengaged which causes no-show or creates the perspective of disorganization with the SMH Department. Decolonization includes removing power and expert knowledge held by Western voices and influences. Madden (2019) supports this sentiment indicating that Canada's educational systems have focused on policy reforms and cultural

renewal rather than on decolonization. Madden explains that while there are strides to address

the TRC's (2015) calls to action in education, policy and scholarship have focused mostly on

engagement and community activism (Madden, 2019). To move towards a decolonial lens and to

conduct meaningful work in decolonization, Madden (2019) provides a detailed analysis of

reconciliation through land-based teachings, creating pathways for Indigenous Peoples to have

power over their own stories, policies, and practices.

     Coordinators, Deans, and I seek to promote inclusion of Indigenous voices in the decision

making which includes delivery, scheduling, and criterion for admission. Decolonization

acknowledges Indigenous stories, the histories of colonialism and impact on Indigenous

communities, and is an intentional series of processes and activities. Lorenz (2013) indicates that

racist ideologies and hierarchies have existed for over 400 years that have prevented Indigenous

peoples from making decisions that affect their wellbeing. Sanford et al. (2015) relate decolonial

praxis in teacher education to reimagining how learning takes place, how knowledge is accessed,

and how lived experiences shape our understanding of the world. A decolonial leadership lens,

models' Indigenous principles of the Medicine Wheel which looks at the whole person,

Indigenous organizational systems, and how knowledge is accessed, experienced, and

understood. I have included these concepts in the OIP. Decolonization requires academic leaders

at LAC College to challenge our own lenses and perspectives to ensure that we do not fall into

settler perpetuation of colonial systems that further prevent Indigenous learners from access

postsecondary education. As part of knowledge mobilization, I seek to honour the cultural and

Indigenous knowledge systems to support decision-making and practice that is equitable to

Indigenous learners.

While there are successes in other departments around student readiness which includes preparatory courses, testing, and other alternative admission supports, Indigenous communities receive funding resources in as little as four weeks in SMH Department programs, which impacts scheduling, timing, and delivery of programs. These alternative admission supports are not realistic for the current demand of programs in SMH Department, particularly during times when the push for programming is a need within Indigenous communities and the overall province such as gaps in staffing caused by retirements in early childhood education programs. This issue is outside of my control and the control of LAC College academic leaders as training is determined by Chiefs and Councils and the provincial government. Another limitation is that I cannot enforce knowledge acquisition among staff who are not my direct reports. However, the SMH Dean, Dean of Community Development, and Registrar have signaled that they are open to having registration clerks and academic managers collaborate and work together to develop a process that is mutually understood and that is informed through site visits and conversations with Indigenous educational partners which segues to the creation of a communication plan.

Communication Plan

The purpose of developing a communication plan as part of this OIP is to communicate alternative ways to evaluate Indigenous student admission for in-community programming within the SMH Department. Another reason for a communication plan is to discuss the need for change and awareness of understanding the envisioned change. As part of implementing this OIP, all stakeholders must discuss and identify the awareness level of the PoP, identify guiding documents, map, and share goals, and invite identified initiators, change agents and additional collaborators who may have been missed. While the Vice-President of Academic leads conversations around policy change and reviews, academic units and departments are responsible

for implementing policies in their respective areas. The third step of Hiatt's (2013) change model requires the change agent to implement a knowledge mobilization plan.

Knowledge Mobilization Plan (KmP)

Jones et al (2005) indicate that there are elements and factors that influence success which includes how a person perceives the problem, credibility, and current knowledge and resources available for this change. There are four steps to consider as part of knowledge mobilization. The Knowledge Mobilization Plan (KmP) in this OIP includes, generating ideas from a committee on how to communicate change, facilitating knowledge building through the review of strengths and gap areas in policy interpretation, facilitating discussions with departments on managing resistance, anxiety, and transitions, and activities for future training. An overview of the KmP is in Appendix A.

Step one is to determine communication mechanisms to collaborators. This is the awareness building stage of ADKAR where the aim is to hear all voices and to utilize storytelling as part of the process. I intend to share the purpose of each upcoming conversation and the relationships with equity, diversity, and inclusionary goals as part of LAC College's Indigenization Strategic Plan and reconciliatory calls to action that support Indigenous students as the drivers for change. Also, I intend to invite sharing of personal moments of pride in collegial work and support to students. Each participant in this change process will have a profile which outlines their awareness, desire, and understanding or knowledge of the problem described in chapter 2 of this OIP. Other key considerations are to set a relational tone, establish trust, seek buy-in, appeal to values and invite sharing of stories about positive experiences of support for students. Lastly, I intend to use inquiry or questioning to facilitate conversations around solutions to the problem of practice.
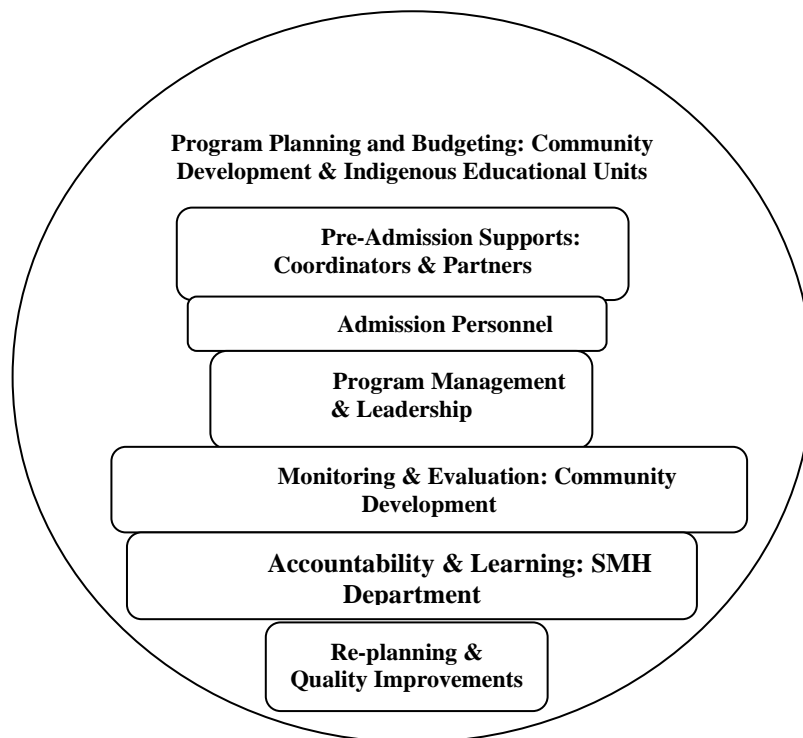
Step two requires the facilitation of one-to-one meetings to engage and motivate staff. I propose establishing learning communities as part of knowledge mobilization with a committee of external and internal stakeholders including alumni, current learners, Indigenous partners, instructors, SMH Dean and Dean of Community Development, Vice-President of Academic, coordinators, and the Director of learning and innovation. This stage provides an opportunity to describe the issues and suggested mechanisms available for the change. An ad hoc committee would focus on specific parts of the admissions policy and each member would lead specific parts of the discussion that impacts their department, community, or educational unit. The use of sample cases where programming was delayed that led to the withdrawal of a student application would be used as a learning opportunity. The intent is to create a guiding document for staff training to promote consistent policy interpretations.

Step three considers how change agents, including myself will communicate with colleagues and partners through transition which includes handling anxiety and resistance. Proposed tools for this step of knowledge mobilization are to provide monthly updates to the staff intranet and biweekly updates at staff meetings. I will facilitate meetings to address questions and provide updates on progress. A series of meetings will be held to onboard new and existing admission clerks and staff. The readiness to change and reinforcing change survey tool will be utilized and is in Appendix C.

Step four requires reinforcing change through established guidelines. This will involve professional development which I propose would be led by the Learning Commons, a centralized hub for teaching and learning for faculty and staff at ABC College. Appendices D and E are sample tools that would be utilized to focus on future training needs and to assess any member of the broader college team working within in-community training to transition to change.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The final stage of this OIP is to develop a monitoring and evaluation plan. This is also the

final stage of implementation and reinforcing change which is to conduct a meta-evaluation of

user accountability to: learners, community, evaluation team, partners, academic members, and

Indigenous Affairs. The monitoring plan determines how monitoring will contribute to

answering evaluation questions whereas the evaluation plan determines how evaluative processes

will add to and complement information collected through monitoring. Markiewicz and Patrick

(2016) indicate that evaluation focuses on assessing whether the improvements proposed

achieves intended results, asks what works well – why or why not, and assesses the quality and

value of the change. In other words, evaluation examines whether the change meets the

expectations of key stakeholders. Monitoring systematically tracks progress against a range of

predetermined performance indicators. Two indicators for this monitoring plan are the reduction

of delays when Indigenous learners apply into programs in the SMH Department to when they

receive a decision regarding their admission, to enrollment, and registration. Currently, there are

four-week delays in decision making. This type of delay prevents program starts, access to

course materials, and delays in finalizing instructor contracts. Proposed components of

evaluating performance are to monitor the time it takes students to obtain confirmation about

their admission and enrollment. Figure 5 highlights the features of performance management.

Figure 5

Components of performance management

Program Planning and Budgeting: Community Development & Indigenous Educational Units

Pre-Admission Supports: Coordinators & Partners

Admission Personnel

Program Management & Leadership

Monitoring & Evaluation: Community Development

Accountability & Learning: SMH Department

Re-planning & Quality Improvements

Note. Image adapted from Markiewicz and Patrick (2016, p. 125).

The monitoring plan is used to guide ongoing processes and the evaluation plan is used to guide periodic internal and external evaluation processes or the experiences of prospective learners. Markiewicz and Patrick's (2016) five broad areas for monitoring are appropriateness, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability are adopted in this OIP as areas of criterion to evaluate admission tools and processes. Each broad area identifies the focus, establishes indicators, determines anticipated target goals, identifies the data to be collected and the tools of use, and finally determines the unit responsible for monitoring and reporting at specific timeframes. Proposed tools to assess change include attendance records from training, individual surveys on increase in knowledge, student program surveys regarding the application process, and quantitative feedback from sharing circles with partners and internal staff. Table 5 is an outline of the monitoring plan across each broad area.

Table 5

Sample Monitoring Plan

Broad Areas	Step 1: Focus	Step 2: Indicators	Step 3: Target Goal	Step 4: Data Collection	Step 5: Communication Mechanism	Step 6: Lead Area
Appropriateness	Train all current and new academic managers in SMH Department, Registration, and Community Development	Number of participants and monitor attendance records.	100% of all registration clerks trained in this process by June 30, 2024	Attendance Records	This is updated as part of the monthly report on contract training	Dean of Community Development and Indigenous Affairs Director
Effectiveness	Identify level of increased knowledge about admission barriers in contract training.	Developed in consultation with stakeholders	80% of clerks will indicate their knowledge has increased.	Individual staff survey tools	Monthly report.	Dean of Community Development and Indigenous Affairs Director
Efficiency	Monitor the cost for a new admission tool, training, and reporting	Developed in consultation with stakeholders	80% of clerks will indicate training and tools were effective.	Individual staff survey tools on effectiveness Quantitative feedback from partners and staff	This is monitored by and shared in their contract training quarterly report.	Dean of Community Development and Indigenous Affairs Director
Impact	Ask to what extent has the use of the admission tool cut down on process times, misunderstanding that cause delays in students learning about their admission?	Developed in consultation with stakeholders	80% of users indicate a reduction in delays	Shared in short term of 3-6 months at SMH Department and Registration meeting	Developed in consultation with stakeholders	Registrar, Associate Registrars, Coordinators, Academic Managers, and Indigenous Partners
Sustainability	Asks, were there evidence of ongoing benefits for the implementation of this Indigenized admission's tool?	Responses can be collected through anecdotally and anonymously each year.		Records or minutes taken from partner meetings with samples of learners who enter the program under an Indigenous	Developed in consultation with stakeholders	Registrar, Dean of Community Development, And Dean of SMH Department

Broad Areas	Step 1: Focus	Step 2: Indicators	Step 3: Target Goal	Step 4: Data Collection	Step 5: Communication Mechanism	Step 6: Lead Area
				admission framework.		

Note. The broad areas identified have been adapted from Markiewicz and Patrick (2016, p.127). However, the data included are specific to the PoP and use in this OIP.

Evaluation Process

In the final stage of the UFE is the evaluation plan. Markiewicz and Patrick (2016) indicate that "evaluation identifies approaches that worked well and those that did not and reasons for success or failure and learning from both" (p.151). Caffarella and Daffron (2013) view the central purpose of evaluation processes as "gathering and analyzing data for decision making" (p. 233). Caffarella and Patrick (2013) indicate that when there are multiple sponsors it is important to understand the people and organizational contexts and planning needs to be more collaborative than contentious. At LAC College, the importance of quality programming is at the forefront of the minds of each school and support unit. The definition of quality has been adapted from Markiewicz and Patrick (2016) for this OIP as "the intrinsic merit of a program in relation to meeting a stated or implied need, as determined by measurement and/or based on experience" (p. 152). The value or worth, usefulness and benefit of a program is an ongoing discussion with support units, the Office of the Registrar, Community Development, and Indigenous Educational partners. My overall vision is that long term evaluation is conducted within the SMH Department where there are rigorous and equity-based admission processes for in-community training for the next three years and where it is anticipated that there will be increasing numbers of contracts due to the demand to meet labour shortages within Indigenous communities. The anticipated value is that SMH programs address community needs in a timely on-demand manner and programs are

seen as well-managed and organized particularly in times when programs are in high-demand and academic managers are called upon to be adaptive in our response.

When designing an evaluation process, I anticipate that there would be considerations around the audience, timing of the evaluation, focus of the evaluation, approach, and identified outcome(s). It is anticipated that there will be a mix of formative and summative evaluations. The type of evaluation anticipated considers if change has led to improvements in wait times and the need to re-submit application forms or other documentation that have delayed admission processes or have caused tensions between departments. The audience will include department and registration personnel, participating Indigenous partners, and students. The timing would include general annual indicators of success and end of contract feedback from learners. The focus examines opportunities for quality improvement. Table 6 represents the evaluation plan for SMH Department programs and admission wait times.

Table 6

Proposed Evaluation Plan for SMH Department

Evaluation Questions	Summary of Monitoring	Focus of Evaluation	Evaluation Method	Method Implementation	Who is Responsible	When
Appropriateness	Number of trained academic managers, coordinators, and admissions clerks	Desire to learn. Response to address delays in admission decision	Observations	Coordinator report for assigned program area in SMH Department	Registrar, SMH Dean & Dean of Community Development: oversees implementation. Me- meeting facilitator	Facilitated meetings to develop awareness and desire to change
Effectiveness	Changes in knowledge from participants	Areas of success and areas that still see delays in admission decision making.	Meeting Minutes Interviews	Statements from Indigenous partners in biweekly and monthly meetings; meetings with registration and admission clerks and SMH Department managers and I	Coordinators	KmP 3 and 6 months of use of the new admission tool

Evaluation Questions	Summary of Monitoring	Focus of Evaluation	Evaluation Method	Method Implementation	Who is Responsible	When
Efficiency	Performance indicators of admission experience	Program indicators of success	Survey	Disseminate survey to Indigenous partners and students	Dean of Community Development	Within first three weeks to a month of the start of the program
Impact	Trends in admission and student immersion experience and overall success in the program	Changes that result in increased admission and/or student success through retention rates.	Records and Storytelling Data	Disseminate survey to Indigenous partners and students at the mid-way point of the program	Coordinators and I	Mid-way through program
Sustainability	Ongoing Indigenous partner relationships and increased programming	Ability to retain and update repository of admission tools based on Indigenous community mechanisms	Cost-benefit analysis report	Disseminate survey to Indigenous partners and students at the end of the program	SMH Dean and Dean of Community Development	End of program

Note. The broad areas in the plan have been adapted from Markiewicz and Patrick (2016, p.127). However, all data and content indicated in the plan are based on the PoP and proposed for this OIP.

Efforts to Prevent Barriers and Inequities

In an inquiry-based project, I must consider my professional boundaries, particularly when there are no ethics approvals in place to share confidential information about learners, staff, and Indigenous community members and leaders. Stensaker (2015) argues that organizational identity provides an understanding of organizational dynamics across postsecondary institutions to explain change and continuity. As a scholar, I tend to view change processes in higher education strategically to *build* continuity. Stakeholders such as students, Indigenous partners, government, and staff increasingly call for transparency and accountability to deliver what "*we say we are going to do''*. Additionally, the critical framework calls for bridging gaps in access to quality education, fairness in student experience, and a break away

from structures of inequality which supports student enrollment and long-term academic

achievement and retention. There may be multiple actors with distinct identities at any time with

strong organizational cultures operating within a hierarchical system that is sometimes unclear

while Indigenous systems are also operating with distinct identities with multiple structures of

responsibilities. Ideally mapping program requirements using an Indigenous admission lens and

tools is necessary. As such, this evaluation design and methodology is a proposed framework for

use in day-to-day work and is based on reflection throughout the inquiry period when data has

been collected, analyzed, and communicated to improve admission processes in the SMH

Department at LAC College.

Evidence-Based Data to Inform Change Agents within the OIP

I have shared this evaluative methodology with peers, coordinators, advisors, Deans, and

anticipate sharing the evaluation with the Vice-President of Academic programming. I have

omitted identifiers from this OIP. The evaluation tools are based on my interpretation of the

observable needs within the SMH Department and are informed by the ongoing internal tensions

around admission processes within Indigenous community training programs. With the

anticipated increase in programming over the next few years, formally involving coordinators,

learners, partners, Deans, and members of the Office of the Registrar would strengthen the

process. It is anticipated that continued discussions around the adoption of this OIP are

forthcoming and will be released to Deans and the Vice-President of Academic for further

adjustments and considerations. Anticipated challenges include mitigating tensions associated

with changes to roles and responsibilities that may have been seen designated to one area over

another. As part of anticipated conversations with members of the SMH Department,

Admissions, and partners, determining appropriate roles and responsibilities and disseminating

this information through internal department meetings of any changes and why the change is necessary is one part of the communication strategy. Considering data obtained from observations, meeting minutes, statements from interviews, surveys, and reports, I will be able to communicate recurring themes of success, strengths, threats, weaknesses, and opportunities for future improvement.

Next Steps and Future Considerations

I focus on a first order change initiative in this OIP which is administrative decision-making to determine admission criterion for Indigenous students within in-community programming in the SMH Department at LAC College. There is cultural change involved in this planning which is a second order change. The key message has been to build understanding of the impact on Indigenous student access to college career programs and impact on individual and community livelihoods. Key stakeholders include faculty, academic manager, coordinator, Deans, the Registrar, Vice-President of Academic, Directors or appointed educational representatives from Indigenous partner communities, and Indigenous current and alumni learners. In-community training is one pathway to improve Indigenous student access to college programming which has been part of the Indigenization strategic plan for over five years. In-community training would allow learners to complete college programming within their respective communities. However, career programs have had significant increases in enrollments such as in the trade's areas, other programs where funding and timelines are set by various Chiefs and Councils and the provincial government have not had comparable results. In the context of programs with the SMH Department, my proposal is to review the current admission policy from an Indigenous lens. This would include conversations with four to six communities and the experiences shared by learners, partners, and internal staff at LAC College. I have

proposed the solution to create an admission tool that allows Indigenous educational partners to determine the criterion for admission that would be added to existing criterion to serve as an alternate Indigenized approach to evaluating admission requirements. This would support learners who have had gaps in their education, are unable to access documents, but have demonstrated comparable knowledge and real-world experiences that can be utilized as part of evidence-based criterion for admission determined by partners. The value of reciprocity is key to this OIP, and it requires champions such as the SMH Dean, Registrar, and Dean of Community Development with whom I have worked and who have the authority to approve this solution and approach to admission. I have been an initiator who has brought forward this Problem of Practice to the senior management team – the Registrar, Dean of SMH Department, Dean of Community Development, Indigenous Affairs Director, and the Vice-President of Academic. I have shared learner and Indigenous partner experiences and anecdotes with the senior management team. To date, the senior management team are open to discussing the problem and implementing recommendations presented in this OIP.

As discussed in chapter two, deepening second order changes and future consideration include reviewing and developing a rigorous prior learning and assessment process, developing onboarding tools for academic managers, and developing a rigorous process for the Indigenization of curriculum. These topics are complex in nature particularly around the Indigenizing curriculum. In the context of this PoP, curriculum change may vary from career program to career program taking into consideration accreditation standards and competencies, availability of Knowledge Keepers and knowledge itself from first nation group to first nation group, and the openness of faculty and staff to accept and understand other ways of knowing.

These second order changes take three years or more to complete as they require PLAR and

Indigenous subject matter experts.

A third order change for future consideration is developing a common shared vision,

processes, and language around student supports that promote equity, diversity, and inclusion

particularly around the Indigenization policy and programming. The purpose for this change is to

bring forward the issue of Indigenous student attrition, retention, and supports. A review of

institutional data on retention and attrition of Indigenous learners in contract training would be

examined. A literature review would be conducted and shared with the committee and council.

The committee would establish goals and outcomes on how to address the issues at hand. This is

a longer-term project that may take over two years to complete.

Second and third order changes will be incremental. Not examining second and third

order changes has a high impact cost which includes relationships with Indigenous communities

in the province and across the country. The plausibility of these future change initiatives is high

because these issues are well-discussed among academic managers, the Vice-President of

Academic, the Registrar, Dean of Community Development, Dean of SMH Department, Director

of Indigenous Affairs. These changes support Indigenous students' overall successes, support

meaningful engagement with staff, students, and Indigenous partners, and identify long term and

measurable outcomes that demonstrate a commitment to Truth and Reconciliation.

Conclusion

A comprehensive Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) has been prepared to review

admission processes within Indigenous in-community programming offered by SMH

Department at LAC College. Dialogic thinking is a key component of this OIP and deepens

overall communication. I have considered organizational cultures within the SMH Department,

academic and support units, and the organizational structure at LAC College. I have also identified resources, change participants, and community partners involved in this OIP. I view this PoP through a critical lens and consider incremental systemic change that removes admission barriers faced by Indigenous students within in-community career programs. Allyship through collaborative and adaptive leadership is required to remove admission barriers in postsecondary education. If LAC College enhances its admissions procedures through the creation of an Indigenized admissions process and tools, academic leaders can ensure that they are responding to reconciliatory calls to action. LAC College would be on the path to successfully addressing one or more of its goals towards creating college career paths to increase Indigenous student graduation numbers and to integrate Indigenous Knowledges in postsecondary admission processes. The OIP presented will support in removing the backlog of Indigenous learners seeking postsecondary education.

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Appendix A: Knowledge Mobilization Plan

Table 7

Knowledge Mobilization Plan

Steps & Objectives in Knowledge Mobilization	ADKAR Stage	Guiding Documents & Resources	Activities for Knowledge Building	Target Audience	Timeline
Step 1: Determine communication mechanisms to collaborators. **Objective 1:** Communicate lack of admission pathways for non-traditional students entering College Career Programs within in-community training programs.	**Stage 1:** Building Awareness **Message:** Discuss the need for change and awareness of understanding for change	• Special Circumstances Form • Admissions Policy • PLAR Policy • Credit Transfer Policy • Indigenization Strategy • Academic Charter • Academic Plan • Identity Additional Participants and Collaborators • Identify Available Training Opportunities	• Map PoP across Institutional Goals & Alignments to Guiding Documents/ Identify Gaps • Organize facilitated discussions to develop department training plan for registration clerks and academic managers	• Initiator & Participant (Me) • SMH Dean • Dean Community Development • VPA • Indigenous Educational Partner A • Indigenous Educational Partner B • Indigenous Educational Partner C • Director of Indigenous Affairs • Registrar	May -June

Steps & Objectives in Knowledge Mobilization	ADKAR Stage	Guiding Documents & Resources	Activities for Knowledge Building	Target Audience	Timeline
Step 2: Facilitated one-to-one meetings to engage and motivate staff. **Objective 2**: Develop learning communities of internal and external stakeholders	**Stage 2**: Developing Desire to Change AND **Stage 3:** Building Knowledge **Message:** Discuss the issues and suggested mechanisms available for change from a community of practice or ad hoc committee	• Create Indigenous Admissions Process, Tool, or Guide to explain policy usage (to promote consistent policy interpretation)	• Use case examples of where there were significant delays in starting a program; identify future potential processes • Discuss where there may be resistance; discuss strategies to manage resistance.	• Initiator & Participant • Associate Registrar • Admission Clerks • Indigenous Educational Partner A • Indigenous Educational Partner B • Indigenous Educational Partner C • Alumni • Current Students	September - December
Step 3: Consider Communication with Colleagues & Partners **Objective 3:** Managing Transitions & Anxiety	**Stage 3:** Managing Resistance	• Admissions Policy • Indigenized Tool & Process Guiding Document • Minutes	• Facilitate in-person meeting. • Refer to the Guiding Document • Utilize feedback loop survey to manage anxiety and resistance.	• Admission Clerks • Coordinators • Associate Registrars • Academic Managers • Indigenous Educational Partners	January - April

Steps & Objectives in Knowledge Mobilization	ADKAR Stage	Guiding Documents & Resources	Activities for Knowledge Building	Target Audience	Timeline
Step 4: Establish Guidelines **Objective 4:** Create ongoing professional development for new and existing staff	**Stage 4:** Reinforcing the Change	• Facilitate onboarding for new staff and existing staff when needed	• Conduct survey on new awareness, knowledge, ability, and reinforcement (see Appendix C)	• Learning Commons Staff • Academic Managers • Coordinators • Deans • Registrar • Registration Clerks • Associate Registrars	May – June

Appendix B: Stakeholder Readiness for Change Survey

Adapted from Hiatt's (2013) Readiness Survey.

Purpose: to evaluate how the current admissions policy hinders Indigenous student access.

Directions: rank the following statements (1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree)

Awareness	**Rank** 1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree
I understand the institutional reasons for change.	
I understand the risks of not changing.	
I understand the impact of change on my day-to-day work activities.	
Desire	**Rank** 1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree
I am personally motivated to be part of the change.	
I look forward to the new, changed environment.	
My peers support the change	
My supervisors and chair support the change.	
The leadership team and administrators support the change.	
Faculty support the change.	

Appendix C

Stakeholder Feedback: Desire for Change Discussion Questions

Adapted from Hiatt's (2013) Desire to Change Survey Tool

Purpose: to explore how the current academic admission and prior learning and assessment policies support or do not support Indigenous student enrollment in contract training programs?

Directions: please complete the following questions. Your participation and responses are anonymous.

1. How well are we/you supporting Indigenous student admissions? Why do you feel this way? Please share examples.

2. How well are we/you supporting Indigenous student admissions through prior learning and assessment recognition? Why do you feel this way? Please share examples.

3. How confident are you in providing information or assessing prior learning of Indigenous learners? Why do you feel this way? Please share examples.

4. How motivated are you to be part of these continued discussions about improving admission and prior learning policies? Why or why not?

5. Do you feel you have the tools available to collaborate with Indigenous communities requesting Indigenized curriculum and curriculum tools? Why or why not. Please share examples.

6. How motivated are you to be part of discussions of onboarding tools for Indigenizing curriculum? Why or why not. Please share how you feel.

Appendix D: Stakeholder Feedback: Readiness/Reinforcement for Change

Adapted from Hiatt, 2013, p. 57-62, and Prosci, 2018.

The initiative: Indigenous student admission delays within in-community training are a symptom of delays in the admission processes and lack of appropriate tools to evaluate non-traditional students for entry into career programs in the SMH Department.

Rank the following statements (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree)

Awareness	Rank
I understand the institutional reasons for the change.	
I understand the risks of not changing.	
I understand the impact on my day-to-day work activities.	
Desire	
I am personally motivated to be part of the change.	
I look forward to the new, changed environment.	
My peers support the change.	
My supervisors and chair support the change.	
The leadership team and administrators support the change.	
Knowledge	
I have the skills and knowledge to be successful during the change.	
I have the skills and knowledge to be successful after the change.	
Training has been adequate to prepare me.	

Ability	
I can perform the new duties required by the change.	
I can get support when I have problems and questions.	
I have practice at performing in the new environment.	
Reinforcement	
The institution is committed to keeping the change in place.	
I intend to perform in the new way.	

Appendix E: Training Needs Assessment

Adapted from Prosci, 2018

This worksheet can help you identify, for each employee, the required skills or knowledge to support this change. In the **Needs** column, indicate the skill or knowledge required for this change. In the **Gap** column, indicated the size of the gap between their current skill or knowledge level, and the required skill or knowledge level (none, small, large). This will help you focus your training efforts on the largest gap areas.

The initiative: Indigenous student admission delays within in-community training are a symptom of delays in the admission processes and lack of tools to evaluate non-traditional students for entry into career programs in the SMH Department.

Employee Name:		
Skill:	**Need:**	**Gap:**
During change:		
Dealing with transition ● Special processes or procedures during implementation ● Handling problems and exceptions ● Where to get help		
Change Management ● Personally, dealing with change ● Succeeding in a changing environment		
After change		
Big picture overview ● What does the new environment look like? ● What is my role in the new environment?		
Specific skills/knowledge requirements ● Basic or requisite skills/knowledge ● Process skills/knowledge ● System skills/knowledge ● Technical skills/knowledge ● Organizational skills/knowledge ● Problem resolution		

Appendix F: Fostering Ability Worksheet

Adapted from Prosci, 2018

The initiative: Indigenous student admission delays within in-community training are a symptom of delays in the admission processes and lack of tools to evaluate non-traditional students for entry into career programs in the SMH Department.

1. What actions can I take to foster ability within my group to implement this change?

2. What additional resources are available to help my team through this transition?

3. How will I know if change is successful in my area?

4. What specific measures and associated target values will I be using to assess our performance?