

# Post-Secondary Education



Native Women's  
Association of Canada

L'Association des  
femmes autochtones  
du Canada



## The On-Going Legacy of Residential Schools

- Pre-contact, Indigenous peoples had their own systems of childcare and education rooted in the community, the natural environment, and spiritual teachings.
- Post-contact, colonization began and the reservation and residential school systems responsible for the cultural genocide were imposed upon Indigenous peoples in Canada.
- The Canadian policy of assimilating Indigenous peoples came from the belief that Indigenous worldviews were inferior or primitive.
- Residential schools were established in 1880 with the last school being closed in 1996. These schools practiced abusive and inhumane discipline on students.<sup>1</sup>
- Residential schools were so underfunded that proper care was not provided to students. Students were forced to provide most of the labour necessary to run the schools. Only 2-4 hours daily were dedicated to learning.
- When politicians faced pressure over spending on these schools, policies changed so education focussed on agriculture and housework, limiting skills in the trades and academics.
- As a result, students were not prepared to advance in education or for entry into the workforce<sup>2</sup>

## Funding of Indigenous PSE

- Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP) is the primary funding mechanism for indigenous students<sup>3,4</sup>
- It is a myth that all indigenous students attend Post-Secondary free!<sup>3,4</sup>
- From 1996 until 2016, the PSSSP was capped with 2% annual growth allowance<sup>3,4</sup>
- During this time, there was growing indigenous populations and skyrocketing tuition and ancillary fees meaning less students received funding each year!<sup>3,4</sup>
- Indigenous students are more likely to enter PSE at an older age and with dependant<sup>5</sup>
- PSSSP not accessible to non-status, Metis and some students with ongoing land claims disputes<sup>5,6</sup>
- Canada Students Loans Program is not a solution for Indigenous students, systemic discrimination makes these students debt averse<sup>3</sup>
- Inuit students experience culture shock when attending university because there is no university in the north<sup>7</sup>
- Metis students cite lack of Metis specific worldviews and teachings in PSE programs that claim inclusion of 'pan-aboriginal' perspectives<sup>5</sup>

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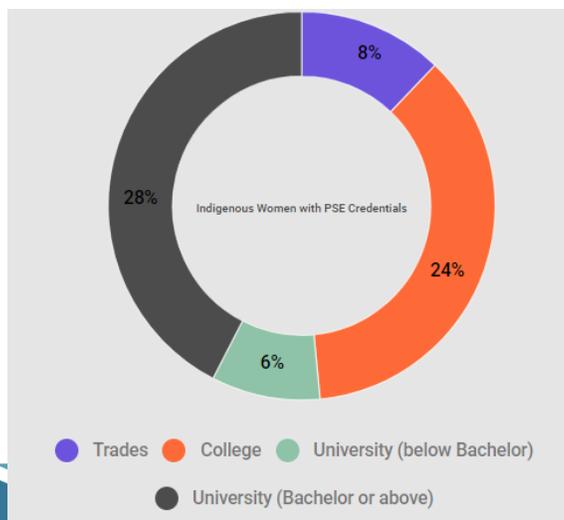


## PSE QUICK FACTS

- **51% of Indigenous women age 25 – 64 have PSE credentials<sup>7</sup>**
- **37% on reservation and 51% of off reservation First Nation women have PSE credentials<sup>7</sup>**
- **51% Metis women have PSE credentials<sup>7</sup>**
- **36% of Inuit women have PSE credentials<sup>7</sup>**
- **Indigenous women are more likely to have university degree than indigenous men<sup>7</sup>**

## Culturally Relevant PSE Programs

- There is currently a movement to make indigenous studies mandatory in universities to counter prejudice and stereotypes<sup>1</sup>
- This is a response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions calls to action<sup>8</sup>
- University of Winnipeg and Lakehead University were first to implement mandatory indigenous studies courses<sup>1</sup>
- In the 1970's, Indigenous Institutes of Higher Learning (IIHL) began to emerge as a response to the need to provide culturally relevant PSE to indigenous students<sup>2</sup>
- There are approximately 60 First Nations IIHL with a wide range of programs<sup>2</sup>
- There are approximately 60 First Nations IIHL with a wide range of programs<sup>2</sup>
- There are some Metis specific IIHL
- IIHL lack stable funding mechanisms that public PSE institutions have<sup>2</sup>
- Most universities and colleges offer programs in indigenous studies or partner with indigenous communities to provide culturally relevant learning opportunities<sup>2</sup>



**TO LEARN MORE, PLEASE CONTACT:**

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