



Overcoming Barriers to Study Abroad for Better Engagement of Indigenous Students

An Indigenous-Based Research Report

June 10, 2021

A partnership between Laurier's Indigenous Initiatives Office and Laurier International

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Land acknowledgement

Wilfrid Laurier University and its campuses are located on the Haldimand tract, traditional territory of the Neutral, Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee peoples.

This land is part of the Dish With One Spoon Treaty between the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe peoples. It symbolizes the agreement to share the land to the mutual benefit of all of its inhabitants.

The Haldimand Treaty of Oct. 25, 1784 was signed by the British with their allies, the Six Nations, after the American Revolution. Despite being the largest reserve demographically in Canada, those nations now reside on less than five per cent of this original territory.

Cover: **Laurier's Indigenization Logo**

Based on the Haudenosaunee creation story, our logo reminds us of how the first seeds of life on Earth were planted on the back of a turtle. The inner segments of the dome represent the Anishnaabe (Ojibway) Seven Grandfather Teachings: love, respect, wisdom, bravery, truth, honesty and humility. The golden rays of the sun symbolize enlightenment, learning and new beginnings. The Métis beaded purple flower represents the gifts of plant life from the Skyworld, which encourage and sustain life. The entire design rests on the waters of life.

Uplift

We would like to uplift those who contributed to the proposal and research

- Indigenous student participants of the survey and focus group
- Office of Indigenous Initiatives staff
- Emily Daniel, Indigenous Student Centre staff
- Nicole Augustine, graduate student
- Dr. Kathy Absolon, Laurier's Centre of Indigegogy
- Ivan Joseph, Vice-President, Student Affairs
- Jennifer Casey, AVP Enrolment Services and Registrar
- Ben Yang, Director of Global Engagement
- Laurier International's Global Engagement staff
- Research Ethics Board, Laurier
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Canada

The program is funded by the
Government of Canada's Outbound
Student Mobility Pilot Program



**Universities
Canada.
Universités
Canada.**

Executive summary

In keeping with the objectives of Universities Canada's Outbound Student Mobility Pilot Program's Innovation Fund call for proposals, Laurier's Indigenous Initiatives office with support from Laurier International set out to better understand Indigenous students' learning needs and obstacles related to international education.

By gathering knowledge about student experiences, needs and wants in a culturally appropriate way, the project generated evidence-based insights that will inform the design of learning abroad programs so they meet Indigenous students' ways of learning and requirements for a safe and healthy experience. The information will be used to implement and further test approaches to better prepare Indigenous students to transition to a physical mobility experience.

The research portion of the project included a literature review conducted by an Indigenous graduate student, a survey completed by over 90 Laurier current Indigenous students and Indigenous alumni, a focus group involving 11 Laurier current Indigenous students and three Indigenous alumni, and a stakeholders meeting involving 64 Laurier Indigenous faculty members, staff, and students plus Laurier staff and faculty from various departments and at least 30 attendees from International and Indigenous offices at other universities across Canada.

Feedback from project participants indicated that there is significant interest among Indigenous learners for intercultural and international experiences and identified some factors related to the nature of those experiences that would make them of interest and doable for Indigenous learners. The research also gathered feedback from participants about the barriers Indigenous students face related to international experiences. Finances were identified as the primary barrier. Others included personal commitments such as having dependents (many Indigenous post-secondary students are mature students), process complications (such as paperwork, lack of role models and absence of dedicated support staff as a contact person), racism and safety (such as travelling to cultures or communities where sensitivity to Indigenous ways of knowing is limited), and a desire for programs that apply an Indigenous approach to study abroad.

The process of conducting the research and knowledge sharing has proven to be a catalyst not only for greater understanding of Indigenous students' experiences and needs but also for opportunities to build a network of partners who can work together to advance the state of Indigenous post-secondary education in Canada while improving international mobility as a whole.

This research project and report have been organized according to a version of Medicine Wheel teachings: Vision, Knowledge, Relationships, Action.

Contents

Vision.....	1
Laurier snapshots.....	1
Why outward mobility experiences matter for Indigenous students	5
Project overview	9
Research process and methodology.....	9
Knowledge.....	11
Summary of literature review.....	11
Findings related to participants and program preferences.....	12
Barrier #1 – Finances and personal commitments.....	15
Barrier #2 - Complications of the process	19
Barrier #3 - Racism and safety	23
Barrier #4 – Lack of an Indigenous approach to study abroad.....	26
Relationships.....	30
Direct and indirect benefits of the project.....	30
Knowledge sharing and partnerships	31
Similar reports from other Canadian post-secondary institutions.....	31
Action	34
Priority calls to action	34
Appendix A: Literature review	36
Appendix B: Survey Questions.....	42
Appendix C: Focus Group Questions	50

Vision

Laurier snapshots

Wilfrid Laurier University is renowned as an exceptional learning community. From its roots in Kitchener-Waterloo as a small Lutheran seminary that opened its doors in 1911, it has evolved into a comprehensive, multi-campus, multi-community university with an expanding research profile. Since the turn of this century, the institution has experienced historic growth, while maintaining the small-campus feel and student-focused approach to postsecondary education that form the essence of Laurier.

By the Numbers

- 20,000 students
- Nine faculties
- Over 25 research centres and institutes
- Over 105,000 alumni living around the world

Global Learning

Laurier’s mission is “devoted to excellence in learning, research, scholarship and creativity.” To achieve this mission of excellence, curiosity must extend beyond national borders, talents must come from diverse backgrounds, and solutions must be applicable in a global context. Active global engagement and exchanging ideas with different parts of the world will ensure that Laurier can achieve excellence.

Laurier has implemented a multi-pronged strategy to engage the world and internationalize the university. In recent years, Laurier has:

- Intensified its international student recruitment
- Established more international exchange opportunities, field courses, internships and volunteer opportunities
- Reached out to its alumni in more and more locations worldwide
- Enhanced its research activities through a greater number of international projects and collaborations, including partnerships in the North

These initiatives have not only provided more cross-border mobility for students and faculty, but also significantly increased awareness of internationalization of the curriculum and participation in “international at home” programs.

Social Media Links

- Facebook: facebook.com/WilfridLaurierUniversity
- Instagram: instagram.com/WilfridLaurierUni
- Twitter: twitter.com/Laurier
- Youtube: youtube.com/lauriervideo

Indigenous student demographics

Winter Semester, 2021:

- 507 registered Indigenous students: 382 undergraduate and 125 graduate
- Self-ID: First Nations, Inuit, Métis
- 53 students from out of province
- Most students from Ontario, with majority concentrated in Southwestern Ontario

By Faculty:

- Faculty of Human and Social Sciences: 122
- Faculty of Arts: 108
- Faculty of Education: 10
- Faculty of Liberal Arts: 39
- Faculty of Music: 8
- Faculty of Science: 70
- Lyle Hallman Faculty of Social Work: 113
- Lazaridis School: 30
- Martin Luther: 3
- School of International Policy and Governance: 3

Historically, in any given year, Laurier has had 1-4 Indigenous students involved in mobility projects via an exchange program, and group travel opportunities.

Indigenous student support and services

Indigenous Student Services

The Indigenous Student Centres in Waterloo and Brantford are committed to fostering a positive student experience for Indigenous students: First Nation (status and non-status), Inuit and Métis persons. They help with academic and personal support, financial assistance and career advice, and more. The office provides access to traditional medicines and welcomes all to join regularly held gatherings, feasts and traditional ceremonies. Indigenous Student Services supports students in all areas of student life to ensure the best student experience.

Indigenous Student Services operates with five staff members, providing student support coordinators, a wellness counsellor, student centres on each campus, and two gardens: the Mino-Kummik Community Garden (Waterloo), an outdoor ceremonial and teaching space, and the Medicine Garden (Brantford), offering traditional land-based teachings about the human relationship to the natural world.

In sum, Indigenous Student Services provides support with academics, research, financial aid, personal matters, and cultural programming. It also schedules social events and visiting Elders-in-Residence events.

Indigenous Student Support social media

<https://www.facebook.com/wlu.indigenous.waterloo/>

<https://www.facebook.com/wlu.indigenous.brantford/>

<https://twitter.com/WLUIndigenous>

<https://www.instagram.com/WLUIndigenous>

Global engagement and exchanges

Laurier has partnered with universities all over the world to offer exchange programs to its students. Currently, it has exchange agreements with more than 70 universities in 25 countries around the world. Studying abroad, typically done in either third or fourth year, allows students to broaden their perspective of the world and gain an increased sense of self and independence while building skills transferable to future employment.

Laurier also offers Summer Study Abroad programs (earn credits and study abroad during the summer); Field Courses; Internships (international work experience); International Co-op and Alternative Reading Week opportunities.

Some numbers from 2019-20:

- 215 outbound exchange students
- 183 incoming exchange students
- 134 students planned to participate in mobility programs (cancelled)

International at Home

International at Home offers ways to develop intercultural competencies and learn about the world while at Laurier. Students may join the Intercultural Certificate program (development of intercultural skills, knowledge and attitudes, both curricular and co-curricular); Language Sharing Programs (the Tandem Program, established to teach language to and learn from a peer, and Hawk 2 Hawk, which matches Laurier students with LEAF students to help with English proficiency); and International Cultural Conversations (relationship-building and improved understanding across cultures, nationalities and languages).

Some 2020-2021 numbers and offerings:

- 7 remote inbound students
- 82 participants of the Hawk 2 Hawk English Conversation Project
- 95 Students participants of the Tandem Language Program
- 35 Global Engagement Student Ambassadors
- 44 Laurier International Cultural Conversations
- 305 Intercultural Certificate members (138 students/111 staff/56 community)
- International Education Week

Partnership between Indigenous Initiatives Office and Laurier International

The two offices—Laurier International and Indigenous Student Services—partner together to provide local intercultural programming through International at Home. They also work together at the Waterloo and Brantford Indigenous Student Centres to support experiences.

International and Indigenous students come together to learn traditional activities and engage in workshops. They may learn about the maple syrup process on the Six Nations Reserve or about the importance of white corn harvesting. They can also visit Kanata village, where the approach to learning is Indigenous in its foundation.

The two offices have also joined together for formalized mobility programming, including a reciprocal exchange with Syracuse University and with members of the Shawnee Territory. Together, Laurier International and Indigenous Student Services supported the 100,000 Strong in the Americas Funding proposal by the North America Studies Faculty members Dr. Kevin Spooner and Lucy Luccisano to support the Syracuse exchange, earning a grant to provide sustainable study abroad and training opportunities in agriculture, business, Indigenous studies, language, culture, and STEM fields, among others.

Why outward mobility experiences matter for Indigenous students

The value of international experiences in general

The research is clear that international education facilitates the development of many social and intellectual competencies: interpersonal and intercultural relationships, problem-solving, communication, planning and organization, resilience, adaptability, creativity, and teamwork. All these forms of knowledge, skills and attitudes are needed for career preparedness, for an inclusive and open society, and for personal growth.

Northeastern University provides a summary of the beneficial outcomes of international learning experiences.¹

1. Improve language skills.
2. Experience a different style of teaching.
3. Impress employers. Studying abroad can help launch your career and make you more competitive in the workforce.
4. Enhance your network. Studying abroad helps you build invaluable relationships with people from all over the world.
5. Learn about new cultures and perspectives. Your experience with a different culture allows you to expand your worldview.
6. Develop your confidence. By immersing yourself in another culture, you develop valuable life skills needed for personal growth, including independence and adaptability.
7. See the world. Studying abroad allows you to see the world and travel to new places you would otherwise not have visited.
8. Discover career opportunities abroad—depending on your field of study.

According to the Canadian Bureau for International Education (see infographic on next page), only 2.3% of Canadian university students studied abroad in 2015. Of that number, 70% say their travel influenced their career choice and two-thirds said it influenced their academic path.

In addition, the vast majority of students cited cultural awareness and understanding, openness to difference, knowledge of world events, self-confidence and awareness of their own identity as positive outcomes of their experience.

¹ <https://www.northeastern.edu/graduate/blog/study-abroad-benefits>

Canada's Performance and Potential in International Education

Canadian Students Abroad

2016

Only **2.3%**
of university students
went abroad in the
2014-15 academic year¹

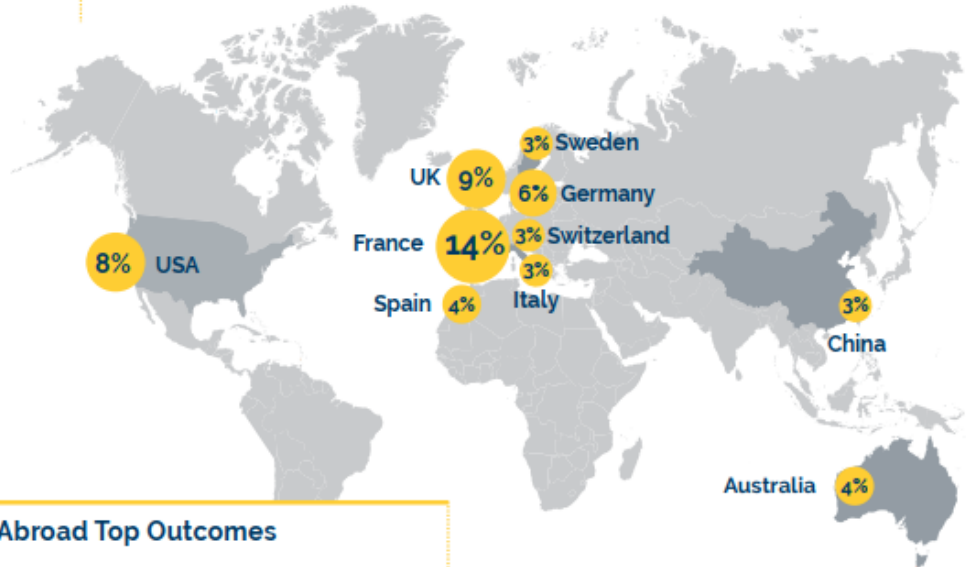
7 in 10 mobile students
agree that their
experience abroad
influenced their
career choice

2/3 of mobile students
agree that their
experience abroad
influenced their
academic path

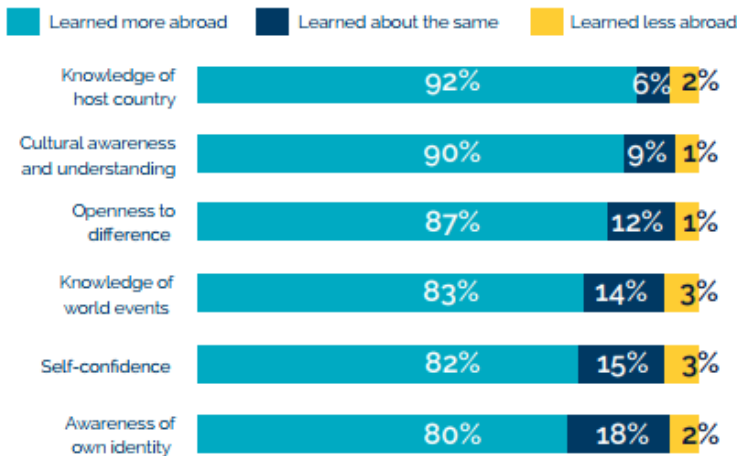
Top Five Fields of Study of Outbound Students²



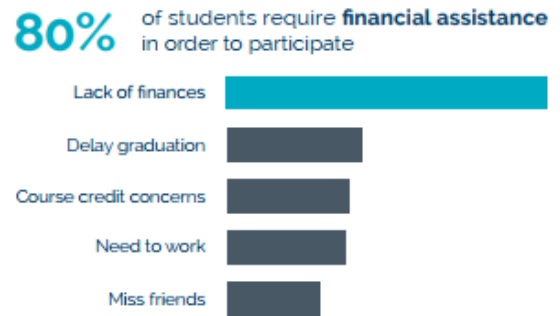
Top 10 Destinations for Outbound Students



Education Abroad Top Outcomes



Greatest Barrier to Education Abroad: Cost



Better career outcomes: **“I was recently hired for my first job with a company in Quebec - my cross cultural experience and French language experience definitely helped me get noticed and land this amazing position.”**

– Undergraduate student with education abroad experiences in the UK and France



of students **received credit** on their Canadian transcript for their most recent experience abroad

¹ Based on data submitted by 30 participating universities. Includes undergrad and graduate students participating in credit and non-for-credit experiences.
² All data, unless otherwise specified, is derived from CBIE's 2016 Education Abroad Student Survey of 7000+ students from 35 Canadian universities and colleges/polytechnics.

According to a report published by the Study Group on Global Education, co-authored by The Centre for International Policy Studies at the University of Ottawa and the Munk School of Global Affairs at the University of Toronto, global education can especially serve as a tool for creating economic opportunity for young people from less advantaged groups, promoting inclusive growth and economic fairness.

“Studies indicate that international education is associated with higher academic scores and degree-completion rates as well as higher employment rates and salaries after graduation. Moreover, these benefits appear to be strongest among students from less-advantaged backgrounds; the opportunity to study or work in another country can be a great social and economic equalizer.”²

Why Indigenous students need access to international learning

Indigenous students continue to be underrepresented in Canadian post-secondary environments, even more so in extracurricular or experiential learning opportunities that require funding, added navigation, and cultural knowledge supports. Universities say that they are committed to doing their part to close this education gap, but we need to look beyond “closing” the Indigenous educational achievement gap.

Indigenous students deserve fulfilling, enriching experiences that many non-Indigenous students have access to during their time at university. Our research shows that First Nations, Métis and Inuit students are more than interested in experiencing the world through international mobility. But they are also telling us that they need funds and programs designed with their needs in mind. Systems, structures, and opportunities are unintentionally excluding those who cannot afford to access study abroad experiences.

The Report of the Study Group on Global Education states that “Indigenous youth are among the fastest growing segment of the Canadian population, and Indigenous people’s share of the Canadian workforce is expected to double by 2036.” This presents a unique challenge to Canadian universities where Indigenous students are underrepresented in international learning programs, partly because they are more likely to come from low-income backgrounds and to be the first in their families to pursue post-secondary education.

One Indigenous alumna from the University of Regina who is a current grade school teacher reports that her international travel experience has benefitted her and her students. Profiled in a University Affairs article titled “Why do so many Canadian students refuse to study abroad?”, Cassie Fisher studied alongside Indigenous students at the Intercultural University of the State of Mexico.³ Fisher says she learned about their common struggles against colonization and saw how “Indigenous elements can be woven into a larger, more diverse curriculum.” She has been able to integrate those lessons into her own classroom, where most of her students are First

² <https://munkschool.utoronto.ca/research-articles/global-education-for-canadians-equipping-young-canadians-to-succeed-at-home-and-abroad/>

³ <https://www.universityaffairs.ca/features/feature-article/staying-home-study-abroad/>

Nations and Métis. Fisher's experience indicates how international travel for Indigenous students can have personal, professional and cultural benefits.

The Global Education Report further clarifies the educational, ethical and equity-based case for Indigenous students studying abroad: "International education can offer a unique opportunity for Indigenous students to gain vital skills and experience that can help them succeed as employees, entrepreneurs, and leaders. It can also contribute to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's call for greater intercultural communication by providing Indigenous youth with the opportunity to study and work with Indigenous students and communities in other countries."

In terms of knowledge sharing, Universities Canada emphasizes that the cohabitation of Western science and Indigenous knowledge in universities "has the power of opening a dialogue among cultures and enhancing our shared knowledge."⁴ This is also true for international learning opportunities, where Indigenous students will benefit from all of the advantages of travel while also expanding knowledge and understanding for others.

Accessible mobility opportunities will create meaningful student success amongst Indigenous students if the programming is responsive and dedicated to their needs. These opportunities also follow several of University Canada's Indigenous Education Principles.

- Continue to develop resources, spaces and approaches that promote dialogue between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.
- Continue to develop accessible learning environments off-campus.
- Recognize the value of promoting partnerships among educational and local Indigenous communities and continue to maintain a collaborative and consultative process on the specific needs of Indigenous students.
- Recognize the importance of fostering intercultural engagement among Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, faculty and staff

Not being able to participate in study abroad experiences further exacerbates a sense of "otherness" and not belonging in academia and places of high learning. The inability to travel to present at conferences or hear international speakers can be detrimental to progression, to graduate student opportunities, and to transitioning from master's programs to PhD programs.

Finally, the Report of the Study Group on Global Education notes that "few learning-abroad programs in Canada are specifically geared towards Indigenous students, although there are some promising initiatives that might be built upon, including the University of Victoria's Indigenous International Work Integrated Learning Exchange Program, Queen's University's involvement in the Matariki Indigenous Student Mobility Programme, and Memorial University's Labrador Institute International Indigenous Internship."

⁴ <https://www.univcan.ca/media-room/media-releases/universities-canada-principles-on-indigenous-education/>

Project overview

The Laurier submission to Universities Canada, “Overcoming Barriers to Study Abroad for Better Engagement of Indigenous Students: An Indigenous Based Approach to Data Collection and Design,” sought to “widen access and equity to participation in outbound student mobility programming.” Target student groups identified by the program included Indigenous students. The project explored Indigenous students’ learning needs and obstacles as they relate to international education. The data will be used to guide the co-creation of programs along with an appropriate promotion implementation plan.

Since 2017, the Office of Indigenous Initiatives, Laurier International and various faculties have taken purposeful and proactive steps to better engage Indigenous students in International Mobility Programming. Examples include an exchange for Indigenous students with Syracuse University and scholarships for Indigenous students to offset related study abroad costs. Despite the concerted efforts, and generous financial supports, numbers of Indigenous student participants in mobility programs have grown little, and some Indigenous students who studied abroad had negative experiences and returned early.

The project directed by the Indigenous Initiatives Office with Laurier International support will go beyond increasing numbers of Indigenous student participation in international education by designing learning abroad programs that meet students’ ways of learning and requirements for a safe and healthy experience with appropriate preparation, support while abroad, and debriefing upon return. The key will be to gather knowledge about the students’ experiences, needs and wants in a culturally appropriate way. Information gathering will be led by an Indigenous scholar with expertise in Indigenous research methods. The data will guide the best design development for Indigenous student participation.

As stated in the application to Universities Canada for the funding for this research project, the project team identified the following objectives:

1. Implement and test approaches to better prepare students to transition to a physical mobility experience
2. Share information about best practices and strengthen evidence-based approaches used by post-secondary institutions in the Canadian post-secondary education sector

Research process and methodology

The research portion of the project included a literature review conducted by an Indigenous graduate student, a survey completed by over 90 Laurier current Indigenous students and Indigenous alumni, a focus group involving 11 Laurier current Indigenous students and three Indigenous alumni, and a stakeholders meeting involving 64 Laurier Indigenous faculty members, staff, students plus Laurier staff and faculty from various departments and at least 30 attendees from International and Indigenous offices at other universities across Canada. The

project also involved knowledge sharing with other post-secondary institutions in Canada engaged in similar research.

Survey

- The survey was co-created with Indigenous researchers leveraging existing relationships with self-identified Indigenous students in the Laurier community.
- The staff of the Indigenous Initiatives office sent the survey (based on an earlier CBIE survey and one that Laurier students had participated in 2017 that was adapted to seek Indigenous-student specific information).
- Sent to 507 current students and approximately 680 Indigenous alumni direct via email
- Posted on WLUIndigenous social media
- 93 respondents to the survey—current and former Laurier Indigenous students)
- Participants were given six days to complete the survey
- Indigenous staff interpreted the survey data

Focus Group

- Designed and facilitated by Dr. Kathy Absolon, Indigenous researcher, scholar and Director of Laurier’s Centre of Indigegogy
- Digital Circle process using medicines and smudging to create ceremonial space and cultural safety
- 14 student Participants—11 current students and three alumni
- Range of Indigenous identities:
 - Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, Métis, Mi’kmaq and intersecting identities
 - On reserve and urban Indigenous
 - Direct from high school, mature students and parents
 - Two spirited, non-binary gender identity, alumni, various faculties, wide array of generation ages 18-52

Recommendations

- Developed by project team based on input from participants through survey and focus group

Stakeholder’s meeting

- Stakeholder’s meeting content—in the form of questions, project team responses and stakeholder comments—collected via chat log and transcript of audio
- 63 participants from across the Laurier community and Canadian universities
- 30 different post-secondary institutions represented
- Three students attended, including two who are non-binary
- Project leads shared findings and recommendations and invited feedback at the end of each presented section

Note: Throughout this report, in an effort to honour the voices and individual perspectives of participants, comments, feedback and questions have been conveyed in their own words wherever possible.

Knowledge

Summary of literature review

Overall, there is little research on Indigenous student participation in study abroad programs, as has also been confirmed by the 2021 Algonquin College study, “People First: Designing an International Outbound Mobility Program for Indigenous Students” discussed later in this report. What evidence there is indicates that the barriers Indigenous students face to post-secondary education are also barriers to their participation in international learning experiences.

What does exist tends to focus on obstacles to student participation, such as lack of funding or a pervasive sense on the part of Indigenous students of exclusion and “othering.” There are very few examples of success stories, such as the positive impact of student travel on the lives of Indigenous students.

The literature does show that Indigenous students face similar and amplified obstacles to travel as they do when transitioning to post-secondary education: cultural transition, racism, first generation experience, and loneliness from being away from home.

The literature also reveals that support for Indigenous mobility requires institution-wide commitment. There are many departmental touchpoints for mobility programming, and all of these departments need to be aware of and able to adapt to the particular experiences and needs of Indigenous students. At the least, baseline obstacles need to be removed, and connection through culture is key.

Kate Grantham of McGill University echoes what the literature says about institutional commitment in her comments about why university strategic plans are important for student mobility: “Even the most innovative and well-designed student mobility programs can only prove effective in the sense of offering transformational experiences when they are accompanied by an institution-wide commitment to addressing the issues associated with student mobility—issues of accessibility, ethics and program evaluation.”⁵

[For complete literature review, please refer to the Appendix.]

⁵ <https://journals.sfu.ca/jgcee/index.php/jgcee/article/view/176/371>

Findings related to participants and program preferences

Survey

1) Participant profiles

By campus:

- Waterloo – 52.5%
- Brantford – 15.4%
- Kitchener – 16.7%
- Primarily Online – 15.4 %

By faculty:

- Lazaridis School of Business and Economics – 10.81%
- Arts – 16.2%
- Education – 8.11%
- Human and Social Sciences – 10.8 %
- Liberal Arts – 4%
- Music – 5.4%
- Science – 17.6%
- Social Work – 27%

Degree type

- Bachelors – 59.7%
- Masters – 36.4%
- PhD – 3.9%

Enrollment

- Part-time – 29.7%
- Full-time – 63.5%
- Alumnus – 6.7%

2) International experiences

International education experience

Only 15% of respondents have travelled outside of Canada related to education, with about half of those participating in a student exchange program and the rest divided between internships, co-ops, faculty-led programs and volunteering.

Interest in international education programs

Most respondents (84%) have been interested in participating in an international education program while 85% of respondents have never participated in an international education program. Regions of greatest interest are Australia, France, Ireland, Italy, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, Netherlands, New Zealand, Peru, and India with particular interest being expressed in nations with Indigenous populations and programming.

Awareness of international education programs at Laurier

Most of those with knowledge of programs learned through the Laurier website, in specific classes, or during orientation activities. They learned the least through social media, residence staff, Indigenous student advisors, academic advisors, faculty/departments, and student government members.

3) Types of experiences

Types of international education programs

There is a strong demand for all types of programs in the following order of preference: exchange programs, internships, faculty-led programs, volunteer and co-op.

Length of time for an international education program

Half of all respondents are interested in a semester-long program, with a greater preference for Fall and Winter terms over Spring and Summer terms, and 20% would prefer a one-year program.

Outcome of international education

Almost one-third of respondents preferred a credit with a grade, with an honorarium and a pass-fail credit following in preference. Taken together, credit options are most preferred.

Travel groups and accommodation

The majority of respondents would like to travel with a friend or group and stay in residence.

Focus group

“There are a lot of barriers. Laurier is a colonial institution and Indigenous erasure is real. Who gets information about trips? Who gets scholarships? I want a safe Indigenous process that is meaningful for me or I won’t go.”

“I struggle with the motivation behind those presenting international travel programs. Are they interested in my research and work or am I a token attendee?”

“When I do go forward in an international program, I would really want to make sure that anti-colonial practices are at the forefront of everybody’s mind. The community music program focuses on England a lot—would I go there to be a token Indigenous person? I don’t want to teach everybody how to be anti-colonial.”

“Creating partnerships with international institutions on a community-based level rather than just academic would have helped me as a younger student pursuing international education.”

“We need to have an international office that is critical in understanding ways of knowing and being. Getting the word out to all Indigenous students. Get the message out there that we all can do this if we choose.”

Recommendations

- Leverage clear expression of interest as a basis for building out the international offerings for Indigenous students
- Integrate learnings from this survey into an end-of exchange survey for participants
- Make connections between Indigenous, international and faculty programming related to international experiences, particularly programs like social work with extensive international programming
- Explore part-time study abroad options
- Explore new partnerships in locations about which Indigenous students have indicated an interest
- Take into account the types and lengths of programming of interest to Indigenous students when building new programs, e.g., summer abroad options and programs that are a semester or a month long
- Explore partnerships for programs in the more popular Fall semester
- Given value placed on paid and for-credit programming, explore options in these areas
- Expand options for travelling with friends or groups

Barrier #1 – Finances and personal commitments

In the general experiences of staff working with Indigenous students and the International office, funding has always been confirmed to be the number one obstacle to student participation in international experiences.

This assessment is widely supported in general evidence about Indigenous peoples. For example, the Canadian Poverty Institute notes that Indigenous peoples in Canada experience the highest levels of poverty nationally: one in four Indigenous peoples (First Nations, Métis and Inuit) or 25% are living in poverty, and four in 10 or 40% of Canada's Indigenous children live in poverty. And, according to Statistics Canada, 39% of Indigenous people reported that they couldn't cover an unexpected expense of \$500.

Survey

Among the most identified barriers to international education, five were related to finance:

- Requires money I do not have
- Need to work during school
- My job may not be held for me
- Not needed to get a job
- Absence of income during the program

Students with dependents

Over a third (36%) of respondents have dependents, and the greatest number of those are supporting two or more others (78%).

Need for financial assistance

Almost 90% of respondents indicated they would require financial assistance to learn abroad, and two-thirds of that group would require more than \$5000.

How can international education programs be designed to help Indigenous students participate?

"A family participation option would be amazing—if not the ability to bring along family then at least to bring one child. This would make it possible for me to travel and reduce the load at home, both to conferences and international learning opportunities. Opportunities to exchange with other PhD students in countries with a similar colonial experience would be amazing."

Other themes:

- More funding/bursary/subsidy/scholarship opportunities
- Opportunities with paid positions so working students can travel
- Confusion around funding opportunities, such as MITACS, OSAP and First Nation sources – e.g. that OSAP is not available to students who are on exchange

Focus group

Themes

1. 100% of focus group participants noted finances was a major obstacle.
2. There is an evident lack of knowledge among students about how scholarships and funding are decided, which has led to distrust of the university as a colonial institution. This was compounded by the application process not being clear.
3. There was evidence of a lack of support that offered students a cultural lens to help them have a better understanding of how the external funding opportunities can be accessed.
4. Students who did travel noted that the exchange rates depleted their finances to a degree that they had not anticipated.
5. Students with dependents articulated they would need enough funding to house their family while abroad.

Specific comments

“International travel is only accessible to those who can afford it.”

“Funding to make sure that financially I would be secure in travelling to different parts of the world. Indigenous people are here to teach the world about resiliency. I want to learn from other Indigenous people about their resiliency and culture or tradition and be financially secure.”

“Someone presenting an opportunity to me would draw me in, but financial assistance holds me back.”

“It’s really important to consider how we include our families in international education experiences.”

“I live rurally and very traditionally. There are times of the year I need to be at home and on the land. International education opportunities don’t allow for this flexibility when you’re involved in traditional activities. When I’ve been offered an opportunity, I couldn’t do it because my Indigenous cultural responsibilities take precedence. How is Laurier supporting Indigenous students who are living seasonally?”

“I want to be able to take my family and study.”

Recommendations

- Indigenous specific scholarships for study abroad programs that could provide the needed \$5,000 or more and support various formats of experience
- Scholarships assessed on need and costs associated with travel abroad, as opposed to GPA, including dependents and family obligations
- Better communications on eligibility for external funding of both institutional sources (e.g. OSAP and MITACS) and First Nations’ sources.

- Ensure this content is adequately relayed to Indigenous Student Centre staff so that students can work with a trusted staff member knowledgeable of Indigenous specific funding opportunities based on identity and learning goals
- Earlier communications related to funding for international education so that students are aware of what is available well in advance of their arrival in their university program, such as early in their high school years or at the beginning of the application process for mature students
- Regular meetings and coordinated communications/events with Global Engagement Units and Indigenous Student Support Coordinators to foster knowledge sharing about funding sources
- Explore opportunities for more paid international placements
- Integrate some questions from the research survey into the outgoing post-exchange survey (e.g., “Do you have dependents?”)
- Explore opportunities for travel abroad programming which dependents can also attend – e.g., family exchanges
- Improve communications to include how students with dependents can learn abroad (for example, student profiles and stories)—students with dependents will likely have increased costs and require greater funding.
- Shorter time (one to two weeks) makes it achievable as many students have dependents and can’t get away for too long

Stakeholder feedback

Note: Stakeholder feedback is represented below in two forms: as comments or as questions (in bold) followed by a brief response from the project team.

“Many Indigenous learners are mature students and have dependents and I think it’s good that you included that in your evaluations.”

“How were learners who were part of the Ministry of Children and had their education paid for included in this data?” This project did not differentiate participants based on whether they had been in the child welfare system, but that is definitely something to consider for future research.

These findings and recommendations are similar to the findings shared by Saskatchewan Polytechnic and Algonquin College.

“Has there been consideration for faculty-led study abroad experiences as a means to increase Indigenous student participation?” This is part of the overall assessment of potential growth areas for future programming.

“I think it’s also important to recognize financial implications for learners who go abroad, that still have ‘back home’ responsibilities such as housing, children, etc...”

“There might be opportunities to obtain funding from the employer community to support Indigenous students to study abroad.” Our students support coordinators have strong

relationships with local Indigenous-based funders related to employment and training and, often, there can be matches between Indigenous student learning goals and community organizations for some of their funding pockets.

“What funding resources are there for Non-Status Indigenous students?” There are some internal pockets and some external pockets depending on the community organizations. This is an example of an area where domain knowledge is critical to helping students navigate the system.

“I’m wondering about whether the role of Indigenous faculty members supporting Indigenous student engagement in study abroad was explored?” This is an area for ongoing growth.

“How can WLU create a wraparound support similar to Transitional Years Programmes of other universities? Yes, money is a barrier, but so is institutional literacy - for learners.” An important consideration for future action.

“As per the Jay treaty, First Nations folks can travel to the USA with their status card, but it also is complicated to ask First Nations folks to get a Canadian passport, when they might consider themselves a citizen as Sovereign of their people vs Canada.”

“Did the mentorship also include a diverse representation of faculty (with intersecting identities as the default is not cis het able-bodied Indigenous faculty?)” This is an important point that should be actively considered a recommendation for future action.

Barrier #2 - Complications of the process

Entering the research process, the previous experience of the staff and project team indicated that the complexities of the process of international travel were a major barrier to Indigenous student participation, even with situations that might be deemed relatively simple, such as travelling to the United States.

Survey and focus group

1) First-generation students

Culture shock is an ongoing consideration for Indigenous students throughout their post-secondary experience, so it can be hard for them to consider and be prepared for international travel if dealing with more immediate concerns and needs.

“Not exposed. Big deal to go to Brantford to get groceries once a month let alone travel.”

“I have no previous experience of international travel, let alone international education. First one in my family to go outside of the US. Getting into university was already a tough thing to do; going international wasn’t even a thought. It was a journey trying to get through school in the first place. I didn’t think I’d be qualified.”

“I was a first-generation university student. No personal experience or travel experience. It’s a big deal to come to university—never thought I’d be here. Always so afraid to come to university, let alone international travel. Big deal to go to Brantford to get groceries once a month let alone travel.”

2) Lack of student role models

Lack of “role models” or other Indigenous students to talk to about working through challenges.

“Knowing others who have done this before, share information about where and how, general expenses with Indigenous students so you know what you are getting into.”

“Growing up in North Bay, I had support from my family but there was no-one to look to who had done something of this sort.”

3) Need a dedicated support staff

Lack of point person with insight in Indigenous point of view.

“Established ways for Laurier students to stay connected to and supported by Laurier, even while across the world.”

“A point of contact. While away, I wish I had just one person to check in on me every once in awhile (bi-weekly maybe) to give me help and advice. My advisor was heaven-sent and luckily

had been to the place I was living, so that was helpful. All students might benefit from a point of contact back home for support.”

“I need institutional support—someone assigned to support my experience as an international Indigenous student.”

4) Established relationships

Lack of relationships established prior to departure and sustained during the experience.

“Having established relationships with the host university ahead of time would be helpful—perhaps starting the relationship in the Fall semester (introduction, orientation, support), and then the student would be prepared with some established relationships upon arrival. Relationships for Indigenous people take time, so building that before a semester of study abroad would be critical for a good fit between the host and student.”

“Establishing relationships in advance so you are not alone in another country. Planned activities after hours to keep learning and exploring. Less time to feel lonely and homesick.”

5) Extensive support navigating the complexities of the process

Lack of assistance navigating the complexities of the paperwork and travel process.

“Identify a clear path to participate for Indigenous students that is unique.”

“No exposure to the idea of being able to travel at an early age. Having that exposure and knowing there are supports would have changed my view.”

“Hold multiple information sessions about international travel and, if possible, make it program specific. There is a lot of information given to new students during the first month of school, which can be overwhelming. Multiple sessions or one-on-one meetings could reduce stress and allow for questions.”

“Make orientation more comprehensive.”

“Offer step-by-step support and information from first idea to application process to preparedness.”

“An understanding of the local language, culture, values, some do’s and don’ts of this new place. Also some of the dangers and pitfalls, plus how to become involved in the everyday life of the community I would be living in.”

“I need help going through the steps of travelling, like flight information, transportation options, getting a passport, finding accommodations. It would be best to have a mentor for regular check-ins to ensure the progress is going smoothly.”

“A ton of support! Going to a different country is a huge experience, and with school, meeting new people, and everything else, it seems overwhelming.”

“Spiritual and educational support.”

“Support with funding (scholarships, grants and ease of applications) is needed. Also, information about employment at the receiving institution or country. Clear program expectations and outcomes (i.e. grades and credits). A process for addressing racism if experienced in another country. VISA application help. Much of this could be solved with a designated coordinated approach and coordinator for each student to ensure that they have support throughout this complex process.”

“I would really love to see support in the applications. This process was VERY overwhelming to me (visa, paperwork, international office). I really had no support from Laurier International. I hope the international office can see colonialism through a critical lens. We need support on all those tick boxes. All that paperwork is too much.”

“First exposed to international travel at career fairs and university recruitments. But the steps, planning, etc. got in the way to getting there. Began the process and tried to get there, but the complexities stopped me from pursuing it.”

“Reduce the complexities of applying, like how credits and transfers work.”

Recommendations

- Introduction of international opportunities earlier to students in high school or at a younger age along with parallel orientation and exposure for mature students
- Consider how university recruiters can enhance their understanding of and involvement in sharing information about international experiences
- Consider establishing a point person and liaison between international and Indigenous Support Centres to work with students across the entire experience from application to return
- Offer live sessions to walk through applications to programs housed at Indigenous Student Centres along with offering support with international travel documentation
- Streamline programs for Indigenous students through Indigenous faculty members
- Offer support for covering fees for document applications and inoculations
- Assess entry point programming in COIL (Collaborative Online International Learning) and faculty-led programs and offer Indigenous-specific recommendations for how those programs can be enhanced
- Advertisements with past successful students
- Paid ambassadors who are Indigenous who would present to future and current students about their travel abroad experiences (incentive travel grants based on students willing to share their experiences)
- Sharing circle for past and interested Indigenous students looking at travel opportunities

Stakeholder feedback

Note: Stakeholder feedback is represented below in two forms: as comments or as questions (in bold) followed by a brief response from the project team.

“Did hesitancy to travel because of a lack of previous travel experience come out as a barrier? We are looking at many groups of students without travel experience (crown wards, low-income etc.) and whether supporting them more pre-departure would help.”

“With Indigenous students, there’s a very large mature student population.... so I’m just wondering if maybe **there’s something that could be introduced during orientation week or kind of like in the beginning, because they may not have access to programs in high schools.**” This reinforces an important point conveyed in both the survey and focus group.

“In addition to the really important financial factors, I think ensuring effective support systems on the exchange partner side are really important to ensure successful and positive exchange experiences. Laurier may have an institutional culture of faculty and various administrative units working well together to address challenges, but that may not always be the case at other, host institutions. Speaks to the need to partner carefully.”

“**This assumes that Indigenous youth will make it through high school.**” One of the respondents in the focus group was talking about how do we change the whole culture of thinking about international education right from the beginning so it becomes accepted, understood and anticipated, so that’s a focus going forward. Also, we are definitely thinking about how these findings intersect with what we know about resistance and persistence of Indigenous learners so that we are looking at these opportunities as broadly as possible.

“**As far as the point person is concerned, could elders provide emotional and spiritual guidance to Indigenous students abroad?**” The idea of elder involvement was brought up, and it’s an interesting option to pursue in terms of emotional and spiritual guidance to Indigenous students abroad, depending on the availability and interest of elders with international travel experience.

Barrier #3 - Racism and safety

The possibility of racism and a general need and desire for safety are themes for Indigenous students that came out in the research, as many of these students find it scary, risky or overwhelming to separate from their families and communities and travel abroad. These considerations can then be magnified by the culture in the receiving nation or whether or not the partner's programming is sensitive to Indigenous ways of being.

Survey and focus group

There was strong evidence of racism in the data with an overwhelming majority of students expressing either experiences or concerns related to safety, alongside a general agreement that if programming was Indigenous organized and Indigenous led, it would reduce their concerns and lead them to really strongly consider going.

"I experienced a lot of racism in my experience with International education."

"However, during exchange people would ask 'What is Métis? What does that mean? I thought Indigenous people in Canada were no longer.' Surprising triggers in the different experiences between an Indigenous specific program and a non-Indigenous program/area."

"The hint of someone saying, 'Here this is an opportunity for you!' It wouldn't take much to draw me in"

"Establish a relationship before travel to bring elements of safety. Receiving institution needs to be ready to receive international Indigenous students. How am I being protected from racism? Is this institution and country ready to receive Indigenous students? Specific Indigenous student supports need to be available."

"I am new to my Indigenous journey, so I wouldn't know how to find Indigenous support abroad."

"I'm concerned about the level of visibility of Indigenous people abroad, afraid of facing racism."

"When we do travel, we need go to spaces that are safe for us and have Indigenous spaces, communities, ways of knowing (no tokenism)."

Recommendations

- Increase safety by offering participants opportunities to connect with other Indigenous students for international experiences
- Organize at least one Indigenous group travel per year for credit
- Support arrangements of "Indigenous cohort" or a proactive system to favour requests for connection
- Adapt forms to encourage Indigenous students to travel together

- Provide Indigenous specific supports at host location supplemented with strong institutional relationships
- Offer a specific point person at Laurier to support students while abroad
- Have Indigenous paid students and Indigenous staff review existing wraparound services and provide input on how to make more inclusive and responsive to Indigenous student needs
- Develop specific Indigenous led and driven group experiences
- Create “briefing notes” on Indigenous identity and Indigenous people in Canada’s history for hosting university, if required—follow up with call and debrief the briefing note
- Consider having hosts complete online Indigenous cultural competency training, as needed
- Explore options for elders and knowledge keepers to participate in various stages of the programming, e.g. “Aunties” on site to receive with us also receiving their Aunties and/or Uncles
- Real-time check in for faculty about what’s available.

Stakeholder feedback

Note: Stakeholder feedback is represented below in two forms: as comments or as questions (in bold) followed by a brief response from the project team.

“How were questions around disabilities or trans/2 spirit identity captured as sites of safety or concerns around safety?” We can move toward purposeful inclusion in future research to gauge intersections of Indigenous student identities, inclusion of identifiers related to disabilities, and LGBTQQIP2SAA populations within the Indigenous student communities.

“Are any of our exchange partners going through a process like this and wanting to promote Indigenous mobility? Could an opportunity for Indigenous-to-Indigenous relationship building be part of international exchanges? It could help make the context more safe/supportive as well as enriching the exchange.” We will definitely explore this in future surveys to partners to whether they have Indigenous students supports, Indigenous curriculum, etc. And then continue to assess partners and develop programs based on those findings.

“Would it be possible for Indigenous students from other Ontario universities to go to the same placement?” That’s such a great question, and it has planted the seed given how many people from across the country participated in this process.

“Could students from different faculties or institutions come together to create cohorts?” Focus group participants suggested having students from other universities also register in faculty-led courses to build up numbers for an Indigenous student cohort, so that is definitely an option to pursue.

“Are there ways in which WLU might address the issue of host countries not being aware of Indigenous identities (to speak to your point about ‘What is Métis?’)” This is definitely one of the areas that came out clearly in the research—ways to help partner institutions more actively

prepare for hosting Indigenous learners. For example, perhaps there could be a briefing kit with information about Indigenous identity or even some training they could receive before receiving our students. It's an exciting possibility and opportunity.

"That's a great idea. It's uncomfortable to have to explain this to people."

"That will help students not feel forced into becoming the 'expert' and having to put them in more of the focus."

"This is much how they feel in classrooms"

"Maybe talking to Indigenous students about these issues that may come up prior to leaving." This is definitely a good option for addressing these topics.

Barrier #4 – Lack of an Indigenous approach to study abroad

Through experiences working with Indigenous learners, it was expected that this theme would emerge from the data. Programming that is attentive to and based on Indigenous ways of learning and knowing has a dramatic impact on the experience of Indigenous students, such as programs that consider their relation with the land and family that are not understood or experienced by settler students and staff.

Survey

Lack of Indigenous-specific locations, cohorts, or learnings was identified as one of the largest barriers in the survey.

Indigenous studies curriculum

The vast majority of respondents (92%) would like an Indigenous-focused program, with the greatest interest in working with Indigenous academics, engaging with local and international Indigenous organizations, learning about global Indigenous culture, and partnering with Indigenous universities or Indigenous-focused faculties at universities.

How can international education programs be designed to help Indigenous students participate?

“Engage Indigenous students by asking them to participate in the indigeneity of the program and courses being taught. Learning Indigenous cultures as real existing cultures, not through the anthropological lens. Expose students to real lives, cultures, social and economic organizations to gain an understanding of the historical impact of political and religious institutions.”

“It would be helpful to hear from Indigenous students who have participated in international programs.”

Short comment summaries:

- Stories/testimonials from Indigenous students/elders/knowledge keepers from the program
- Connect to Indigenous families in travel locations before travelling
- Cross-cultural exchanges with other Indigenous groups (i.e. Maori/Australian Aboriginals)

Focus group

“Offering a set international program in one country might deter students who aren’t interested in that specific situation.”

“With lived experience of Indigenous students—our voices are needed in these institutions and programs. I want to add my voice, my true Indigenous experience and voice, and that should be

treasured. Understanding the experience of facing adversity, I want to be connected to like-minded folks and the ability to create networks through that.”

1) The value for reciprocal learning

“Exchange should be reciprocal, learning from each other.”

“Focus on the students and their needs/ wants. What helps both the students and the Indigenous community at large? Opportunities that strengthen the Indigenous knowledge that Indigenous youth require.”

“The awareness of the community obligations and responsibility to give back from the learning.”

2) Safe environment based on strong relationships

“Demonstrations of established relationships to know they are ready to host an Indigenous student. Are they ready and supportive?”

“Knowing other Indigenous students were going would support me. They could help walk me through the process, share their experiences and information.”

3) Learning in a non-colonized space

“I don’t want to go to another colonial institution and feel like it’s a privilege to be there. I want them to feel like it’s a privilege for me to be there, that our true Indigenous experiences and our voices are needed in these institutions and programs.”

“The experience was motivating because it was an Indigenous experience.”

“I would be motivated to pursue education abroad if I knew there were unique programs different from what’s available in Canada. It’s very colonial here. I’m not interested in more of the same.”

“I participated in an Australian experience, and being all Indigenous people, I felt secure. In France, I heard ‘I thought Indigenous people in Canada were no longer.’ There are surprising triggers in the difference between an Indigenous-specific program and a non-Indigenous program or area.”

“Participation in cohort models led by Indigenous faculty to Indigenous locations.”

Recommendations

- Review of present institutional partners for Indigenous Studies and supports
- Research to identify and request partnership with universities with Indigenous Studies and supports because Indigenous students want to be with the people of the lands they walk upon
- Ensure for a variety of Indigenous inclusion from diverse backgrounds and community groups/intersections. Ensure inclusion supports and program development with and for Indigenous 2SQ and LGBTQ2S+ communities.
- Ensure inclusion supports and program design with and from Indigenous persons who identify with disabilities/ diffabilities and specialized needs
- Financial support to faculty and staff to support Indigenous group travel for credit
- Support for Indigenous student-led trips
- COIL to physical mobility program
- Frequent check-ups and reassurance
- In communications, feature students who have travelled and their experiences
- Enhance considerations of First Nations as nations to change the way people think about international travel and nations within nations
- Prioritize English-speaking countries
- Explore more involvement of elders in the processes
- Conduct an environmental scan of best practices related to working together from International-Indigenous units
- Build a national network and community of practice for Indigenous-International units in Canada who are interested in this topic to share best practices
- Host a symposium to discuss best practices in the field and share resources
- Create an Indigenous student mobility guidebook at Laurier
- Conduct UX tests of the process of Indigenous undergraduate and Indigenous graduate student process
- Develop separate funding stream for Indigenous graduate students who want to present at conferences
- Host Indigenous international speaker series to begin to develop relationships and connections with potential placements/conferences or study abroad opportunities
- Establish a formalized structure for yearly planning with Laurier Indigenous and International units to identify activities and ways to be invitational with students to express interest for study abroad options
- Set shared goals and targets for shared success with measurable results

Stakeholder feedback

Note: Stakeholder feedback is represented below in two forms: as comments or as questions (in bold) followed by a brief response from the project team.

“Hopefully decision makers will take direction from this data.”

“Can we get a baseline of what ‘learning in a non-colonized space’ means, as what learners define that and faculty/deans define greatly differ!”

“How does it align with TRC calls to action on education? How does it align to the Nations’ protocol whose lands the institutions occupy?”

“How do the students define it? How do the faculty and faculties interpret and create non-colonized spaces/pedagogies?”

This is a challenging area as people are coming at it from so many different perspectives. It’s an interesting question—how do you build a baseline? How do you what is universally inclusive? How do we check in to make sure that a given faculty-led program meets the criteria that our students are looking for? These are very interesting questions that will need to be explored further.

“Thinking about funding requests and building in stipends for elders/aunties/community members to be paid for their time.” Definitely something to explore in terms of compensating elders and community members for their time.

“I think my biggest takeaway from all of this is it’s about relationship building. It’s about working with other institutions where you can really build relationships with them.”

“There is not a lot of experience or knowledge of the North and how they live and experience life.”

“Wondering too if other Laurier faculty connections could be expanded to Indigenous focused connections—like those already related to NWT and sustainability—shifting to more of a cultural exchange but in the same communities?”

Relationships

Direct and indirect benefits of the project

Directly, this project generated new insights about barriers to international outward mobility among Indigenous students that will inform program development at Laurier and partner institutions going forward. Given the richness of the data and findings, and the buy-in that the research process has led to across the Laurier community, the university is now well positioned to develop more effective mobility programming and attract funding to support it.

Indirectly, this project has been a catalyst for strengthening interest and engagement around the issues facing Indigenous students that will have a positive impact well beyond this particular project.

These indirect benefits include:

1. Strengthening ties between the Indigenous Initiatives office and Laurier International that will support an enhanced capacity to deliver on Laurier's commitment to support Indigenous students related to outward mobility
2. Research findings that can be generalized to inform future programming for offices and faculties across the university in areas beyond outward mobility programming
3. Strong participation of Indigenous students in the research project that has led them to feel more connected, that their voices are being uplifted, and that they have a stronger relationship with the Indigenous Initiatives office and Laurier International
4. Enhanced interest and buy-in from senior leaders across the university related to issues of Indigeneity, in particular relating to the challenges and barriers facing Indigenous students and programming to support them
5. Relationship enhancement across faculties and communities within Laurier and also outside the university
6. A sense of renewed energy and desire for next steps and engagement in programming and supports related to Indigenous students
7. Enhanced understanding among representatives from various faculties about barriers facing Indigenous students and the need to co-create programming and supports that are designed around Indigenous ways of learning and knowing
8. Increased awareness of the nuances and needs of programming and supports for Indigenous students
9. Enhanced understanding of the resource challenges facing staff working directly to support and deliver programming for Indigenous students
10. Enhanced awareness of the importance of the "never about us without us" principle for designing Indigenous student programming, supports and experiences

Knowledge sharing and partnerships

Knowledge sharing associated with this project included a focus group meeting with Laurier staff, faculty and Indigenous students; a stakeholder's meeting with 63 participants from across the Laurier community and Canadian universities; enhanced dialogue with senior leaders and faculty members at Laurier about the unique needs and experiences of Indigenous students; and dialogue with partner institutions across Canada, such as Saskatchewan Polytechnic and Algonquin College, and in the United States at Harvard University. Additionally, numerous Canadian universities have outreached to Laurier to collaborate on further GSO initiatives which are under discussion and have communicated that they will use the research funding to apply to their program supports and designs.

One of the tangible impacts of this project's national profile has been to prompt knowledge sharing and connections between institutions and opportunities for new partnerships. Every interaction between institutions related to knowledge sharing has also become an opportunity to explore future partnerships. This project has also been a catalyst for new and renewed partnerships within the Laurier community that will benefit Indigenous students on a long-term basis in a range of program and support areas.

Similar reports from other Canadian post-secondary institutions

Saskatchewan Polytech, International Mobility for Indigenous Students, March 2021 - International Education Department & Indigenous Strategy Department

The purpose of this research project was to collect data on the interests, barriers, and supports needed for Indigenous students to participate in international travel. International travel provides an experiential learning for students that takes them out of the classroom and engages them with other cultures and people. The key questions this research focused on were:

- What is the level of Indigenous student interest in outbound international mobility?
- What are the barriers to Indigenous student participation in the mobility program?
- What supports are needed to increase the level of Indigenous student participation in the mobility program?

Key findings from the report:

- Varying levels of Indigenous student interest in international learning experiences: In total, 88% of students said they were slightly (20%), moderately (25%) or very (43%) interested.
- The majority of students (76%) said they would like to meet with other Indigenous students while travelling.
- The most common barriers experienced by students are cost of travel (85%), family responsibilities (47%), unsure of required travel documents (31%), work responsibilities (18%) and fear of travelling (16%).
- The vast majority of students (89%) have not heard about international travel opportunities in their program.

Five recommendations presented in the report:

Recommendation 1: Provide designated scholarship to Indigenous students for international travel that is complementary to existing International Travel Mobility Award.

Recommendation 2: Encourage more programs to include the international travel and inter-cultural experience for students and share the information on available international opportunities with all faculty and support areas that have contact with Indigenous students.

Recommendation 3: The International office will streamline advisory services to programs and students for better planning of outbound international travel.

Recommendation 4: Utilize existing partnerships, memberships, and Memorandum of Understandings with international institutions to extend international exchanges and add more interested programs in travel opportunities.

Recommendation 5: Utilize business and industry partnerships of Saskatchewan companies with their partners abroad to open new inter-cultural opportunities for more programs.

Algonquin College, People First: Outbound Mobility Programs for Indigenous Students, March 2021 - Human-Centred Design Institute

The authors interviewed fourteen subject matter experts to gain insight into the challenges Indigenous students might be faced with when considering studying abroad. Hearing from professors, public servants, service workers and community representatives, they concluded that the financial costs of international studies were just the tip of the iceberg.

Looking to studies conducted across Canada, Brazil, New Zealand and Australia and for signs of similar successful outbound mobility programs, the authors recognize that although one size certainly does not fit all, there were some guiding principles for a mobility program to adopt.

The first is that for some Indigenous students, accessing post-secondary education in general might already feel foreign and that a holistic approach to their support and education would need to be adopted to even begin international studies. This might look like preparatory programs between high school and post-secondary for some or a more robust Indigenous Support Centre and presence on campus for others.

The second principle is recognizing the importance of community and a sense of belonging to students. For example, international exchanges in Peru realized it was beneficial for students to travel in pairs and have shared accommodations to stave off the feelings loneliness or isolation that can sometimes come with leaving home.

Third, the authors suggest having these programs offered on a short-term basis, so as not to prevent students from obtaining employment part-time or between terms and so they wouldn't be far from home for too long.

A generalization of what might make international studies appeal to Indigenous students is impossible, but using the guiding principles laid out with the help of experts, and working continuously with students, the authors believe an exciting and successful outbound mobility program can exist in the near future.

Algonquin College, Mobility By Design: Outbound Mobility of Canadian College Students, March 2021 - Design Research Centre

This study's research objective was to understand the many drivers, rationales, and factors of outbound student mobility and identify ways to better prepare and engage students for these mobility experiences. The focus was not specifically on Indigenous students, but some feedback from subject matter experts included considerations for students from more vulnerable groups, such as those with disabilities or Indigenous students.

For each general barrier to student travel identified in the report, the authors noted that they are even greater for Indigenous students or potentially impact them more. Those barriers include lack of awareness of any study/work abroad programs at the college; the need for better marketing and promotion; limited resources and support at the college level for implementation; complexity of the overall process; adjusting courses to fit a mobility schedule; and the cost of travel opportunities.

About the cost of travel: "This barrier is even bigger if students come from a more vulnerable group that has harder financial conditions than most people (such as groups of students with disabilities, Indigenous students). These groups require extra accommodations and have logistical challenges to be solved."

About the complexity of the overall process: "For students coming from more vulnerable groups (Indigenous students, students with disabilities), the administrative process is even more heavy as more documents would be required for extra accommodations."

About college communication: "Two SMEs pointed out that international departments and faculties need to reach out to Aboriginal departments to have a better understanding on Aboriginal students and what are their needs, what kind of programs would suit them."

Limitation of the study

The authors were unable to interview Indigenous students due to factors out of their control.

"Interviewing Indigenous students requires careful ethical considerations, and the timeframe of this study was too short to develop a robust ethics review process that could have been reviewed, and processed in time. Despite having an option in our survey for students to 'check yes' to identifying as being Indigenous, we did not receive any responses. Not having this data on Indigenous students was therefore a significant loss for our research findings, in that we did not receive primary data on how these students felt about outbound mobility.

Recommendations for future research that might complement our data is to have enough time to have ethical clearance so a diverse range of students could be interviewed."

Action

Priority calls to action

As an initial step in taking action on the research and recommendations in this report, the project has identified four immediate priorities.

1) Pursue additional university resources

Given the prominence of funding as a barrier for Indigenous student outward mobility, both directly and also in the form of supports required, this research underscores the need for post-secondary institutions to explore options for additional funding in the international-Indigenous space.

Alongside direct funding for student experiences in the form of scholarships and bursaries, one of the main barriers to implementing the recommendations is staffing. At Laurier, the project team will be recommending a reassessment of staffing needs related to international programming for Indigenous students in hopes of establishing a .5 FTE position to support this work. This role would straddle departments and assist with processes based at the Indigenous Student Centres within a joint reporting structure. This position could also help with ongoing efforts to work with faculty members who want to support Indigenous students but may not fully understand the requirements for these programs related to staff time, resourcing or the barriers Indigenous students face.

In addition to staffing, there is also value in pursuing options for funding to cover costs such as the involvement of elders, marketing, support groups, funding for one-on-one support conversations with students, and organizing meetings.

2) The Global Skills Opportunity

This research connects directly to an exciting funding opportunity coming from Universities Canada called The Global Skills Opportunity, which was created to encourage low-income students, students with disabilities, and Indigenous students to participate in study and work abroad programming.



- 4 years, \$500,000 funding, two proposals, up to \$10,000 in funding for Indigenous students with disabilities, and students with low income
- \$5,000 to less-traveled destinations for other students
- Canadians and permanent residents
- Undergraduates only
- Seven days minimum
- 10% can cover staff or faculty travel costs

3) Explore new internal and external partnerships

Building on the connections that have been made through this research project and knowledge sharing, the project team will lead Laurier in exploring new internal and external partnership opportunities in the Indigenous-international space.

These will include exploring questions such as these:

- Which Indigenous faculty are interested in travel experiences with students?
- How can International and Indigenous units share experiences/resources?
- What connections can we make between international universities and Indigenous programs or scholars to create opportunities for exchanges or visits?
- How can the Laurier Centre for Indigegogy be engaged in international student mobility in a more intentional and expansive way?

4) Form a national community of practice for international-Indigenous units

At the moment, there is no dedicated community of practice in the international-Indigenous student experience space. Grounded in this research, Laurier is interested in working with partners across the country to create one that works in parallel with other Indigenous student communities of practice and networks across the country.

Appendix A: Literature review

Research question: What are the barriers that Indigenous students encounter when studying abroad?

Sonn, C., Bishop, B., Humphries, R., (2000) Encounters with the Dominant Culture: Voices of Indigenous Students in Mainstream Higher Education. *Australian Psychologist*. 35(2), 128-135. Retrieved from <https://doi-org.libproxy.wlu.ca/10.1080/00050060008260334>

Literature suggests that current research on the experience of Indigenous students in higher education are focused on the individual experiences of students. Research consists of using an ecological paradigm and participatory methods that gathered students' responses to the challenges that they face in the context of their social, economic, and the psychological history of being oppressed. Results from the qualitative analysis suggest Indigenous students do not feel supported by their educational institution in changing their social or economic status. Lack of supports leave Indigenous students feeling that their cultural identities are being threatened through ongoing attempts by the institution to assimilate them. The data includes that the barriers experienced are subjected to power differentials in teaching and learning strategies that do not support or validate Indigenous knowledges. Indigenous students express a lack of support with research relevant to their home communities as a clash of worldviews. Indigenous students are concerned with relocation, discrimination, overt racism, modern racism, and a lack of cultural sensitivity. The challenges Indigenous students experience are with the dominant culture group, both students and faculty. Common aggressions are associated with feeling obligated to educate the institutional community about Indigenous issues and often lectures violate Indigenous rules or protocols. Indigenous students point out that social sciences are insensitive to their culture and the connection they share to the land, and oftentimes courses offered are not reflexive of Indigenous culture. Indigenous students feel socially isolated as they are often forgotten or misrepresented in the curriculum. This research suggests that for Indigenous students to receive optimal experiences from higher education, courses should be picked that fit the student's attributes. Indigenous students should seek informational support, resources, materials and physical support. This research was based on western research methodologies that fail to recognize the process of researching and data collection for Indigenous people about Indigenous people. It further offers suggestions on what students could do to make their experience better but does not provide concrete suggestions on how higher-level educational institutions can accommodate the needs of Indigenous students.

Clark, D.A., Kleiman, Spanierman, L.B., Isaac, P., & Poolokasingham, G. (2014). "Do you live in a teepee?" Aboriginal students' experiences with racial microaggressions in Canada. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, 7(2), 112-125. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0036573>

This research consisted of interviews with aboriginal students who expressed common experiences of their treatment from non-aboriginals in academic settings that were unfair or had a negative impact their educational experience. The experiences shared were focused on assimilation and the racial discrimination that aboriginal students encounter through racialized

microaggressions during international studies. Aboriginal undergraduate students were victims of micro-assaults from non-aboriginals being insensitive and having demeaning ideas about minorities. These students also shared experiences with micro-invalidations and were the subjects of being negated and minimized for their thoughts, feelings, and lived experiences. These students were further victims of micro-assaults through the manifestations of racial microaggressions that targeted them with the intent to harm them. This research further speaks to the environmental microaggressions that are at the macro level of institutional racism that is systemic in nature. Many students felt that they were excluded from events on campus. The emerging themes from the research include the denial of racism, the waging of stereotype attacks, misinformation regarding aboriginal people, and relying on stereotypes to inform perspectives about aboriginals. Aboriginal students are the victims of racial stereotypes and are confronted with an expectation of primitiveness, voyeurism, and jealous accusations. Indigenous students feel socially isolated as they are often forgotten or misrepresented in the curriculum. The research confirms that there has not been any empirical research done from an aboriginal perspective. Research concludes that aboriginal students are underrepresented in white universities; they lack in numbers and have limited power to influence potential recruitments. For research specific institutions, aboriginal students are apprehensive because research has been for exploitation. These focus groups were consensual and qualitative to understand aboriginal students' experience. This methodology is similar to Indigenous research methodology of storytelling.

Bailey, K., (2016). Racism within the Canadian university: Indigenous students' experiences. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 39(7), 1261-1279. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2015.1081961>

This research used a snowball sampling consisting of one-on-one and semi-structured interviews with Indigenous students who attend Canadian universities. The experiences are similar to those students in the study of "'Do you live in a teepee?' Aboriginal students' experiences with racial microaggressions in Canada" (2014). Consistent themes that emerge are unconstructed voyeurism, jealous accusations, cultural elimination or misrepresentation in curriculum. Presumed primitiveness and isolation on campus are demonstrated by scholars and through university policies. Canada's denial of racism has made educational institutions resistant to change and reluctant to include Indigenous experiences within their research. The lived experiences of racism and microaggressions for Indigenous students are referred to as the "root of the problem." Higher education is being considered as a policy for assimilation and is enforced through the dominant racial belief systems that enforce and protect the status quo and encourage the dismissal of anything that may represent structural inequalities within the institution. There are different levels of isolation the research found: Indigenous students are challenged with being away from their home communities and also isolated within the university's social and academic environments. The research concludes that the macro sociological structures influence the micro sociological processes for Indigenous students.

Shankar, J., Ip, E., Khalema, E., Couture, J., Tan, S., Zulla, RT., Lam, G. (2013). Education as a Social Determinant of Health: Issues Facing Indigenous and Visible Minority Students in Postsecondary Education in Western Canada. *International Journal of Environmental*

Research and Public Health. 10(9), 3908-3929. Retrieved from
<https://www.mdpi.com/1660-4601/10/9/3908/htm>

This research used a qualitative methodology and interpretive phenomenology and critical theory to analyze the oppressive structures that impact Indigenous students in post-secondary schools. Data collected determined that many Indigenous students face financial barriers when attending post-secondary education. Many Indigenous people were forced to attend residential schools and could not access higher levels of education. Indigenous students are often from low-income families and may live in remote areas. Those who are trying to access post-secondary education often face challenges with their age and being full-time parents. Post-secondary institutions operate on discriminatory practices and create stress on Indigenous students, having adverse impacts on the psychological health and wellbeing of students and resulting in lower academic confidence. Post-secondary education as a health determinant is considered as an opportunity to elevate social conditions and create healthier outcomes for individuals. The research concludes that this is not the case for Indigenous students and attending post-secondary education has had negative impacts on their health. The research that has been done does not represent the worldview of Indigenous people. For interpretive phenomenology to be successful, consideration must be given to all contexts of a person's life including their epistemology and world view. The research gives consideration to the historical and contemporary issues Indigenous students face with education and provides an analysis of the oppressive structures.

Schofeild, T., O'Brien, R., Gilroy, J., Indigenous higher education: Overcoming barriers to participation in research higher degree programs. *Australian Aboriginal Studies*. September 22, 2013. Retrieved from

<https://www.thefreelibrary.com/Indigenous+higher+education%3a+overcoming+barriers+to+participation+in...-a0354182120>

This paper is about a policy approach that came from the research done by Marcia Devlin (2009) with University of Southern Australia. This research determined that there was a need for the development of a new "paradigm in the research for Indigenous higher education." This came in response to the inequalities that Australian aboriginals encounter with participation in research higher degree (RHD) programs. Aboriginal participation in RHD programs has emerged as a critical dimension of social inequality (Schofeild, et al, 2013). Aboriginal students encounter challenges in accessing economic and social resources. The educational institution intention in policy is to integrate the global knowledge economy by marginalizing the advancement of aboriginal students. This paper commodifies the knowledge that RHD programs can provide. Institutions and higher-level education policies market universities in a business manner. The institutions are responsible for the production and the dissemination of knowledges and discourse. This creates challenges to aboriginal students, as educational institutions are concerned with European knowledges and frameworks resulting in negative impacts on the aboriginal students. Institutions have been framed as having a "fundamental disregard" (Luke, 2009) for aboriginal histories, culture, and traditions, affecting students' morale and how they engage with the university. Aboriginal students tend to do better academically when the

content is relevant to their lives and if able to transfer skills into their home communities (Howlett et al., 2008:23).

Chang, A. (2015) Call Me a Little Critical if You Will: Counterstories of Latinas Studying Abroad in Guatemala. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*. Retrieved from <https://journals-sagepub-com.libproxy.wlu.ca/doi/full/10.1177/1538192715614900>

This research was developed using qualitative methodology and critical race theory to understand the experiences of Latina students through counter storytelling. Students are concerned with cultural dissonance in education. This research focused on students' reflections of the past, present, and their perspectives on privilege in an educational setting. The students shared stories of being historically marginalized and used transformative strength-based solutions to cope with racial, gender, and class inequalities. Many students shared common experiences of feeling like an outsider, language barriers, and difficulty moving in and out of comfort zones. Students encountered a lack of respect, ignorance, and felt exploited. They are concerned with non-Indigenous peoples approaches to private or sacred spaces held with care. White people have commodified Indigenous people to the extent that students feel like objects. Understanding the benefits of studying abroad Indigenous students are underrepresented in academics and some come as "heritage seekers" to find a familiar significance and transference of knowledge to their own communities. The data concluded that most of the research on challenges of studying abroad are on upper middle-class white students. This research was limited in scope of having four case studies, not representative of a larger body of students. The use of critical race theory was appropriate in the analysis of connecting of how the educational institutions systemically position non-Indigenous students with privilege and power through policies and benefits that are unachievable by Indigenous students because of the lack resources they have to reach their potential.

Zuchowski, I., Gopalkrishnan, N., King, J., & Francis, A. (2017). Reciprocity in international student exchange: Challenges posed by neo-colonialism and the dominance of the Western voice. *Aotearoa New Zealand Social Work*, 29(1), 77-87. Retrieved from [doi:https://doi.org/10.11157/anzswj-vol29iss1id235](https://doi.org/10.11157/anzswj-vol29iss1id235)

Research was conducted to explore internationalisation in social work education and defining what approaches are being used to analyze current practices to improve international student exchange. The main focus was on reciprocity and collaboration and how those relationships are viewed in the context of colonization. Western dominance and professional imperialism contribute to the exploitation of people and resources. These types of behaviours sustain hegemony and devalue social care systems that are congruent with social work education and ethical standards. The institutional commitment to international students is to advance knowledge in a broader construct of culture. Personal and professional benefits are to be gathered from studying abroad and should be done in a reciprocal manner. The current practices are done under neo-colonist structures and conflicts with social workers acting or practicing in a socially just manner. The research concluded that more critical thinking and research is needed on how to minimize Western positioning in international student programs.

Leonard, B., Mercier, O., (N.D.). Shaping Indigenous Spaces in Higher Education: An International Virtual Exchange on Indigenous Knowledge (Alaska and Aotearoa). *Canadian Journal of Native Education*. 37(1), 218-237. Retrieved from

https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Beth-Leonard-2/publication/267451525_Shaping_Indigenous_spaces_in_higher_education_An_international_virtual_exchange_on_Indigenous_knowledge_Alaska_and_Aotearoa/links/55465fe20cf234bd_b21d8d6d/Shaping-Indigenous-spaces-in-higher-education-An-international-virtual-exchange-on-Indigenous-knowledge-Alaska-and-Aotearoa.pdf

This paper describes four international virtual exchanges between Alaska and Aotearoa among students enrolled in the University of Alaska's courses. This is an Indigenous studies course that focuses on the documentation of Indigenous knowledges. Discussions include having Indigenous faculty and having the institution teach about Indigenous issues with rather than for students, creating opportunity for social justice and the capacity to transform spaces in higher education so they are safe for Indigenous learning to occur. Students shared their thoughts through online forum posts and evaluations. The key themes that emerged included that these students felt a sense of place within their educational institution. This sense of belonging created a safe place for students to share and take up space with their own identities while maintaining an academic identity. This virtual exchange design used a multi-directional approach that validated Indigenous knowledges. Concerns were with the process of knowledge transmission and how to preserve that knowledge. Challenges occurred with the interfacing of Western concepts and Indigenous knowledge systems. English is unable to fully translate the depth of meaning in Indigenous languages, making it difficult to transmit the true meaning without it being lost in translation. When studying in mainstream academia, students expressed challenges with modelling of Indigenous pedagogies and knowledge appropriation or the diluting of Indigenous knowledges. The students struggled with issues situated in colonialism and imperialism. Students had difficulties with European time constraints, securing reliable Wi-Fi, and grading schemes for assignments. The research concluded that educational institutions need to understand and develop relational frameworks in addressing the challenges of Indigenous students. The use of online forums is potentially a way to create discussions and engagement around a certain issue or topic, though a forum will not create an in-depth analysis with a sensitive topic or population for many reasons. Indigenous people do not trust researchers and may not want to share fully or at all. Online data is at risk for exposure, tampering or breaches of confidentiality.

Sadeghi, M. (2017). Proposing a New Construct: Academic Cultural Diversity in Studying Abroad. *European Journal of Educational Studies*. 3(2), 65-78. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/313029766_PROPOSING_A_NEW_CONSTRUCT_ACADEMIC_CULTURAL_DIVERSITY_IN_STUDYING_ABROAD

This research was conducted to introduce a new concept to understanding Academic Cultural Diversity (ACD) with interest in knowing if a student's cultural background boosts or hinders their expectations in studying abroad. Research was conducted as a qualitative narrative base, similar to Indigenous research methodology of storytelling for data collection. What was found was that students' barriers to academic life had a correlation to academic expectations.

Students' academic expectations were of curriculum differences and unfamiliarity with the content being taught. Expectations about the difference of learning and teachings styles were found to be common with academic failure. The ACD is context specific and the data generated from unstructured interviews through a narrative based is consistent with qualitative data expectations.

Grantham, K. (2018). Assessing International Student Mobility in Canadian University Strategic Plans: Instrumentalists Versus Transformative Approaches in Higher Educations. *Journal of Global Citizenship and Equity Education*. 6(1).

Linking Canadian educational institutions to mobility programs serves the production of global-minded leaders and improves intercultural competency and job readiness. International education is used to promote the university and support its economic motivations, including marketing, commodification, and globalization. These motivations situate students as consumers of universities' education. Indigenous people often do not have the resources to experience programs that prioritize the institutions' benefits because they are limited to top-level students. International education is referred to as borderline neocolonialist and students who are minorities (such as LGBQ, aboriginal, or of colour) are less likely to participate. The research concluded that the barriers many minorities share regarding the inability to participate in international programs are associated with costs, curriculum, culture, and life circumstances.

Appendix B: Survey Questions

Laurier International, Office of Indigenous Initiatives and various faculties have taken purposeful and proactive steps to better engage Indigenous students in International Mobility Programming. Given the disparity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students participation in international mobility programs, Laurier would like to grow opportunities for Indigenous student mobility, as many concentrated efforts have resulted in little increase in participation. The results of the survey will be used to find general information on Indigenous students' awareness and experiences with international mobility programs. In addition, the Indigenous students' preferences, needs, and wants to engage in international experiences will be explored to co-create a framework design for inclusive international education programming for Laurier.

Key Terms:

Student Exchange Program: A program of study whereby partner institutions establish a reciprocal agreement which enables students to pay tuition at their home institution and to register and study at the host partner institution with credit transferred back to the home institution. The typical duration of an exchange is one or two semesters.

Internship Abroad: A work placement abroad, usually working in a pseudo-professional capacity, where the primary motivation is educational. Internships may be credit or non-credit and paid or unpaid.

Faculty-led Program Abroad: An education abroad activity involving a group of students under the supervision of a home-institution faculty member.

Volunteer Abroad: An unpaid student placement abroad which may, or may not, be organized by a third-party organization. Volunteering abroad differs from service learning or experiential learning abroad in that the main focus is not necessarily on student learning.

Co-op: A work-integrated learning opportunity with partner schools.

Survey Questions

1. Which campus do you belong to?
 - a. Brantford
 - b. Waterloo
 - c. Kitchener
 - d. My program is primarily online

2. Which of the following apply to your current status?
 - a. Faculty at Laurier

1. Lazaridis School of Business
 2. Arts
 3. Education
 4. Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
 5. Human and Social Sciences
 6. International Policy and Governance
 7. Liberal Arts
 8. Martin Luther University College
 9. Music
 10. Science
 11. Social Work
- b. Bachelor Student
 - c. Masters Student
 - d. PhD Student
3. Which year are you currently in?
- a. First (Bachelor/Masters/PhD)
 - b. Second
 - c. Third
 - d. Final (Bachelor/Masters/PhD)
4. Which of the following apply to you?
- a. Part-time student
 - b. Full-time student
5. Do you currently have any dependents (i.e. children, parents, spouse/partner)?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
6. If the answer to question 5 is (Yes), how many dependents do you have relying on you to provide support for them?
- a. 1
 - b. 2
 - c. 3
 - d. 4+

7. Have you ever participated in an international education program (i.e., educational experience outside the country of your home institution during your degree/diploma/certificate)?
 - a. No
 - b. Yes

8. If your answer to question 7 is (Yes), then what type of program did you participate in?
 - a. Student Exchange Program
 - b. Internship
 - c. Co-op
 - d. Faculty led program
 - e. Volunteer
 - f. Other (specify):

9. Have you ever been interested participating in an international education program (Any educational activity which occurs outside of Canada? (Yes/No)
 - a. No
 - b. Yes

10. If your answer to question 9 is (Yes), then choose which of the following locations would you prefer (choose all that apply)?
 - a. Australia
 - b. Austria
 - c. Belgium
 - d. Mainland China
 - e. Denmark
 - f. France
 - g. Germany
 - h. Ghana
 - i. Hong Kong (China)
 - j. Ireland
 - k. Italy
 - l. Japan
 - m. Macau (China)
 - n. Mexico
 - o. Netherlands
 - p. Norway
 - q. Portugal
 - r. Slovenia

- s. South Korea
 - t. Spain
 - u. Sweden
 - v. Switzerland
 - w. United Kingdom
 - x. USA
 - y. Other (specify):
11. Which of the following international education program would you prefer (choose all that apply)?
- a. Student Exchange Program
 - b. Internship
 - c. Co-op
 - d. Faculty led program
 - e. Volunteer
 - f. Other (specify):
12. How long would you want to be a part of the international education program?
- a. One semester
 - b. Two semesters
 - c. One year
 - d. One week
 - e. Two weeks
 - f. Other (specify):
13. Which term/semester would work best for you to participate in an international education program?
- a. Fall
 - b. Winter
 - c. Spring
 - d. Summer
14. Which of the following would you prefer to receive from an international education experience? (Order by greatest to least)
- a. credit with grade
 - b. Credit with Pass/Fail
 - c. Non-Credit
 - d. Co-curricular (Laurier Experience Record)
 - e. Payment

- f. Honorarium
 - g. Travel paid
 - h. Accommodations paid
 - i. In country transportation paid
 - j. Other (specify):
15. Would you like a program that has an Indigenous Studies Curriculum? Indigenous focused?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
16. If your answer to question 15 is (Yes), how can this be done? (choose all that apply)
- a. Work with Indigenous academics
 - b. Learn more about global Indigenous culture
 - c. Embed learning goals with Indigeneity worldviews
 - d. Staff experienced with understanding students and their needs related to international travel
 - e. Partnership with Indigenous universities
 - f. Opportunities to engage with local and international Indigenous organizations
 - g. Other (specify):
17. Which of the following would you prefer when travelling?
- a. Alone
 - b. With a friend
 - c. As part of a group
18. What type of accommodation would you prefer?
- a. Rent
 - b. Residence
 - c. Hotel
 - d. Sharing space with a roommate
19. How can the international education programs be designed to help you or others?
20. What do you think you need to successfully complete an international education program?
21. The following are obstacles that students in the past have faced that have kept them from participating in international education programming. Which of these barriers may

impact your decision to participate in an international education program? (choose all that apply)

- a. Requires money I do not have
 - b. Do not know if it will delay graduation
 - c. Do not know if I will get credit for courses taken abroad
 - d. Courses are too tightly scheduled to miss.
 - e. Need to work during school
 - f. Take me away from my friends
 - g. Job may not be held for me
 - h. Not needed to get a job
 - i. Parents would not approve
 - j. Dependents need me to stay at home
 - k. Health concerns
 - l. GPA is too low
 - m. Athletics obligations
 - n. Lack of comfort
 - o. Travel documentation
 - p. Other
 - q. Absence of income during the international education abroad program
 - r. Family members or dependents who rely on my support
 - s. Loneliness
 - t. Worry about racism
 - u. Worry about my health and security while abroad (eg crime)
 - v. Other (specify):
22. If you were already aware of international education programs at Laurier how did you learn about them (choose all that apply)?
- a. During orientation activities
 - b. Through admissions materials
 - c. Through an Academic Advisor
 - d. In classes
 - e. Through a friend
 - f. Through a Staff person at Laurier International
 - g. Through an Indigenous Student Support Coordinator
 - h. Posted flyers
 - i. Residence staff
 - j. Student government members
 - k. Laurier website
 - l. Social media networks
 1. Instagram

2. Facebook
 3. Twitter
 4. TikTok
 5. Reddit
- m. My Faculty/ department
 - n. Friend(s)
 - o. Other student(s)
 - p. I had to search for the information as it was not easily available
23. Costs of participation in Education Abroad Programs can vary depending on the type of program, length of time and destination. For example, participating in a student exchange program will require additional funds above the normal costs of University expenses such as: transportation, housing and meals (may be more or less than you already pay while at Laurier), insurance and incidentals. On average this semester long program may be an additional \$5,000 to \$10,000. If you wanted to participate in an international education program, would you require financial assistance to pay for the costs?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Not sure
24. If you require financial assistance to participate in education abroad, what amount would you need to cover the additional costs:
- a. \$500 – \$1000
 - b. \$2,000 – \$3,000
 - c. \$4,000 – \$5,000
 - d. \$5,000+
 - e. Other (specify):
25. Would you like to participate in a focus group to help us understand barriers to travel or get ideas on future programming related to this topic? (\$75/hr compensation provided)?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
26. If your answer to the previous question is (Yes), which of the following would best fit your schedule?
- a. Monday (8:00 - 9:30pm)
 - b. Tuesday (8:00 - 9:30pm)

- c. Wednesday (8:00 - 9:30pm)
 - d. Thursday (8:00 - 9:30pm)
 - e. Friday (8:00 - 9:30pm)
 - f. Saturday (12pm - 1:30pm)
 - g. Sunday (12pm - 1:30pm)
27. Please input your full name, email address, and contact information to be invited to the focus groups.
28. Is there anything you'd like to add here that this survey did not cover? Do you have any other insight that you would like to share related to Indigenous Student mobility?

Thank you for participating on this survey. Please input your contact information to have a chance to win an iPad.

Appendix C: Focus Group Questions

Focus Group Questions:

1. Context question: Describe your exposure or involvement with international education programs (either in your family or your community).
2. What would motivate or draw you to engage in international education programs?
3. What are the obstacles that keep you from engaging in international education programs?
4. Any other thing you want to share about how Laurier can support your engagement with international education programs?

