SUPPORTING ABORIGINAL STUDENT SUCCESS

Report of the LE,NONET research project

University of Victoria

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Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication information forthcoming
Hunt, Sarah, 1976 –
Lalonde, Chris, 1959 –
Rondeau, Yvonne, 1968 –
Supporting Aboriginal Student Success: Report of the LE,NONET research project

ISBN 978-1-55058-425-7
Printed in Canada (on 100% recycled paper)

Design | UVic Graphic Services

SUPPORTING ABORIGINAL STUDENT SUCCESS

Report of the LE,NONET research project.

Authors

Sarah Hunt, MA, co-principal investigator
Chris Lalonde, PhD, co-principal investigator
Yvonne Rondeau, project manager
Research assistance from Auburn Phillips, Haley DeKorne and In-In Po

Acknowledgements

The LE,NOṈET Project was conceived and initiated under the joint leadership of the University of Victoria and the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation which was established with funding from the Government of Canada. In particular, we wish to acknowledge David Turpin, Jamie Cassels, Jim Anglin, Norman Riddell, Jocelyn Charron and Andrew Parkin. The authors wish to thank Jose Glado and Jean-Paul Restoule for their helpful comments on an earlier draft. We also acknowledge and thank all of the students, staff, faculty, and community members whose enthusiasm and support made the LE,NOṈET Project possible.

Acknowledgement of Traditional Territory

The LE,NOṈET Project and the University of Victoria are situated in the traditional territory of the Coast and Straits Salish people. We would like to thank the local First Nations communities for hosting us on their traditional lands, where we are honoured to live and work.

A Note on the Term "Aboriginal"

For the purposes of this report, "Aboriginal" is used to refer to persons of First Nations, Métis, or Inuit ancestry. The term "Indigenous" is being used with increasing frequency at the university, and it is therefore used interchangeably with "Aboriginal" throughout this report. Terms such as "Native" or "Indian" or specific First Nations names are used when quoting research respondents.

LE,NOṈET: "Success after enduring many hardships"

LE,NOṈET (pronounced le-non-git) is a word in SENĆOŦEN (sen-chaw-then), the language of the local Straits Salish people, meaning "paddling a canoe in a storm and making it through to the other side," and was also documented in an orthography by the late Dave Elliott Sr. as meaning "success after enduring many hardships." The name LE,NOṈET was suggested by elder and traditional knowledge keeper Earl Claxton (YELḴÁTŦE) as well as by John Elliott of the Tsartlip First Nation.

Artist Charles Elliott of the Tsartlip First Nation contributed the LE,NOṈET Project logo, which uses a classic spindle whorl design depicting a human surrounded by a pair of wolves and speaks to the capacity of students to use the best of both worlds, in this case the traditions of their Indigenous communities and the traditions of Euro-Western academia.

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REPORT AT A GLANCE

The LE,NONET Project was developed by the University of Victoria in partnership with the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation, which was established with funding from the Government of Canada, to determine best practice principles and to evaluate program models in supporting the success and retention of Aboriginal students in post-secondary education. The project developed a suite of student-focused programs and one program for faculty and staff at the university, which were piloted between 2005 and 2009.

Scope of the Report

This report focuses primarily on the project outcomes (summative evaluation), including results from both qualitative and quantitative research into the impact of the LE,NONET programs on participants and the broader university. For more in-depth information on the implementation of the first half of the project (formative evaluation), see *LE,NONET Pilot Project: Interim Evaluation Report* (2008).

Report Outline

This report contains 10 sections. Section 1 provides the background and context for the LE,NONET Project at the University of Victoria and situates the report within the broader literature on the retention and success of Aboriginal students. Section 2 outlines the qualitative and quantitative research questions and methods for the project, as well as the evaluation framework that was developed to assess the outcomes of the project and individual programs. Section 3 provides information on the 200 Aboriginal students who participated in LE,NONET programs over the four-year pilot project, including students' program participation, age, gender, and Aboriginal ancestry. Section 4 provides information on the qualitative research participants, including students, program advisors, LE,NONET staff, university stakeholders, and participants in staff and faculty workshops. Sections 5, 6, and 7 discuss the qualitative research findings. Section 5 provides a broad view of the LE,NONET programs, examining the key questions that students were asked about their experiences. Section 6 examines individual student support programs. Section 7 evaluates cultural awareness training for staff and faculty. Section 8 contains the results of the quantitative research, including demographic analyses of student participants and an examination of student retention, withdrawal, and graduation rates. This section also reports on the impact of individual LE,NONET programs on student success. Section 9 provides a project expense summary, including an overall project budget and a breakdown of expenses by program. Section 10 briefly concludes the report by outlining key principles of best practice in supporting the success of Aboriginal students.

1 | INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Context and Background: the Emergence of LE,NONET

The LE,NONET Project emerged out of both national interest in increasing post-secondary graduation rates for Aboriginal people and the University of Victoria's long-standing commitment to Aboriginal education. Supported by leadership at the University of Victoria and the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation, which was established with funding from the Government of Canada, the LE,NONET Project was an opportunity to investigate program models for supporting Aboriginal students to succeed in post-secondary studies within a culturally grounded, supportive environment.

Planning for the LE,NONET Project came at a time when the University of Victoria had already demonstrated a significant commitment to increasing the Aboriginal presence on campus and to improving relations with surrounding Aboriginal communities and organizations. In 2002, the Planning and Priorities Committee at the university created a strategic plan, entitled *A Vision for the Future,* with a strong commitment to Aboriginal education. In 2007, a renewed document, ** Vision for the Future: Building on Strength,* was approved and adopted by the Senate and Board of Governors. This document included further strategies to "increase the number of Indigenous students graduating from all faculties at UVic, building on our commitment to and our unique relationship with Canada's First Peoples" (University of Victoria, 2007b, p. 15).

The President's Advisory Council on Indigenous Education advises the president on institution-wide matters related to Indigenous education programs and services in order to assist the university in meeting the aims outlined in the strategic plan. The council adopted new terms of reference in October 2007 (University of Victoria, 2007a) but had been active for many years prior to this date. The council is chaired by the president of the university and includes representatives from local First Nations (appointed by the First Nations), government ministries, and the university's administration and Indigenous campus community.

In the years leading up to the LE,NONET Project, Aboriginal issues and education were becoming increasingly visible on campus, as evidenced by a number of indicators:

- a growing number of Aboriginal regular faculty members on campus (15, or 2.1% of all faculty, at the time of the proposal to the Canadian Millennium Scholarship Foundation in 2005);
- a growing number of Aboriginal staff providing services to students;
- an increasing number of educational programs that had Aboriginal content or included components specifically for Aboriginal learners;
- an active Native Students Union;
- the creation of the President's Advisory Council on Indigenous Education; and
- a commitment to construct a First Peoples House on campus.

There had also been a significant and steady increase in Aboriginal student enrolment at the university in the years leading up to the initiation of the project. Full-time, part-time, on-campus, and distance learning enrolment rose from fewer than 100 self-identified Aboriginal students in 1999/2000 to 534 in 2005/2006 (University of Victoria Institutional Planning and Analysis).[1] Some portion of this increase is likely due to the adoption of more accurate data collection methods as well as to the fact that Aboriginal people are becoming increasingly likely to self-identify as Aboriginal. With a growing Aboriginal student population and an increased commitment to serving Aboriginal students and communities, the university was well placed to test further proactive initiatives.

Meanwhile, at the start of the decade, the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation set up the Millennium Research Program, an initiative designed to investigate barriers to post-secondary education. The foundation intended to use "rigorous analysis and empirical evidence" to examine the impact of policies and programs designed to alleviate such barriers. The University of Victoria indicated its desire to examine models for reducing barriers for Aboriginal students, submitting a proposal to the foundation for programs starting in 2005 and extending to 2009.

1 The data for 2005 include both self-identified Aboriginal students and those identified through the data-gathering activities undertaken for this project.

1.2 Project Rationale

In the years before LE,NONET was initiated, Aboriginal enrolment in post-secondary education had been climbing: the percentage of Aboriginal people aged 25 to 64 with some post-secondary credentials increased from 33% in 1996 to 38% in 2001 (Statistics Canada, 2003). Since that time, the 2006 census has shown that Aboriginal education rates continue to improve, but the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people is still large.[2] In 2006, 44% of the population with Aboriginal ancestry had post-secondary credentials (either trades, college, or university), compared with 51% of the overall Canadian population. However, only 8% of Aboriginal people aged 25 to 64 had attained university degrees, compared with 23% of the non-Aboriginal population (Statistics Canada, 2006).

Education has the potential to build the capacity of Aboriginal peoples to improve the quality of life both in rural and isolated Aboriginal communities and for urban Aboriginal people. Governments and institutions have an important role to play in supporting Aboriginal people to develop the tools that will enable them to assume greater responsibility and control over their education, as well as to deliver programs and services (Government of Canada, 2004). Although some research has been conducted on barriers to accessing post-secondary education, few initiatives have looked specifically at retaining Aboriginal students through to graduation.

Research on barriers to Aboriginal achievement in post-secondary education suggests that inadequate financial resources, weakness in academic preparation, lack of self-confidence and motivation, lack of institutional understanding of Aboriginal culture, experiences of racism and exclusion, and an absence of role models with post-secondary education are all factors impacting Aboriginal student success (R.A. Malatest, 2004; National Council of Welfare, 2007).

Aboriginal women face additional barriers to those facing Aboriginal men. Research suggests that family responsibilities are a barrier for many Aboriginal women's educational attainment, and given that Aboriginal women are more likely be lone parents, have children at a younger age, and have more children than non-Aboriginal women,

2 It should be noted that the census data are only partially representative of Aboriginal peoples' experiences. The Assembly of First Nations has noted flaws in data collection, including the omission of significant portions of the Aboriginal population in Canada. See Assembly of First Nations (2008).

they require different resources to succeed at school (R.A. Malatest, 2004; National Council of Welfare, 2007). Despite these challenges, Aboriginal women complete university programs at a higher rate than Aboriginal men. In 2001,14% of Aboriginal women had some university education, compared with 10% of Aboriginal men (Hull, 2006). Aboriginal students are more likely than non-Aboriginal students to be female, single parents, and older than the general student population (Ministry of Advanced Education, 2004).

Aboriginal students represent both a growing youth population in Aboriginal communities and a growing number of mature students who are re-entering the education system. It is estimated that by 2016, the Aboriginal population aged 15 to 24 will have grown rapidly. At a 2004 roundtable on lifelong learning for Aboriginal people, the Government of Canada estimated that 315,000 Aboriginal children would go through the K-12 education system and potentially on to post-secondary education (Government of Canada, 2004).

The development of Aboriginal-specific offices, programs, curricula, and services is part of the process of creating an academic space that is respectful of Aboriginal culture and that facilitates the development and maintenance of Aboriginal students' cultural knowledge and skills. Kirkness & Barnhardt (1991) describe a university environment that supports Aboriginal identity:

The university must be able to present itself in ways that have instrumental value to First Nations students; that is, the programs and services that are offered must connect with the students' own aspirations and cultural predispositions sufficiently to achieve a comfort level that will make the experience worth enduring.

Some authors (Bobiwash, 1999; Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991) have defined the condition for success for Aboriginal post-secondary students as participation in a post-secondary environment that strengthens, rather than weakens, their cultural integrity. Culturally relevant Aboriginal educational programs help to strengthen Aboriginal cultural identity and facilitate the inclusion of Aboriginal people in a way that recognizes their cultures and fosters success (Government of Canada, 2004). In this view, a post-secondary institution that offers a relevant, respectful, reciprocal, and empowering learning environment is one in which Aboriginal students are most likely to achieve success. Additionally, Aboriginal organizations and researchers have stressed the importance of Aboriginal control or input into educational programs for Aboriginal people, including collaboration, culturally relevant approaches, and adequate resources:

Statistics tell the story of increasing Aboriginal success in education where Aboriginal peoples are involved in determining Aboriginal education; this success would be all the greater were such initiatives adequately resourced. Given the young demographic of the Aboriginal population the time to act is now. (National Council of Welfare, 2007, p. 59)

As more Aboriginal people become involved in post-secondary education as students, staff, faculty, and administrators, the gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal definitions of success are of increasing importance. Research released after the initiation of the project supports the need for a better understanding of Aboriginal definitions of success, which often stand in stark contrast to those held by Western institutions. Indeed, a 2007 report released by the Canadian Council on Learning notes that research and approaches to measuring Aboriginal learning in Canada often use Western frameworks that

- are oriented toward measuring learning deficits
- do not account for social, economic and political factors
- do not monitor progress across the full spectrum of lifelong learning
- do not reflect the holistic nature of First Nations, Inuit and Métis learning, and
- do not reflect the importance of experiential learning. (p. 10)

In order to develop more appropriate measures of success, initiatives such as the LE,NONET Project must focus on the voices of Aboriginal people and their own definitions of successful learning. The following Aboriginal perspectives on learning and education have been identified as key elements of programs to support Aboriginal learners:

- Learning is holistic.
- Learning is a lifelong process.
- Learning is experiential in nature.
- Learning is rooted in Aboriginal languages and cultures.
- Learning is spiritually oriented.
- Learning is a communal activity, involving family, community and Elders.
- Learning is an integration of Aboriginal and Western Knowledge. (Canadian Council on Learning, 2007, p. 5)

During the consultation process, the central question of success emerged as the main focus of the project: What constitutes success in Aboriginal students and communities, and how can post-secondary institutions support Aboriginal students to succeed on their own terms?

One of the challenges in determining priorities for the project was the lack of national data on Aboriginal student post-secondary participation, including types of funding, enrolment numbers for various universities, and drop-out and withdrawal rates for Aboriginal students. These gaps largely emerge from a lack of consistent data collection methods and ways to share information nationally. Although data collection methods are improving, most information on self-identified Aboriginal students has been collected for the last few years only, making it difficult to track long-term student success rates (Holmes, 2006). For example, limited data are available on how Aboriginal students pay for their post-secondary education or their access to various types of student financial assistance, including First Nations band funding, federal and provincial scholarships, and student financial aid (R.A. Malatest, 2008).

1.3 Project Goals and Vision

The LE,NONET Project's overall aim was to develop strategies and programs that could promote Aboriginal student retention and success and to research the effectiveness of these strategies. The research findings were then used to identify best practice principles and program models for supporting the success of Aboriginal students. The goals outlined in the project proposal to the Canadian Millennium Scholarship Foundation were in keeping with the vision articulated in the University of Victoria's strategic plan, which outlined a commitment to "enhance the recruitment, retention and graduation of Aboriginal students in all faculties" and to "enhance support services for Aboriginal students" (University of Victoria, 2002).

The two main goals of the LE,NONET Project were to:

- change the experience of Aboriginal students attending the University of Victoria to a more visibly positive one; and
- improve Aboriginal students' access to the university through an effective and readily available program of support services that will enhance student success.

The overall vision for the LE,NONET Project emerged from consultation with key stakeholders at the beginning of the project. Led by a university-based team (including non-Aboriginal scholars, university administrators, and an Aboriginal staff member), the consultation included members of local First Nations communities and Aboriginal organizations, service providers and administrators at other universities, and faculty, staff, and students at the University of Victoria.

During the consultation process, the central question of success emerged as the main focus of the project: What constitutes success in Aboriginal students and communities, and how can post-secondary institutions support Aboriginal students to succeed on their own terms? Several key elements were identified as vital to the development of programs to support Aboriginal student success:

- affirm the student as a person, using a holistic approach;
- acknowledge and reinforce Aboriginal identity;[3]
- foster Aboriginal community;
- value Aboriginal practices and ways of knowing;
- support students financially; and
- raise the awareness of university staff and faculty of how to make the learning environment more welcoming.

Moreover, participants in the project development process emphasized that, in researching the impact of the program, it would not be enough to tally increases in grade point average (GPA), rates of return, and graduation among LE,NONET program participants as compared to a pre-LE,NONET cohort or some other control group. It would be equally important to explore Aboriginal students' concepts of success and to document the effects of the programs on the students' sense of self-worth, cultural identity, and belonging within the Aboriginal and academic worlds.

It should be noted that although the consultation process sought input from a range of stakeholders, it was not exclusively conducted with Aboriginal people. It is challenging in an institutional environment with Indigenous students from across Canada to define what constitutes "community" for a project such as this. The conceptualization of an "Aboriginal community" within an institutional context became one of the central questions explored through the qualitative research, as student research respondents, Aboriginal faculty, and project staff struggled with this issue throughout the project.

Through the consultation process, several conditions for success were identified, which led to the development of specific programs:

- the involvement of Aboriginal communities in the education of Aboriginal students;
- a safe, positive learning environment created for Aboriginal learners;

3 "Aboriginal identity" encompasses diverse perspectives on what it means to be Aboriginal, including First Nations, Métis, Inuit, status, non-status, urban, rural, adopted, and so on. The goal here was to ensure students' educational experiences validated and affirmed their individual Aboriginal identity rather than encouraging them to assimilate in to the broader non-Aboriginal culture of the university.

- strong bonds created between faculty members and Aboriginal students;
- services focused on the unique situations of Aboriginal students;
- faculty members, counsellors, and support staff who are well motivated and suitably trained in supporting Aboriginal student success;
- financial support to supplement limited funds available from band councils; and
- strong and consistent support from the institutional administration, programs, and personnel.

Secondary to supporting Aboriginal student success, the project had a broad goal of impacting the university environment as a whole in order to make it a more welcoming environment for Aboriginal people. Much of the work toward achieving this vision was not specific to any program but was embedded in the operation of the project itself, through its presence on campus, the linkages made between project staff and university departments, and other informal means.

1.4 Program Descriptions

Over the four-year pilot, the LE,NONET Project developed and implemented six complementary student-focused programs and one program designed for staff and faculty at the university. All of the student-focused programs were available to students of Aboriginal ancestry who held Canadian citizenship or permanent resident status, were registered in an undergraduate degree program at the university, and were in good academic standing. The design and delivery of the programs evolved during the course of the four-year project, responding to student needs and the demands of institutional systems. Due to the short amount of time between receipt of the funding and the onset of the programs, the program models were not fully formed when they were first offered. The program models and changes to those models are outlined in Table 1; the student programs are analyzed in Section 6, and the program for university staff and faculty is analyzed in Section 7.

Table 1. LE,NONET Programs

Student-focused LE,NONET programs		
Bursary Program	The Bursary Program provided direct financial aid to Aboriginal undergraduate students. Students received between $1,000 and $5,000 per year. Students were required to be in their first year of study at UVic the first time they applied for a bursary.	Up to $5,000 per year
Emergency Relief Fund	During the first year of the project, it became apparent that some students experienced short-term financial crises that required financial support in order for them to stay in school. The Emergency Relief Fund was established in the second year to meet this need.*	Up to $750 per year
Peer Mentor Program	The Peer Mentor Program provided new students with one-on-one mentoring by experienced Aboriginal students. Additionally, group events were held to bring together Aboriginal students as well as their families and friends.	Mentors paid for fall and winter terms at $3,315 per term ($15/hr for 13 hours per week)
Preparation Seminar	The Preparation Seminar was a course focusing on local Aboriginal history and culture, Aboriginal research methods, and skills for working in community settings. It was a prerequisite for the Community Internship and Research Apprenticeship Programs.	1.5 units of course credit
Community Internship Program	In the Community Internship Program, students completed 200 hours of work with an Aboriginal community or organization in Canada.	$3,500 stipend; 1.5 units of course credit
Research Apprenticeship Program	In the Research Apprenticeship Program, students completed 200 hours of research work with a professor or research institute at the University of Victoria.	$3,500 stipend; 1.5 units of course credit
Program for university staff and faculty		
Staff and Faculty Aboriginal Cultural Training (SFACT)	The SFACT Program had two components: a series of online modules and five face-to-face workshops. Initial SFACT modules were delivered online and were only available for faculty who were supervising students as part of the Research Apprenticeship Program. The workshop modules were developed and piloted in the final year of the project. A needs assessment was conducted in order to inform the creation of the workshops and future offerings of the online modules.	

**The combined amount of funding received from the Bursary and Emergency Relief Programs could not exceed $15,000 for any individual student. This limit was in accordance with the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation's rules and regulations governing the disbursement of funds to students.*

1.5 Institutional Context: Aboriginal Initiatives at the University

The profile of Aboriginal education at the university has been raised significantly since the development, in 2001/02, of the university-wide strategic plan (*A Vision for the Future,* February 2002), and the environment for Aboriginal learners has changed accordingly. One of the main goals of the LE,NONET Project was to make the university a more welcoming learning environment for Aboriginal students, with the further goal of building a sense of community and connection between Aboriginal students and other members of the university community. Because an environmental assessment or other climate measurement was not conducted prior to the start of LE,NONET, it is impossible to assess the specific ways in which LE,NONET has achieved this goal, although components of it are explored in the research findings based on qualitative evidence.

In order to situate the findings within the larger context of the university, an outline of the institutional changes in Indigenous initiatives on campus is offered here. New and emerging initiatives at the university over the previous 10 to 15 years include the following.

Academic Programs. New academic programs at the undergraduate level with an Aboriginal focus or specialization include

- the Indigenous Law Program;
- Aboriginal Education initiatives in the Faculty of Education;
- the Indigenous Child Welfare Specialization in the School of Social Work;
- the Indigenous Specialization in the School of Social Work; and
- the Minor in Indigenous Studies.

Graduate degree programs include the Master of Education in Counselling for Aboriginal Communities, Master of Arts in Indigenous Governance, and Master of Social Work with an Indigenous Specialization.

Additionally, a number of certificate and diploma programs are available, including the Certificate in Foundations in Indigenous Fine Arts, Certificate in Aboriginal Language Revitalization, and Diploma in Indigenous Child and Youth Care. Academic programs at the university continue to expand distance learning options and include online courses, which are more accessible to Indigenous students who live in rural or remote parts of the province.

Indigenous Counselling Office. The Indigenous Counselling Office is available to all Aboriginal people at the university, including students, staff, and faculty. The Indigenous counsellor provides counselling and support with an awareness of the history of colonization and its ongoing traumatic impact on Indigenous peoples.

Office of Indigenous Affairs. This office was initiated in 2007 and replaced the Aboriginal Liaison Office, which had a more limited mandate and had been operating for more than a decade. The Office of Indigenous Affairs works to support and promote Aboriginal initiatives on campus, including the Aboriginal Service Plan for the university, student-focused programs, and partnerships with Aboriginal communities.

First Peoples House. Inspired by Coast Salish longhouse designs, this building, which had been in the planning stage for many years, opened its doors during late summer 2009. The First Peoples House is governed by an advisory committee and co-managed by the Director of the Office of Indigenous Affairs and an Indigenous faculty member.

Handbook for Aboriginal Students. This guide for Aboriginal students, published annually by Undergraduate Admissions and Records, introduces Aboriginal students to the services, programs, and people available to support them on the university campus.

Aboriginal Employee Handbook. A resource for Aboriginal staff and faculty at the university, published by Human Resources, this handbook is also used to promote the university to prospective Aboriginal job applicants and those interested in a career at the university.

Indigenous Faculty Caucus. In the fall of 2008, the Indigenous Faculty Caucus was formed to serve as a voice for the university's full-time Indigenous faculty members.[4] The members came together as academic leaders on campus to offer their expertise on questions pertaining to Indigenous education. The caucus expressed their readiness to engage in university governance and decision-making processes that impact questions of Indigenous education and scholarship, as well as provide guidance in areas where the university has yet to develop policy.

4 Letter to President Turpin from the Indigenous Faculty Caucus, October 7, 2008.

Fostering Community Relationships. In addition to strengthening relationships with Aboriginal communities, the university has undertaken initiatives to strengthen community–university relations overall. The Office of Community-Based Research (OCBR) was established in 2006 and has undertaken a number of initiatives in partnership with Indigenous people and communities. During its formation, OCBR consulted with Indigenous community members and faculty to ensure Indigenous representation and participation. One annual OCBR initiative undertaken in partnership with Aboriginal people is the CANUEL Speaker Series, which brings researchers and community members together to present their research models or findings.

Equity and Overall Environment. Although no specific information is captured on the rates of harassment or discrimination against Aboriginal people at the university, a 2007 report by the Equity and Human Rights Office indicates that harassment and discrimination complaints overall seem to be on the decline.

1.6 Aboriginal Involvement in the LE,NONET Project

Although the LE,NONET Project was initiated and led by non-Aboriginal representatives of the university and the Canadian Millennium Scholarship Foundation, it had a commitment to involve Aboriginal people, communities, and organizations in multiple ways in both the program delivery and research implementation. From the beginning, Aboriginal staff members of the University of Victoria were involved in the project in various roles. While non-Aboriginal people also held leadership roles in the project, efforts were made to ensure Indigenous representation at all levels. It should be noted that the project was conceptualized not as an Aboriginal research project, nor as a community-based research project, but as a university-based project with strong community partnerships.

As already noted, Aboriginal people and communities were among those consulted during the research and planning phase of the project. Additionally, a project advisory committee, consisting of Aboriginal faculty, staff, students, and community representatives, was formed during the beginning stages of implementation. The committee provided guidance to the project team during the development and early implementation of activities. There was no specific group guiding the research development; however, Aboriginal staff were hired to lead the qualitative component of the research. During the project development phase, the focus of the research shifted somewhat as greater emphasis was given to qualitative data, allowing for the emergence of stories, experiences, and perspectives of Aboriginal participants and stakeholders. Although the research methods were not explicitly Indigenous in design, they did evolve to ensure Aboriginal voices are at the heart of this report.

As noted in the interim report, program staff included both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. The research team also included a mix of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff.

Several of the LE,NONET interventions included Indigenous communities and individuals as integral to the design and delivery of the programs themselves (see Sections 6 and 7 for more details). Elders, from local Coast and Straits Salish communities as well as from the larger Indigenous community on campus, were involved in the Peer Mentor Program. The Preparation Seminar included guest speakers from diverse Aboriginal community contexts and was co-taught by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal instructors. The Community Internship Program provided opportunities for Indigenous communities to benefit from the skills of Indigenous students and for the students to benefit from the community experience. The community organizations determined the focus of the internships on an individual basis, based on both community needs and the interests of the students. To a lesser degree, the Research Apprenticeship Program also included partnerships with Aboriginal communities and individuals, as a portion of the student participants worked with Aboriginal faculty members or on Aboriginal research projects.

Although not a fully Aboriginal initiative, the LE,NONET Project clearly included a strong representation of Aboriginal people in the project team as well as in the partnerships that were developed over the four years of implementation.

Education has the potential to build the capacity of Aboriginal peoples to improve the quality of life both in rural and isolated Aboriginal communities and for urban Aboriginal people.

2 | RESEARCH OVERVIEW

While the initial research plan focused primarily on student retention and graduation rates, it was apparent from the outset that the LE,NONET Project should include a broader evaluation of success (as discussed in Section 1.3). The emphasis on qualitative research was increased through the use of interviews, questionnaires, and a small number of focus groups with students, staff, faculty, community members, and others involved in the LE,NONET programs.

Some experiences of LE,NONET students, faculty advisors, and community advisors were captured in ways other than those described here and are not included in this report nor in the program evaluation, as ethics approval was not sought for their inclusion. These include student journals for the Peer Mentor Program and Preparation Seminar, interim and final assessments for the Research Apprenticeship and Community Internship Programs, and feedback tools implemented by program coordinators for some of the programs. However, some of the information gained through these methods has been captured in interviews with program staff who used these tools to monitor their own programs and is included in the thematic analysis in Sections 6 and 7.

There is an increasing need for evidence-based programming within Aboriginal communities, as many funding agencies fund only those program models that have been "proven" successful. Both qualitative and quantitative findings are important in providing such evidence, since quantitative measures alone cannot account for many aspects of a program's impact, including cultural relevance, community impacts, effects on personal relationships, and other aspects that are highly valued within Indigenous contexts. To this end, the research findings have been used to identify best practice principles that can be applied in developing diverse programmatic models for supporting Aboriginal students in various post-secondary institutional settings. These principles are outlined in Section 10.

2.1 Research Questions

The results from the LE,NONET Project were reported in two phases, the first focusing on the results of a formative evaluation and the second on the results of the summative evaluation. This report focuses on the outcomes of the four years of program implementation at the University of Victoria (summative evaluation). It does not address questions about the process of setting up the programs, staffing issues, and other logistics (formative evaluation); these are explored in the project's 2008 interim report.

The primary research question at the heart of this report is:

What impact did the LE,NONET Project have on the success of student participants, in terms both of their retention rate and academic performance as well as their personally defined measures of success?

A number of qualitative research questions were formulated to assess the degree to which the programs met the intended goals and vision outlined in the previous section. A core set of questions were posed to research participants in all programs in order to compare results across programs. These core questions were:

- What does "success" mean to you as an Aboriginal student?
- Did the LE,NONET programs contribute to your success?
- Did participation in LE,NONET programs contribute to your sense of identity as an Aboriginal person?
- Did participation in LE,NONET programs help you to feel connected to the on-campus Aboriginal community?
- Did participation in LE,NONET programs help you to feel connected to the general university community?
- Did participation in LE,NONET programs contribute to your decision to return to school?

Student respondents were asked additional questions about individual programs, including questions about opportunities that arose as a result of the programs, changes the students would recommend for future implementation, and general strengths and weaknesses of the programs.

Research questions about the broad impacts of the LE,NONET Project included:

- What impact did the LE,NONET programs have in making the university a more welcoming place for Aboriginal learners?
- What impact did the programs have on faculty, community members, and staff who were involved in the programs?
- How could the programs be strengthened to better meet the goals and vision of the project?
- What are the key elements of supporting Aboriginal student success?

2.2 Evaluation Framework from the Interim Report

An evaluation framework was created for the interim report[5] in order to account for both formative and summative evaluation outcomes. The evaluation framework included inputs, formative outcomes, and summative outcomes (both short- and long-term) for each program and for the project as a whole. This framework was used to report on the formative inputs and outcomes in the interim report; however, it included outcomes that could not be reported on at the conclusion of the project. These are explained in the relevant section of this report. Additionally, the evaluation framework did not include some outcomes that were found during the summative evaluation for this report.

For the purposes of this report, the summative evaluation framework has been expanded to account for the actual outcomes of the project, including outcomes that were unanticipated in the original evaluation framework. In Sections 5, 6, and 7, the summative outcomes are reported using a modified version of the evaluation framework. Font colour is used to indicate outcomes that were achieved or not achieved, as well as outcomes that were not anticipated in the evaluation framework but were found to be met in the research analysis.

Since the programs are no longer being offered, it is not possible to determine whether some of the long-term outcomes have been met. However, we have indicated which long-term outcomes were met within the time frame of the project.

5 The LE,NONET interim report is available on the LE,NONET Project website: www.uvic.ca/lenonet.

2.3. Qualitative Methods

The qualitative research methods were designed to gather the experiential knowledge of everyone involved in the four-year pilot project, including the diverse perspectives held by the student participants, project staff, university stakeholders, and program advisors. Draft interview and survey questions were developed at the beginning of the project, and the research plan was refined as the project unfolded. The majority of qualitative data for this report were gathered during the last year of the project. The research did not seek to use Indigenous research methods, although the semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed for storytelling and other knowledge-sharing methods that are common in some Indigenous research. The duties of the project advisory committee wound down before the final year of the project, and committee members were therefore not interviewed for this report.

2.3.1 Ethics

The Human Research Ethics Board (HREB) at the University of Victoria approved all of the qualitative research methods and tools to ensure proper protocols were being followed. Qualitative research respondents were assured anonymity and confidentiality in their participation, and every effort was made to maintain ethical standards. Student participants were assigned a research number so that files associated with their data could be coded anonymously and linked across programs. Similarly, Research Apprenticeship and Community Internship advisors were given a participant number that was used in their transcripts, as were university stakeholders and project staff. All electronic data were kept on the university computer servers, to which only the research team members had access. Paper files were kept locked in a filing cabinet in the co-principal investigator's office, and, again, access was limited to the research team members. Only one document held information linking participant names with their research numbers and it was kept on a secure computer server with controlled access. The research team was careful not to print or replicate this file in any way. These measures were taken to ensure student participants would feel free to provide honest feedback about the programs without fear that their statements would impact their grades or involvement in future LE,NONET programs. The LE,NONET co-principal investigator for the quantitative research (a faculty member), did not have access to this file in order to obviate any potential power-over relationship that might exist between participants and the faculty member.

2.3.2 Data Collection Processes and Instruments

The following data collection processes were undertaken for the qualitative research:

- interviews, online questionnaires, and focus groups with LE,NONET student participants
- interviews with Community Internship and Research Apprenticeship Program advisors
- online questionnaires with participants of the online SFACT module
- paper questionnaires with SFACT workshop participants
- interviews with LE,NONET program staff
- interviews with University of Victoria stakeholders

The student interviews were conducted by research assistants over the course of the project, with two research assistants conducting the majority of the interviews during the last year. Over the four years, several research assistants transcribed the interviews. During the last year of the project, one research assistant focused primarily on summarizing the results from the common questions (listed above in Section 2.1) and other Likert-scale results.

The co-principal investigator responsible for the qualitative research conducted all of the interviews with other respondents, including program advisors, university stakeholders, and project staff. The interviews were transcribed by the research assistants.

Student respondents

Students were invited to participate in an interview, either in person or via telephone, or to complete a questionnaire online. They were contacted first via email, with a follow-up phone call, and then were sent a link to the online questionnaire if they did not respond to the attempts to set up an interview. Students were contacted only after their involvement with individual LE,NONET programs was completed to ensure the students felt confident that their feedback would not interfere in any way with their academic grades or program participation. Students were often interviewed for a LE,NONET program that they had completed while they were still participating in another program. However, due to the anonymity of the research, none of the program staff were aware of which students participated in the research regardless of their ongoing or past participation. Initially students were interviewed in several "waves," but after fall 2008, interviews were conducted on an ongoing basis in order to ensure the highest participation rates possible.

Research Apprenticeship and Community Internship advisors

A list of advisors was given to the research team by the program coordinators for the Research Apprenticeship and Community Internship Programs in the fall of 2008 and was updated on an ongoing basis after that point. Attempts were made to contact all advisors. Some advisors were contacted in the fall of 2008 after having had little or no involvement in LE,NONET programs for one or two years, resulting in a low response rate. This delay in contacting advisors had a particular impact on the participation rates of Community Internship Program advisors, as they were not contacted until the fourth program year, and many of them had out-of-date contact information or had moved on from their position with the host organization.

Staff and Faculty Aboriginal Cultural Training (SFACT) participants

The online SFACT module was administered by the coordinator of the Research Apprenticeship Program. All faculty members interested in supervising a student through this program were required to complete the online module and, as they did so, were given the option of filling out questionnaires throughout the module (including a demographic questionnaire prior to starting the module, a questionnaire at the end of each unit, and a final questionnaire at the end of the module). There was no way of linking the questionnaires, so it is not known if the same people who completed the demographic questionnaire also completed the final questionnaire. Additionally, the response rate for the demographic questionnaire was very low (20%). For these reasons, the demographic data are not included in this report. However, Section 7 includes a summary of feedback gained through the individual unit questionnaires and the final questionnaire.

For the SFACT workshops, participants were required to complete a demographic questionnaire prior to the workshop and were given the option of completing an anonymous paper questionnaire at the end of each workshop. The post-workshop questionnaire included some common questions so that results across the five workshop units could be compared, as well as open-ended questions. The demographic data from workshop participants are reported in Section 4.5.

LE,NONET program staff

Program staff, including past and present staff involved in program implementation, were invited to participate in interviews. Staff were given the option of being interviewed by the co-principal investigator responsible for the qualitative research or a research assistant. Program staff also provided input into the questions they were asked during these interviews, as they had the most in-depth knowledge about the types of information they held about their programs.

University of Victoria stakeholders

A total of 16 university employees provided reflections on the larger impacts of the LE,NONET Project over the four years of program implementation. This group included people who had closely partnered with LE,NONET staff over the years, directly supporting program implementation, as well as senior administrators and staff whose positions focused on Aboriginal student support.

2.3.3 Qualitative Data Analysis

Three research assistants and the co-principal investigator responsible for qualitative research were involved in the analysis of data from the qualitative research.

In fall 2008, a system was created to code themes from student interviews as they were conducted and transcribed (for those interviews conducted prior to fall 2008, the themes were coded by research assistants who went back over the transcripts to identify themes). A mix of analytic and emergent thematic categories was used (Strauss 1987); an initial set of themes was determined by common interview questions asked about each individual program, while emerging themes and sub-themes were identified through ongoing analysis of the student interviews. Key quotes and stories were also identified during this theme-tracking process. Emergent themes were validated through regular meetings at which all members of the research team reviewed the program-specific themes and sub-themes, and identified themes that cut across all programs so that they could be explored in more depth. Through these methods, the complexity of the stories shared by student respondents was integrated into the qualitative analysis, as the researchers sought to represent the diversity of students' voices and experiences (Lincoln & Guba 1985; Sorsoli and Tolman 2008). Thematic maps (Maxwell and Miller 2008) were created for each program by the research assistants and the co-principal investigator as a way of visually representing the connection between the key themes and issues within programs; the maps were also used to identify emergent themes that spanned

programs and the overall project. Rather than using any one method of thematic mapping, each member of the research team was able to use her own way of visually representing the relationship between themes and sub-themes in order to bring greater depth to the overall analysis. These visual aids, as well as the extensive theme tracking documents, were then used by the co-principal investigator to analyze the qualitative data, identify lessons learned, and write this report.

While not every individual respondent experience can be represented in this report, the process of theme tracking and mapping by multiple members of the research team was intended to capture student experiences as broadly and comprehensively as possible. Efforts were made to pull out individual stories that illustrate both the strengths of the program models and the ways in which the programs could be improved for future implementation.

Results from the Likert-scale questions were tracked, and tables were created to summarize the results. A decision was made to remove blank responses from the results that are reported here; however, any significant percentages of blank or "not-applicable" responses are noted and explained.

While the research assistants were not of Indigenous ancestry, they brought an awareness of Indigenous issues and of other intersecting factors in students lives, including gender, age, ability, and parental status, among others (through both their own post-secondary degrees and training they received). The co-principal investigator for the qualitative research, who is from the Kwakwaka'wakw Nation, has an extensive background in conducting research and education in Aboriginal communities, and brought this culturally sensitive lens to the analysis process.

2.4 Quantitative Methods

The quantitative research methods were designed to gather administrative data on the demographic characteristics and retention and graduation patterns of three groups of students: a historical cohort (pre-LE,NONET comparison group), the LE,NONET participants, and non-participants (current Aboriginal students who elected not to take part in LE,NONET programs). Data for these groups were examined with respect to differences in

- gender
- age
- year of study
- faculty of study
- expected degree
- degree granted
- grade point average
- term-to-term retention
- withdrawal rate
- graduation rate

2.4.1 Ethics

Approval for all aspects of the project, including the quantitative research methods, was granted by the Human Research Ethics Board (HREB) at the University of Victoria. Annual renewal of this approval was granted during each year of the project. Student data contained in administrative databases were de-identified by staff in the university's Office of Institutional Planning and Analysis before being shared with the research team. All electronic data files received by the research team were stored in password-protected files on a computer in the possession of the co-principal investigator responsible for the quantitative research. No paper files containing quantitative data were created or maintained.

2.4.2 Data Collection Processes

Demographic and administrative data on both current and former students (age, gender, program and specialization, yearly GPA, term-to-term retention, graduation status, and other data) reside within the University of Victoria Student Information System (ISIS) [6] as a normal part of the student record. When students first register, they can elect to "self-identify" as Aboriginal (although not all students choose to do so). For students who attended elementary or secondary schools in BC, a unique student identifier, the Provincial Education Number (PEN), is also recorded. Through an agreement negotiated with the BC Ministry of Education, these PEN numbers were matched with the university's student records to identify students whose records contain the "Ever Aboriginal" flag. According to the Ministry of Education, this designation (which is reported annually and on a voluntary basis) includes First Nations (both status and non-status), on reserve and off reserve, Inuit, and Métis students

6 In 2007, the university began using a new student data system called Banner. Although data are recorded and stored differently in this system, existing data were translated and recoded for the project to produce the most accurate picture of student progress possible.

whose records indicate that they were identified as Aboriginal at least once during their schooling. This data-matching process allowed identification of a much larger group of Aboriginal students within the university's student records system than would have been identified by self-identification data alone.

A data file was compiled by the Office of Institutional Planning and Analysis (IPA) of all students who matched this "Ever Aboriginal" designation, adding those students who self-identified as Aboriginal during their admission process and those who participated in, or qualified for, LE,NONET programs. This master list was maintained by the IPA and used for data extraction and analysis purposes only. A master list of all LE,NONET participants was maintained in the LE,NONET office for administrative purposes, but this list was separate from the university's master list of all "Ever Aboriginal" students registered. Lists of LE,NONET program participants (identified by student ID) were forwarded to IPA by project staff. IPA staff then replaced the student ID numbers with an anonymized record number and added student demographic and retention data (as described above). IPA retained the master list and forwarded the anonymized data back to the researchers.

2.4.3 Identifying Aboriginal Students

For the five-year period that preceded the start of the LE,NONET Project, the university's registration records identified 652 undergraduate students as having self-identified as "Aboriginal" at first registration. A total of 498 students were identified as "Aboriginal" using the BC Ministry of Education designation of "Ever Aboriginal." When these two data sources were cross-referenced, a total of 997 individual students were identified as Aboriginal. This constitutes the historical cohort. Over the course of the LE,NONET Project (September 2005 to August 2009), a total of 995 students were identified through these same procedures. An additional 24 students (of the 200 LE,NONET participants) met the project criteria for being Aboriginal but did not appear in either university or PEN records as such.[7] By extrapolation, this would suggest that the actual size of the current Aboriginal student population may be at least 12% higher than even the best available administrative data indicate.

Of the 200 LE,NONET participants, 75.5% self-identified at registration, 87.5% appeared in the BC-PEN files, and 74.5% appeared in both files. As noted, an additional 24 participants (12%) appeared in neither database but were judged to be Aboriginal by project selection criteria (e.g., held a Status Indian or Métis membership card). Of the 819 non-participants, 74.2% self-identified, all appeared in the BC-PEN files, and 74.2% appeared in both files. Of the 997 students in the historical cohort group, 65.4% self-identified, 54.9% appeared in the BC-PEN file, and 20.3% appeared in both files.

As shown in Table 2, students in the historical cohort were less likely to self-identify at registration than were participants or non-participants. A Pearson chi-square test revealed that the proportions of students who self-identify is not equivalent across the three groups ($\chi^2_{(2)} = 19.941$, $p < .001$). This finding reflects a trend toward increasing rates of self-identification observed between 2000 and 2009. Figure 1 depicts the overlap between the data sources for each of the groups.

7 Three students were admitted to the University of Victoria under special access rules for Aboriginal students. Thirteen were from out of province, six were transfer students from other colleges or universities in BC (but had not attended elementary or secondary school in BC), and two were mature students whose secondary education preceded the establishment of the BC-PEN files.

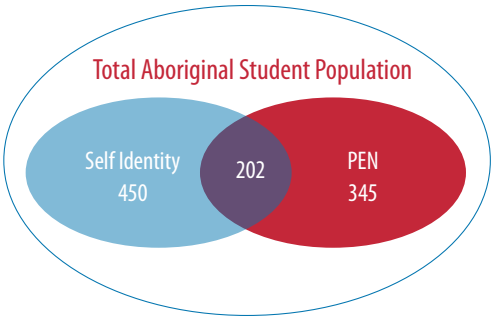
Table 2. Number and Percentage of Students Identified as Aboriginal (by Group and Data Source)

	Data source				
Group	**Self-ID only (%)**	**BC-PEN only (%)**	**Both (%)**	**Neither (%)**	**Total**
Historical cohort	450 (45.1)	345 (34.6)	202 (20.3)	0 (0)	997
Participants	2 (1)	25 (12.5)	149 (74.5)	24 (12.0)[a]	200
Non-participants	0 (0)	211 (25.8)	608 (74.2)	0 (0)	819

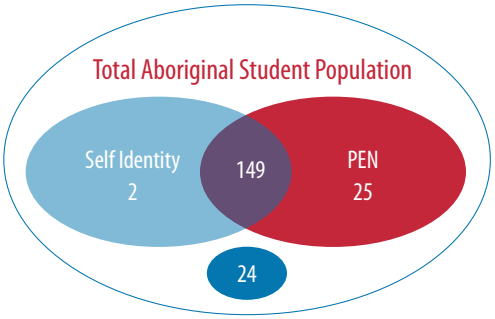
a These LE,NONET participants had not self-identified at registration and did not appear in the BC-PEN files but were judged to be "Aboriginal" according to the project criteria.

Figure 1. Number of Students Identified by Group and Data Source

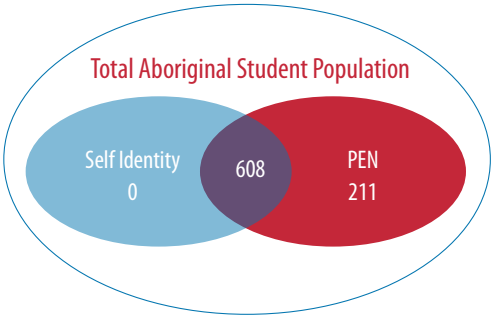
Historical Cohort Group



LE,NONET Participants



Non-Participant Group



3 | LE,NONET STUDENT PARTICIPANT PROFILE

A total of 200 students enrolled in LE,NONET programs between 2005 and 2009. Many more students were impacted through informal participation in drop-in events, but there were no formal data collection mechanisms in place to record information from these students. To qualify for participation in the LE,NONET programs, students were required to demonstrate evidence of Aboriginal ancestry and Canadian citizenship or permanent resident status, and were required to be registered in an undergraduate degree program at the university. Additionally, students were required to be in good academic standing[8] in order to qualify for the Bursary Program.

All students completed an intake form at their first point of contact with the LE,NONET Project. These forms asked students to provide information about their date of birth, gender, Aboriginal ancestry, year of study, parental status, and marital status. Some of the intake forms were incomplete (e.g., including student's day of birth but not the year) or included information that had changed during their years at the university. For this report, information on the intake forms was supplemented with information from other sources, including data held by the university's Office of Institutional Planning and Analysis.

8 Policies of the University of Victoria and the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation required that students be in good academic standing in order to receive bursary funding. At the University of Victoria, students with a grade point average above 2.0 are considered to be in good academic standing.

3.1 Program Participation

The majority of LE,NONET students participated in more than one program over the four-year project (see Figure 2). One student participated in all six programs and was counted twice in the Peer Mentor Program because the student was mentored one year and worked as a mentor in other years. This student actually participated seven times across six programs.

The Bursary Program had the highest number of participants: of the 200 LE,NONET students, 140 received one or more bursaries. The Preparation Seminar had the second highest rate of participation, with 90 students over the four years (see Figure 3 for the program participation rates for all LE,NONET programs).

Figure 2. Number of Students in One or More Programs

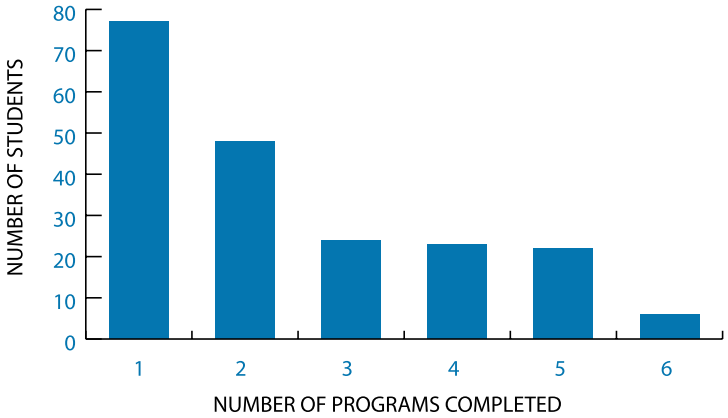
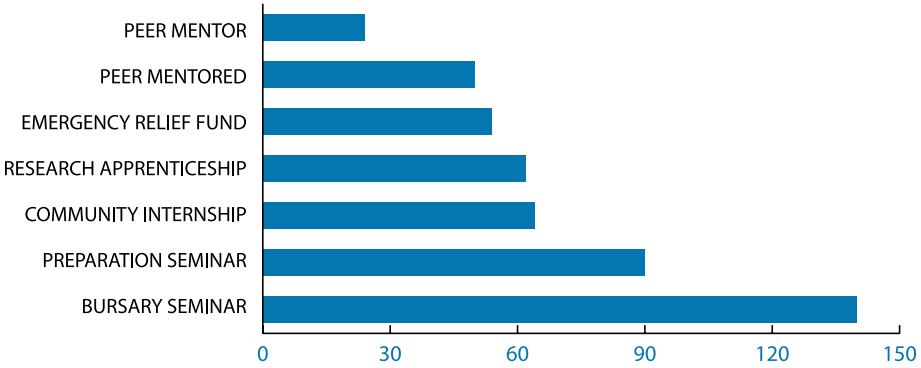


Figure 3. Number of Students in Each Program



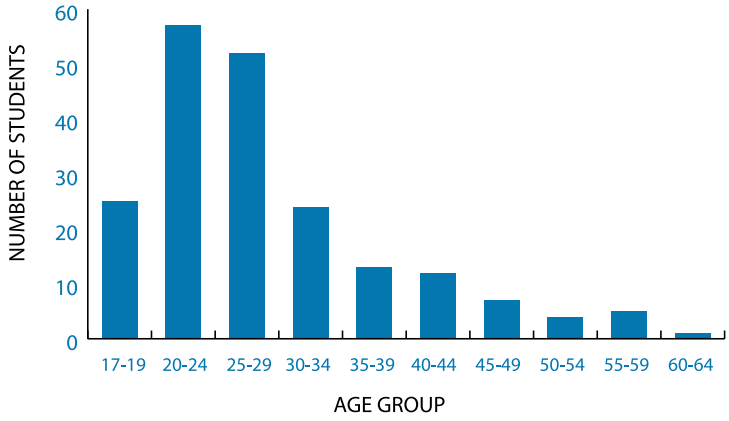
3.2 Age

The average age of LE,NONET participants was 28.7 years (male = 28.5; female = 28.8). Available data for the 2006/07 academic year show that undergraduates averaged 23.8 years (male = 22.7; female = 24.5). LE,NONET participants were, on average, nearly five years older than the general undergraduate population. Figure 4 shows the age distribution for participants.

3.3 Gender

The majority (71%) of LE,NONET participants were female, which reflects the overall gender distribution for the Aboriginal student population at the university. University statistics from 2007/08 show that 68% of self-declared Aboriginal undergraduate students at the time were female. No statistics are available on the number of transgender Aboriginal students, either at the university or in the LE,NONET programs.

Figure 4. Age Distribution of LE,NONET Participants



3.4 Aboriginal Ancestry

All LE,NONET student participants were of Aboriginal ancestry and were able to offer evidence of their ancestry in accordance with the Policy for Establishing Aboriginal Identity developed by the Project Advisory Council. The policy required that students confirm their Aboriginal ancestry through one of a number of means, including various government- or band-issued cards, documentation of adoption, or letters from Aboriginal organizations attesting to the student's involvement in community activities.

Students were asked about their ancestry on the intake forms and were able to choose multiple options or to write a description of their specific background or identity. Students also participated in a brief intake interview at their first point of entry into the project in which they talked about their Aboriginal ancestry with a staff member. Once eligibility had been determined, students were not questioned about their ancestry.

In one case, a student applying for bursary funding did not follow through with an application once the student was asked to show proof of Aboriginal ancestry. In another case, the Aboriginal Ancestry Subcommittee was called upon to determine a student's eligibility after the student was unable to prove Aboriginal ancestry. The student was given one year to show sufficient proof but did not follow up.

The heritage of student participants included First Nations from across Canada, including many British Columbia First Nations. Métis students made up a smaller percentage of LE,NONET participants, and two students reported Inuit ancestry.

4 | QUALITATIVE RESEARCH RESPONDENT PROFILE

4.1 Students

Of the 200 LE,NONET students, 144 (72%) participated in the qualitative research, providing feedback on their experiences with the programs through interviews or surveys. A small number of focus groups were also conducted during the final year of the project to gain students' perspectives on the overall impact of the LE,NONET Project on their experiences at the university. The amount of time between a student's completion of a program and his or her participation in a research interview or survey varied, and the majority of qualitative research data was collected in the final year of the project.

A total of 342 responses were gathered across the programs, as most students were interviewed or surveyed for more than one program (see Table 3 below). The majority of respondents (98 of 144) completed interviews only, 29 completed surveys only, and 17 students completed both interviews and surveys.

Table 3. Number of Student Interviews and Surveys Completed by Program

Program	Interviews	Surveys	Total
Bursary Program	68	22	96
Emergency Relief Fund	23	6	29
Preparation Seminar	56	9	65
Research Apprenticeship	45	2	47
Community Internship	43	7	50
Peer Mentor Program (mentors)	12	5	17
Peer Mentor Program (mentored)	32	6	38
Total	**279**	**63**	**342**

Table 4. Number of Students Who Completed Interviews, Surveys, or Both

Students' type of response	
Interview(s) only	98
Survey(s) only	29
Both interview(s) and survey(s)	17
Total student respondents	**144**

4.1.1 Response Rate by Program

Response rates ranged from 54% to 78% among the LE,NONET programs. The lowest response rates were in the financial support programs, likely because students in these programs were less connected to the LE,NONET Project overall.

Table 5. Qualitative Research Response Rate by Program

Program	Research respondents	Students in program	Research participation rate %
Bursary Program	96	140	69
Emergency Relief Fund	29	54	54
Preparation Seminar	65	90	72
Research Apprenticeship	47	62	76
Community Internship	50	64	78
Mentors	17	24	71
Mentored students	38	50	76
Total	**144**	**200**	**72**

4.2 Program Advisors

Interviews were conducted with advisors who worked with LE,NONET students in the Community Internship and Research Apprenticeship Programs in order to gain their feedback on the programs. A total of 20 advisors were interviewed for the Community Internship Program and 23 were interviewed for the Research Apprenticeship Program. The program advisor interviews were not initiated until the final year of the project, which resulted in lower participation rates than hoped. Several attempts were made to contact advisors in each program, but because of the time lapse between their involvement with the project and the initiation of the interviews, many of the Community Internship advisors had moved on to other jobs or their contact information was out of date. The majority of the interviews were conducted in person; however, several of the Community Internship advisors were interviewed via telephone because they lived outside of the Victoria area.

The interviews were purely qualitative in nature and did not request statistical information from the respondents, so age and cultural profiles are not available. However, information gained from the program coordinators and through the interviews indicates that the majority of Community Internship advisors were of Aboriginal ancestry. Some of the Research Apprenticeship advisors were also of Aboriginal ancestry, but this was not one of the goals of the program. In terms of gender representation, Research Apprenticeship advisor respondents were about equally male and female (11 of 23 were female), while the majority of Community Internship advisor respondents (15 of 20) were female.

4.3 Project Staff

Given the small pool of LE,NONET Project staff, we are unable to provide specific information about the staff respondents in order to protect their anonymity. Qualitative interviews were conducted with staff of the LE,NONET Project during the final months of the programs, in summer and fall 2009. All past and present program staff (those directly involved in program delivery) were invited to participate in interviews during the final few months of program implementation. A total of six staff chose to participate, and several were interviewed for a number of programs, as their roles had spanned multiple programs or had changed during the course of the project. The staff respondents included those of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal ancestry.

4.4 University Stakeholders

In order to gather information about the impact of the LE,NONET Project on the university as a whole, interviews with key stakeholders were conducted in fall 2009. A list of 16 potential respondents was created, and all of them chose to participate.

Respondents included:

- senior administration
- university employees who had worked closely with LE,NONET staff in program implementation
- university employees whose positions were aimed at meeting the needs of Aboriginal students
- a representative from an Aboriginal student group on campus
- deans of faculties that have an emphasis on Aboriginal education

The interviews were purely qualitative in nature and did not require the participants to provide information on their personal identity. Respondents included 10 females and six males, four of whom were of Aboriginal ancestry.

The university stakeholders brought a wealth of experience at the university to their interviews, and many were able to reflect on the impact of the LE,NONET Project with a long-term vision in mind. Respondents from this group had been at the university between one and 29 years and had an average of 11 years of university experience. Several had been involved in the initial meetings leading up to the creation of the LE,NONET Project and were therefore familiar with the original rationale and goals of the initiative. Most of the respondents had experience working directly with students, although several worked behind the scenes in the administration of the university.

4.5 Staff and Faculty Aboriginal Cultural Training (SFACT) Participants

The Staff and Faculty Aboriginal Cultural Training (SFACT) Program had two components: online modules and face-to-face workshops, both of which were piloted between 2005 and 2009. Participation in the online modules was limited to faculty and graduate students who were interested in becoming advisors for students in the Research Apprenticeship Program. Individuals who completed the online modules were given the option of anonymously completing questionnaires on the module content, the results of which were made available to the LE,NONET researchers for use in their analysis of the SFACT Program. Research Apprenticeship advisors were also asked questions about the SFACT online modules during the interviews for the Research Apprenticeship program.

Of the 55 faculty members and graduate students who completed the online SFACT modules, only 11 chose to complete the demographic questionnaire at the beginning of the modules; 17 completed the post-training questionnaire at the end of the entire online training, and response rates varied on the questionnaires at the end of each module (in part because three of the eight modules were added midway through the four-year pilot). Twenty-three advisors responded to interview questions about the online modules, including the links between the Research Apprenticeship Program and the SFACT Program. Due to the low response rate to the demographic questionnaire, the data are not reported here because they do not accurately represent the participant group.

A total of 50 people participated in the five SFACT workshops, including 40 females and 10 males, and all participants completed a demographic questionnaire prior to the workshops. Fifteen participants were faculty members and the remainder were staff. The majority of participants (72%) were between 40 and 59 years of age. Participants were asked about their ethnic ancestry and their responses could represent all parts of their heritage, including mixed backgrounds. Six participants (12%) reported some Indigenous ancestry, while the majority (86%) of participants reported some European ancestry (including Eastern and Western European) and a smaller number (12%) reported other ancestry, including Lebanese, Asian, and South Asian. The majority of participants (74%) reported spending the majority of their life in Canada.

Participation in individual workshops ranged from 10 to 36 people. A total of 76 questionnaires were completed by respondents, with an average response rate of 67% per workshop. Participants in the five SFACT workshops were invited to provide feedback on the workshops through paper questionnaires. The questionnaires were handed out at the end of each workshop and were collected by a LE,NONET research assistant to ensure anonymity of responses. Participants also had the option of completing the questionnaires after the workshop, returning it to the research team via intercampus mail.

> Success to me means that I can complete my program and while doing that acknowledge my Aboriginal background and be supported by that. And really be able to explore it, and not compromise that background for any achievements in academia.
>
> LE,NONET student

> Success means happiness for me. I want to be happy. Sometimes I think that could be confused when you go to school because there's more of an emphasis on grades when you're in school. But I think for me personally and as an Aboriginal student it means happiness, to be happy with my life, who I am, and more than just grades or things like that.
>
> LE,NONET student

> It means academic achievement in a culturally relevant manner, so involvement with the community, an education that's going to benefit Indigenous peoples in general, not just me as a student.
>
> LE,NONET student

5 | KEY QUALITATIVE RESEARCH FINDINGS: OVERALL LE,NONET PROJECT

This section explores the major themes emerging from the qualitative research, with a focus on the LE,NONET Project as a whole. At the heart of the discussion is the central question of how best to support Aboriginal student success in post-secondary education. Definitions of success are explored here as well as the role that the LE,NONET programs played in supporting success among student participants. Student respondents were asked a number of questions about the impact of each program on various aspects of their university experience; an overview of responses is provided here, with program-specific elements explored further under each program section in Chapter 6. Student respondents were also asked about their experiences of racism at the university, which may have an impact on their ability to succeed and stay connected to the university community. Finally, the impacts of the LE,NONET Project on the broader university are outlined at the closing of this section.

5.1 Exploring "Success" for Aboriginal Students

One of the key questions in the interviews, surveys, and focus groups explored the meaning of "success" for Aboriginal students. The vast majority of students agreed that the LE,NONET programs contributed to their success, but the definition of that success was shaped by individual, cultural, and community factors. A small number of students talked about success in purely academic terms, saying that, like non-Aboriginal students, success is about doing well in their academic program and long-term career goals. However, the majority of students saw success as much more than that, and they defined their own personal success as inextricably linked to broader community change. In this way, students said their education was meaningless if it did not allow them to use their skills as tools for meeting the needs of their families and communities.

Student respondents talked about success in relation to their family and community, saying they wanted their educational achievements to directly relate to the needs of their community. They wanted to become role models for younger generations in their families and communities, showing the children in their lives that Aboriginal people can do well at university.

Students also said that success meant combining their academic goals and cultural teachings, enabling them to find employment that was meaningful on a number of levels. This included conducting research in Indigenous communities, working with Aboriginal organizations and communities, and meeting Aboriginal faculty members who served as role models for their own success. Ultimately, success meant being able to bring their whole selves to their education, including specific cultural and community perspectives, career goals, family and community history, and individual needs.

Some student respondents talked about overcoming barriers, including trauma or abuse in their personal history, as an integral part of their own experiences of success. In particular, some older students said that returning to school allowed them to overcome the negative relationship they had developed with education when they attended residential school. Students with children talked about success as being able to balance family and academic responsibilities, despite the financial and emotional challenges.

Respondents also talked about some of the ways in which their definitions of success conflicted with those of the university, or the expectations placed on them by the education system in general. Several students said they did not see grades as an important measure of how well they were doing in university, and saw the usefulness of their skills and knowledge as a better measuring stick. Students with small children talked about the reality that spending time with their children meant getting a lower grade in a course, a sacrifice they were often willing to make.

On a personal level, students wanted to find happiness and balance while meeting their academic goals. They talked about not wanting to sacrifice their personal or cultural beliefs or ethics in order to achieve academic success.

In general, student respondents said the LE,NONET programs supported their success by offering meaningful learning opportunities and by facilitating the development of supportive relationships. Students said their success was greatly improved by the cultural knowledge and academic skills they developed by accessing LE,NONET programs and the project in general.

5.1.1 Impact of LE,NONET Programs on Student Success

With their personal definitions of "success" in mind, 92.1% of respondents agreed that LE,NONET programs contributed to their success (see Table 6). The financial aid programs (Bursary and Emergency Relief Funds) and the for-credit programs (Preparation Seminar, Community Internship, and Research Apprenticeship) received overwhelmingly positive responses. The program with the most negative responses was the Peer Mentor Program, with 23.7% of mentored students and 18.8% of mentors saying that the program did not contribute to their success. The specific reasons for these responses are explored further under each program section in Chapter 6.

Table 6. "Did the LE,NONET program contribute to your success?"

Program	Yes %	No %
Peer Mentor Program	77.8	22.2
Emergency Relief Fund	96.4	3.6
Bursary Program	98.9	1.1
Research Apprenticeship	95.6	4.4
Community Internship	93.8	6.3
Preparation Seminar	88.5	11.5
Total	**92.1**	**7.9**

5.1.2 Impact of Financial Support on Student Success

A significant amount of money went directly to student participants (see Tables 7 and 8). Students said the financial support offered through LE,NONET had a profound impact on their ability to do well in their studies and relieved the stress they suffered as a result of financial hardship. Students said they felt supported by the university and by the LE,NONET programs because of both the financial aid programs and the stipends they received through other LE,NONET programs.

Table 7. Summary of Direct Financial Support to Students

Four-year participation summary		
Program	**No. of participants**	**Financial support to students**
Bursary Program	140	$889,942 in bursaries
Emergency Relief Fund	54	$46,942 in emergency relief funds
Peer Mentor Program	24 mentors 50 mentored students	$228,649 in mentor stipends
Preparation Seminar	90	--
Community Internship	64	$227,778 in intern stipends
Research Apprenticeship	62	$229,775 in apprentice stipends

Table 8. Annual Breakdown of Direct Financial Support to Students

Program	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
Bursary Program	78,720.00	232,389.00	301,786.00	277,046.95	889,941.95
Emergency Relief Fund	n/a	5,000.00	18,380.00	23,562.00	46,942.00
Community Internship	29,710.81	56,438.70	71,528.57	70,100.35	227,778.43
Research Apprenticeship	5,250.00	56,183.12	68,912.35	99,429.63	229,775.10
Peer Mentor Program	49,376.68	63,774.32	48,691.10	66,806.66	228,648.76
Annual totals	**$163,057.49**	**$413,785.14**	**$509,298.02**	**$536,945.59**	**$1,623,086.30**

Well, in order for you to be successful, you need a support system. Especially in the academic community, I feel that especially with Aboriginal students, you need to have some kind of a support system, especially if you're new on campus.

LE,NONET student

It's hard for me to not get pulled into this idea of success being finishing school as fast as you can, getting a high paying job. Like I know what my values are and what I want but it's easy to get sucked into that, being in this environment anyway.

LE,NONET student

I guess it means achieving your goals. I set this goal for myself about 30 years ago and I am coming back and I'm finally doing it. So it's not necessarily the money. I quit a good paying job. I just wanted to make sure that I succeeded in what I set my mind up to do.

LE,NONET student

5.1.3 Key Principles for Supporting the Success of Aboriginal Students

Through analysis of the responses from the qualitative research, several key principles emerged as common threads running through the various programs. These principles were common elements in supporting the success of the program participants and could be applied in other program models aimed at meeting the needs of Aboriginal students. These are explored more fully in Section 10. The key principles supporting success were

- relationship building
- community building
- Indigenous identity development
- cultural relevance
- reciprocity
- individualized programs

5.2 Community Connectedness for Aboriginal Students

Student respondents were asked a number of questions about how the LE,NONET programs contributed to their sense of community connectedness.[9]

Overwhelmingly, students said that the programs increased their sense of connection to Aboriginal communities—both on and off campus—as well as to the broader university community. The issue of community connectedness was strongly linked to both a feeling of being part of a broader group of Aboriginal people and the development of individual relationships with staff, faculty, elders, community members, and other students. However, students' definitions of community varied greatly depending on their personal and cultural teachings, as well as on the way they saw their relationship to the university.

9 University stakeholders, program advisors, and LE,NONET staff also commented on the impact the programs had in strengthening the sense of community on campus. See Section 5.7 "The Impact of LE,NONET on the University" for their comments.

For many students, a sense of community grew from being seen as Aboriginal and being included in programs specifically designed for Aboriginal learners. A sense of community also emerged because of the welcoming, safe, and inclusive atmosphere of the LE,NONET office and events. For those students whose Aboriginal identity was newly emerging, the sense of community was particularly profound because this was one of the first times they had felt part of a larger group of Aboriginal people. Students also said LE,NONET provided programs that were reliable, student-centred, supportive, and respectful and that affirmed their identity as Aboriginal people. Because of the financial support provided by some of the LE,NONET programs, students said they were able to work less and therefore spend more time in their home community or were able to participate in community-building events.

I was able to connect with a lot of Coast Salish students, and it was important to me, to understand their cultures and traditions because I am a visitor here. And so I did connect with students that were able to help me with that, especially knowing the protocols if I went into their community and their Big Houses, and so I found that helpful.

LE,NONET student

5.2.1 Aboriginal Community Connectedness

Overwhelmingly, students said that the LE,NONET programs helped them to feel connected to the Aboriginal community on campus (see Figure 5 and Table 9). The Preparation Seminar and Peer Mentor Program received the most positive responses from students, as these programs were designed to bring Aboriginal students from various backgrounds together in a shared space. Students said these programs provided a structured space for Aboriginal students to learn from one another, develop friendships, and share with one another across differences.

The question was not as relevant for the Community Internship Program, which placed students in Aboriginal communities rather than taking place on campus, nor for the Research Apprenticeship Program, which often placed students with non-Aboriginal professors or projects, but both still received positive responses. The financial aid programs, which did not have specific community-building components, were also seen as being largely effective in helping students feel connected to the Aboriginal community on campus, while some students rightly noted that the question was not as relevant for these programs. Surprisingly more than half (51.8%) of respondents agreed and 19.3% strongly agreed that the Bursary Program helped them to feel part of the Aboriginal community on campus.

LE,NONET events, such as the annual Recognition Ceremony, Open House, and social events organized through the Peer Mentor Program, were all seen as being integral to the development of this sense of community connectedness. The intergenerational aspect of these events as well as the opportunities they provided for students to connect with Aboriginal people in various roles at the university (staff, faculty, students, children of students, and others) in an informal setting, were significant.

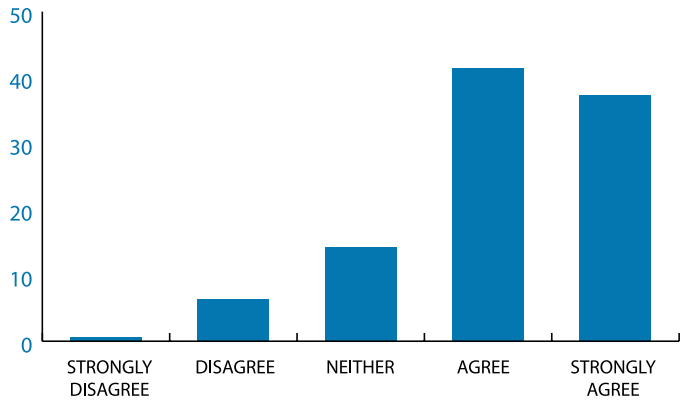
The individual relationships that students developed as a result of the LE,NONET programs were strongly connected to the sense of community felt by students. Student respondents repeatedly said that the LE,NONET staff went above and beyond their roles to make students feel welcome. Some students went so far as to say that LE,NONET provided a "home away from home," and several reflected that they didn't think they would have stayed in school if it weren't for the support of the LE,NONET Project staff. In particular, the project manager, who worked for LE,NONET through the four years of program implementation, was named by students as pivotal to their sense of connectedness.

Through the various programs, students also had opportunities to develop relationships with other Aboriginal students and faculty. Students noted that these relationships were forged across differences in background, age, cultural knowledge, and area of academic study. Because of this diversity, students were able to expand their definitions of community and deepen their relationships within the Aboriginal community on campus.

Table 9. "The LE,NONET program helped me to feel part of the Aboriginal community on campus"

Program	Strongly disagree %	Disagree %	Neither %	Agree %	Strongly agree %
Peer Mentor Program	0.0	7.4	13.0	29.6	50.0
Emergency Relief Fund	4.5	4.5	13.6	45.5	31.8
Bursary Program	1.2	3.6	24.1	51.8	19.3
Research Apprenticeship	0.0	13.0	17.4	32.6	37.0
Community Internship	0.0	11.4	11.4	38.6	38.6
Preparation Seminar	0.0	1.5	3.1	44.6	50.8
Total	**0.6**	**6.4**	**14.3**	**41.4**	**37.3**

Figure 5. "The LE,NONET program helped me to feel part of the Aboriginal community on campus" (all programs)



I'm really going to miss it, actually. It was safe, it was warm, it was comfortable, it was like a little piece of home in some ways….we're reminded what are some of our teachings, and one of them is respect, respect all people, and to be reminded of that was really great.

LE,NONET student

I think that whenever you're around other Aboriginal people, you sort of feel, or you know, people from...you sort of understand each other a little more and it kind of helps you, I think it just helps with your pride.

LE,NONET student

5.2.2 University Community Connectedness

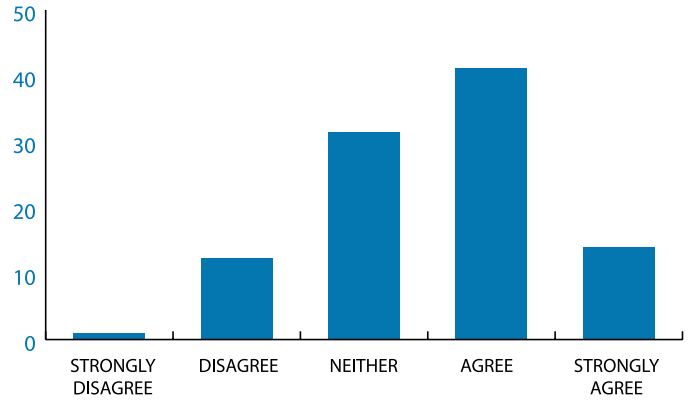
Although support was lower on the question of connectedness to the university community than on the question of connectedness to the Aboriginal community on campus, the majority of student respondents said the LE,NONET programs helped them to feel part of the university community (see Figure 6 and Table 10). The Research Apprenticeship Program had the most positive responses (51.1% agreed and 22.2% strongly agreed), largely due to the relationships that students developed with specific professors, departments, or research centres during the course of their placements. Informal events organized by LE,NONET staff over the course of the pilot project also provided students with opportunities to present their experiences in the Research Apprenticeship and Community Internship Programs to the broader university. These events brought students together with stakeholders from the university, creating opportunities for networking and relationship-building.

However, a significant number of students said the programs did not have an impact on their connectedness to the broader university. Some student respondents said they did not want to feel connected to the broader university, because of the non-Indigenous focus of most academic research and programs, and of the wider campus. Others rightly noted that some specific programs (i.e., the Bursary Program, Emergency Relief Fund, and Community Internship Program) were not designed to build these types of connections.

Table 10. "The LE,NONET program helped me to feel part of the general UVic community"

Program	Strongly disagree %	Disagree %	Neither %	Agree %	Strongly agree %
Peer Mentor Program	1.9	15.1	34.0	34.0	15.1
Emergency Relief Fund	0.0	23.8	19.0	42.9	14.3
Bursary Program	0.0	13.4	31.7	45.1	9.8
Research Apprenticeship	0.0	6.7	20.0	51.1	22.2
Community Internship	0.0	15.9	40.9	31.8	11.4
Preparation Seminar	3.2	6.3	34.9	41.3	14.3
Total	**1.0**	**12.3**	**31.5**	**41.2**	**14.0**

Figure 6. "The LE,NONET program helped me to feel part of the general UVic community" (all programs)



One of the main reasons that it contributed is just the people that I met in the seminar—the other students and faculty. LE,NONET has shown me that I don't have to conform to one kind of knowledge in an academic setting that really tries to shape students into it, sort of material machine, business machine. And understanding that there are people there that will support you when you're being dissident. I mean it's good to have friends.

LE,NONET student

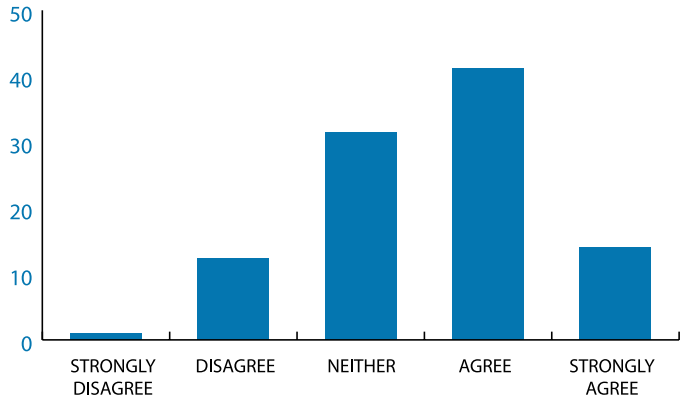
5.3 Supporting Students' Aboriginal Identities

The success of Aboriginal students was seen as integrally linked to the strengthening of students' identities and making education relevant to their cultural and community contexts (see Figure 7 and Table 11). Student participants came to LE,NONET from a diversity of cultural backgrounds, with varying degrees of cultural knowledge and community experience. Some students had never lived on reserve or had grown up away from their Aboriginal family members, while other students grew up in remote First Nations communities with little exposure to mainstream society. The LE,NONET programs were challenged to support the diversity of individual Aboriginal student identities but were highly successful despite these intersecting factors. One key element was providing centralized programming designed specifically for Aboriginal students in a safe space where Aboriginal students could find and use their voices; specific cultural components were also significant.

Table 11. "The LE,NONET program helped me to develop a sense of who I am as an Aboriginal person"

Program	Strongly disagree %	Disagree %	Neither %	Agree %	Strongly agree %
Peer Mentor Program	7.5	18.9	22.6	34.0	17.0
Emergency Relief Fund	6.7	20.0	20.0	26.7	26.7
Bursary Program	2.4	13.4	25.6	46.3	12.2
Research Apprenticeship	2.2	4.4	17.8	28.9	46.7
Community Internship	0.0	6.0	6.0	28.0	60.0
Preparation Seminar	0.0	4.6	7.7	41.5	46.2
Total	**2.6**	**10.3**	**16.8**	**36.8**	**33.5**

Figure 7. "The LE,NONET program helped me to develop a sense of who I am as an Aboriginal person" (all programs)



The responses were overwhelmingly positive, as students said the programs were effective in supporting their identities as Aboriginal people in multiple ways. Issues of identity were integrally linked with feeling connected to the Aboriginal community and to questions of success.

The Preparation Seminar, Community Internship Program, and Research Apprenticeship Program had overwhelmingly positive responses, as most students said these programs were highly effective in putting their educational skills into practice in culturally relevant and personally meaningful ways. The Community Internship Program stood out as being particularly supportive, with 60% of respondents strongly agreeing and 28% agreeing with the statement.

Surprisingly, the Bursary Program and Emergency Relief Fund, which provided financial support, were seen as supportive of students' Aboriginal identities because they were aimed specifically at Aboriginal students. Additionally, students said that through accessing the Bursary Program and Emergency Relief Fund at the LE,NONET office, they felt validated as Aboriginal people on campus.

The Peer Mentor Program received the largest number of negative responses, with 11.8% of mentors strongly disagreeing and 25% of mentored students disagreeing that the program supported their identity development. In part, these negative responses may have been a result of the Peer Mentor Program having little emphasis on cultural teachings. The program focused more on assisting students in adapting to life on campus than on providing specific cultural activities, although this varied from year to year.

Generally, students reported feeling that their identities as Aboriginal people were supported because the programs recognized them as Aboriginal and provided opportunities for them to engage in meaningful learning and personal

> It's really connected me with the university because, just as a student, you're usually sitting in the classroom, and then I get home and study, but this actually got me involved with some of the people that are doing good things at the university and I saw a different side of the university, something that I'd never seen before.
>
> LE,NONET student

> And then through networking and learning more like about the history of, like colonization, and everything you learned about in the seminar just kind of. . . things started to click. . . yeah that's true, that's true. And it kind of helped with my personal development really, like getting a sense of self.
>
> LE,NONET student

growth. Many students said that sharing stories, cultural teachings, and personal experiences with other Aboriginal students was a great source of strength for their own sense of identity. They also said that the programs provided opportunities for them to reconnect with their culture, history, or family, which in turn strengthened their sense of Aboriginal identity. Students who were of mixed heritage or Métis heritage, and those who grew up away from their reserve or home community, were often particularly impacted by the LE,NONET programs. Some students who were not visibly recognizable as Aboriginal—who "look white"—said that through the LE,NONET programs, they were seen as part of the Aboriginal community for the first time in their lives.

Despite the generally positive responses, some student respondents said that the LE,NONET programs did not support the development of their Aboriginal identities. The Bursary Program and Emergency Relief Fund, which were not designed to provide cultural or social components, were said to provide money only, and some students did not see the question as relevant to those programs. Other students said they already had a strong sense of identity and cultural grounding, and they had other sources of support for their identity, such as their community, family, and elders. Some students also said they experienced a strengthened sense of Aboriginal identity through other Aboriginal programs at the university.

I think there's a pride on campus, generally, that the University of Victoria is playing a leadership role in terms of Aboriginal student recruitment and retention, and LE,NONET is one very visible example of that.

University stakeholder

5.4 Strengthening Students' Understanding of Aboriginal Issues

For the programs not specifically focused on financial support, students were asked to what extent the programs strengthened their understanding of Aboriginal issues (see Table 12). Responses for all of the programs were overwhelmingly positive, except for the Peer Mentor Program, which did not include specific Aboriginal teachings or events. While 84.1% of students said that the Research Apprenticeship Program strengthened their understanding of Aboriginal issues, this program received fewer positive responses than the other programs because some students were matched with non-Aboriginal professors and research projects that did not have any link to Aboriginal issues.

Student respondents shared numerous stories about the impact that the LE,NONET programs had on their understanding of a range of Aboriginal issues. Even those students who already had a strong understanding of their family and community history and contemporary issues said they appreciated learning about local Coast and Straits Salish culture and history, particularly through connecting with elders and other community members. The Preparation Seminar supported the development of this knowledge through the readings, assignments, and guest speakers. Some students said that as a result of the Aboriginal issues they were exposed to during the programs, they changed the focus of their studies to have a more explicit Aboriginal focus.

Table 12. "The LE,NONET program contributed to my understanding of Aboriginal issues"

Program	Yes %	No %
Peer Mentor Program	51.0	49.0
Research Apprenticeship	84.1	15.9
Community Internship	95.9	4.1
Preparation Seminar	95.1	4.9
Total	**82.3**	**17.7**

5.5 Impact of LE,NONET Programs on Students' Decision to Return to School

Student respondents were asked whether LE,NONET Programs had an impact on their decision to return to school (see Table 13). This question received mixed responses, with the Bursary Program and Emergency Relief Fund receiving the highest positive response rate. The Peer Mentor Program had the lowest number of positive responses, possibly due to the fact that the mentored students were largely in their first year of studies at the university. Many students said they would have returned to school the following year regardless of the programs, because they were intent on completing their academic program.

Table 13. "Did the LE,NONET program contribute to your decision to return to school?"

Program	Yes %	No %
Peer Mentor Program	26.0	74.0
Emergency Relief Fund	56.0	44.0
Bursary Program	63.2	36.8
Research Apprenticeship	40.5	59.5
Community Internship	48.8	51.2
Preparation Seminar	44.3	55.7
Total	**47.7**	**52.3**

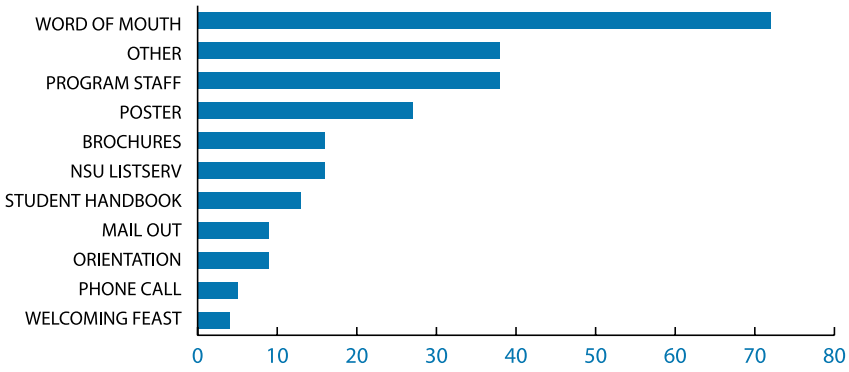
5.6 How Students Heard About LE,NONET Programs

Word of mouth was the primary way that student respondents said they heard about LE,NONET programs (see Figure 8). Some students said the project had gained a positive reputation among past participants, and through hearing stories about the opportunities other students had had in LE,NONET, they were inspired to participate as well. Word of mouth promotion was linked to the development of a strong sense of community among LE,NONET participants, including students, faculty, and staff at the university. Students also said that program staff told them about the programs by speaking in their class, at an event, or during a personal conversation. Posters and brochures were also somewhat effective in reaching students.

I don't think that I've developed a complete sense of who I am as an Aboriginal person because I think that as a person who grew kind of away from my native culture, I can only hope, I can only gradually develop that. I think it'll take years before I can actually incorporate that completely within me because most of my life was created as directly in conflict with that. So it set me on the path to developing a sense of who I am as an Aboriginal person, I think.

LE,NONET student

Figure 8. "How did you hear about LE,NONET?"



5.7 Impact of LE,NONET on the University

Due to the range of Aboriginal initiatives that have emerged at the university during the four years of the pilot project, it is difficult to measure the specific impact of the LE,NONET Project on the university. However, experiences of university stakeholders, project staff, students, and faculty are useful in providing insight into its perceived impact.

For many research participants, LE,NONET was seen as a great success, both in terms of the direct support it offered to students and the impact it had on the visibility of Indigenous issues at the university. University stakeholders felt the project had increased dialogue around the needs of Indigenous students on campus and had created a sense of community among those individuals who were supportive of Indigenous education. The LE,NONET office was seen as a hub on campus for Aboriginal programs and services. Respondents gave many examples of the positive relationships that had emerged through the LE,NONET Project, including new connections among staff, faculty, and Indigenous initiatives. The LE,NONET staff were repeatedly cited as being accessible, informative, open, and welcoming, and their attitude and work ethic were seen as central to the broad impacts of the project. Staff who provide services for students across campus also said that the project helped them to strengthen relationships with students who may not have otherwise accessed the general programs and services (in non-Aboriginal specific offices). Some respondents said they had seen an increase in Aboriginal students accessing their programs or services, but this was largely seen as being due to the overall increased enrolment of Aboriginal students at the university. The

I think, we're midway through a change and I think we kind of need all hands on deck, I guess is kind of what I'm feeling, to make sure that we keep the momentum on it and keep pushing, because I do feel like we're just part way through it, I don't know where it's going to end, and I think it's very exciting that it could end up some place really really good. But we need to always stay on board with it! And that's hard sometimes, to keep everybody on board.

University stakeholder

relationships that staff built with LE,NONET staff also helped to dispel some of the myths about Aboriginal students and to build capacity within the university for respectfully serving students. For example, many people assume that all Aboriginal students have their tuition paid for or that they look a certain way or have the same cultural history; these stereotypes were dispelled through the individualized programming created as part of LE,NONET and the informal education that accompanied the development of relationships across campus.

Several of the university stakeholders said the recognition ceremonies and open events hosted by LE,NONET were incredibly meaningful because they were a unique opportunity to connect with Aboriginal students and to see the impact of their work. Some of the staff who had worked closely with the project said their involvement with the project had a huge emotional impact on them, and they were saddened by the closing of the office and the end of the pilot programs.

University stakeholders were asked whether their involvement with the LE,NONET Project had increased their workload, but none of the respondents said that it had had much effect in that regard. Although several people reported an increase in Aboriginal students accessing their services, this did not impact their overall workload. The increase in Aboriginal students on campus and increase in referrals to university programs and services was a welcomed ripple effect of the project.

Respondents from all groups also said that the project raised the profile of the University of Victoria on a national scale, contributing to the university's being seen as a leader on Aboriginal education initiatives. Several stakeholders noted that although many new initiatives are being undertaken to demonstrate the university's commitment to Aboriginal issues, it is important not to lose momentum to further develop these initiatives in a coordinated, respectful, meaningful way.

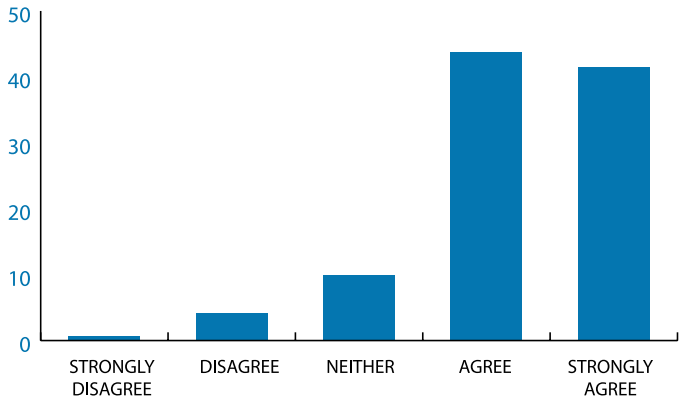
5.8 Assessing the University Climate for Aboriginal Students

Data from interviews with all qualitative research respondents are useful in assessing the climate at the University of Victoria for Aboriginal students, as they were all asked to reflect on this in some way. Student respondents were asked about their experiences of racism at the university as well as the level of respect they had received from staff and faculty at the university. Overwhelmingly, students reported feeling respected by the staff and faculty they had come into contact with during their time at the university (see Figure 9). However, some students interpreted this question to mean LE,NONET staff, rather than staff from the broader university, and the responses may have been influenced by that interpretation.

I think our Honouring Celebration was a positive experience for a lot of people, because [for] some of them, it was the first time coming to the Big House. And so I think that was definitely a positive, and that could be a lesson for the university, you know, to host an event like that once a year.

LE,NONET staff member

Figure 9. "Faculty and staff that I have come into contact with at UVic have treated me respectfully as an Aboriginal student" (all programs)



The vast majority of respondents reported positive experiences, with 61 (43.6%) agreeing and 58 (41.4%) strongly agreeing that they had experienced respect from faculty and staff at the university. Only six students (4.3%) disagreed and one student (0.7%) strongly disagreed, while 14 students responded neither positively nor negatively.

Despite the strongly positive responses from students, many examples of discrimination or racism emerged during the interviews. These experiences ranged from ignorance of Aboriginal issues to experiences of direct and blatant racism. Examples of racism in the classroom included faculty being inexperienced at dealing with conflicts between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students, professors or students making generalized comments about Aboriginal people that the students felt were derogatory, and general misunderstanding about Aboriginal issues. Very few students reported experiencing targeted or blatant racism on campus. One student reported dropping a class because the non-Aboriginal professor clearly advocated against First Nations rights, including the treaty process in BC. Students also reported being silenced when they tried to raise Aboriginal issues in the classroom. They also talked about inappropriate terminology being used to discuss Aboriginal issues among faculty, staff, and students.[10]

Students also provided examples of institutional barriers, which they felt were based in the context of a racist society rather than individual bias. This included the perception that there are very few Aboriginal professors at the university, which they saw as part of a system of institutionalized racism. Students also attributed the under-representation of Aboriginal students to systemic racism within the Canadian educational system as a whole. Divisions between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people and communities were also mentioned as contributing to systemic barriers facing Aboriginal students. Some students shared experiences of feeling excluded from the broader university as a result of being Aboriginal, as well as seeing the university as impersonal, cold, and unwelcoming. Several students also said that in most classes, there was no room for Aboriginal teachings, cultural practices, or community perspectives, which they attributed to the Eurocentric orientation of many university departments.

10 For a broader exploration of experiences of racism and discrimination facing Aboriginal students at the University of Victoria, see the Staff and Faculty Aboriginal Cultural Training (SFACT) Needs Assessment (LE,NONET Project, 2009).

5.9 Summative Project Outcomes

As explained in Section 2.2, the evaluation framework developed for the interim report has been expanded to include outcomes that were unanticipated in the original framework. The qualitative and quantitative research data have been used to assess whether the anticipated outcomes were met, while some long-term outcomes either were not met or could not be measured at the time of the writing of this report. In Table 14, below, outcomes that were anticipated and met are shown in regular text; outcomes that were anticipated but not met or that could not be evaluated at the time of the report are shown in light grey text; and outcomes that were unanticipated but met are shown in bold text. A brief discussion of the outcomes is provided after the table.

I think that I have always been treated respectfully as an Aboriginal student,as an individual. . .but that's not to say that comments haven't been made in classrooms by professors, students that haven't been derogatory and pretty downright mean to Aboriginal people. So in that way it's an attack on me.

LE,NONET student

I've never had any problems in classes, in relation to faculty and personal communications. . . .But also, as a Métis person, I'm able to disguise myself quite well.

LE,NONET student

Table 14. Summative Project Outcomes

Outputs	Early outcomes	Intermediate outcomes	Long-term outcomes
Total number of students participating in each LE,NONET program	Aboriginal students' financial difficulties are eased	Lack of finances is not viewed by students as a barrier to staying at the university	Improved retention of Aboriginal students
Number of incoming students who self-identify as being Aboriginal	Aboriginal students gain cultural knowledge regarding cultural resources and supports on and off campus	Aboriginal students feel they are being treated with respect by faculty and staff	Aboriginal students experience "success"
Number of faculty and staff who take part in LE,NONET professional development activities	Aboriginal students learn about research-related issues and learn and practise research skills	Aboriginal students' sense of Aboriginal identity is strengthened	A safe, welcoming, positive learning environment exists for Aboriginal learners
	Faculty and staff have increased awareness regarding Aboriginal culture and perspectives	Aboriginal students' sense of connection with their Aboriginal communities and their culture and traditions is strengthened	LE,NONET and the university strengthen relationships with local Aboriginal communities
		Aboriginal students learn skills that are of importance to cultural communities	University leadership and funding bodies use Aboriginal lens in defining "success" when developing programming and policies
		Aboriginal students improve their research and communication/ presentation skills	Increased number of Aboriginal students in Aboriginal-specific programs
		Faculty, staff, and services work collaboratively to support Aboriginal student retention and success	The meaning of "success" for Aboriginal students is explored and better understood
		Students receive centralized programs and services aimed at meeting the needs of Aboriginal students	Increased number of Aboriginal students access general university programs and services
		Students, faculty, staff, and Aboriginal community members experience an increased sense of connection	
		Increase in visibility and understanding of Indigenous student needs on campus	
		Students are referred to programs across campus	
		Students receive academic credit, contributing to their undergraduate degree	

Analysis of the qualitative and quantitative research data indicated that the majority of summative outcomes in the evaluation framework were met. The one unmet long-term goal was that the university leadership and funding bodies use an Aboriginal lens in defining success in the development of future programming. This outcome falls beyond the scope of this project, but it is hoped that the university and funding agencies will use the LE,NONET findings about Aboriginal definitions of success after the release of this report. A range of additional intermediate and long-term outcomes emerged from the qualitative research, including broad impacts on the university as a whole, as well as direct benefits to students' educational experiences.

6 | ANALYSIS OF STUDENT-FOCUSED LE,NONET PROGRAMS

In this section, results of the qualitative research are analyzed for each of the student-focused programs. Each program is briefly described, including general changes over the four years of implementation,[11] program outcomes are provided, themes from the qualitative research are summarized, and recommendations are made for future implementation of the programs. In the final section, a cross-program discussion and analysis is provided, including how the various program models complemented one another and the combined impact of the programs.

6.1 Bursary Program

6.1.1 Program Overview

The Bursary Program was designed to provide accessible financial support for undergraduate Aboriginal students, with an annual limit of $5,000 per student and an overall individual limit of $15,000. The program was coordinated by the project manager, who worked closely with staff in the Student Awards and Financial Aid Office (SAFA) to ensure bursary applications were processed as quickly as possible. Students filled out an application form and then met with the program coordinator to go over their application. Because the program coordinator had a close working relationship with the people administering the awards, she was able to check up on individual applications as needed, thereby ensuring that students received funding as quickly as possible. This personalized approach helped to ensure that students were well informed about the application process, wait time, and program requirements.

All of the bursary applications were first screened by the program coordinator, assessed by SAFA, and then approved by representatives of the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation. The first academic term of the program was the most challenging because the approval process was too lengthy. However, the process was soon streamlined and wait times were shortened to a maximum of two weeks. If students had tuition fees outstanding, the tuition costs were paid out from the bursary and the remainder was given to the student.

11 For details on the program implementation (formative) evaluation, see LE,NONET Interim Report (2008).

6.1.2 Program Outputs

The Bursary Program was the most utilized of all the LE,NONET programs, with 140 of the 200 LE,NONET participants receiving bursary support.

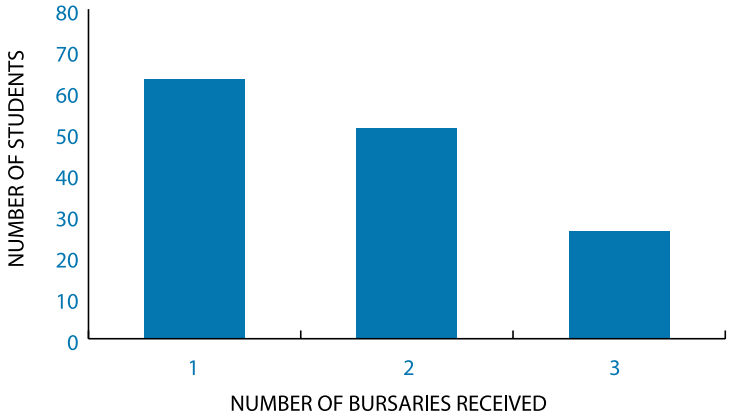
Close to $900,000 was given directly to students during the four-year pilot project through the Bursary Program. One-hundred and forty individual students received a total of 243 bursaries, as outlined in Table 15.

Table 15. Bursary Amounts Per Year

Year	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	Project total
Total	$78,720.00	$232,389.00	$301,786.00	$277,046.95	$889,941.95
Students	24	56	80	83	243
Average	$3,280.00	$4,149.80	$3,772.33	$3,337.92	$3,662.31

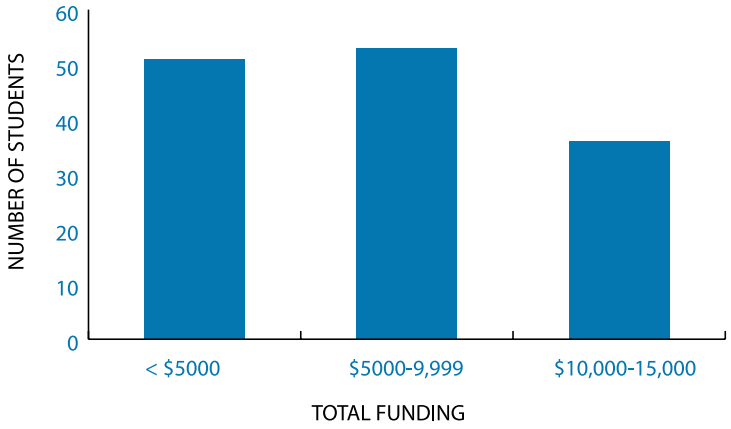
The majority of students (63 of 140) received one bursary; 51 received two bursaries; 26 received three bursaries; and no students received bursaries in all four years of the project (see Figure 10).

Figure 10. Number of Bursaries Per Student



Only three students received the maximum amount of funding ($15,000) through the Bursary Program. Fifty-one students (36%) received less than $5,000; 53 students (38%) received between $5,000 and-$9,999; and 33 students (24%) received between $10,000 and $14,999 (see Figure 11 for the amount of funding students received over the four years of the program).

Figure 11. Amount of Bursary Funding Per Student



While the Bursary Program had a strong impact on the financial stability of student recipients, many students' financial needs were not met. SAFA assessed the student applicants' financial need, but only a maximum of $5,000 could be accessed through this program. Overall, for those students assessed with unmet financial need after receiving a bursary, the average amount of unmet need was $3,615.17 in one year. The majority of unmet financial need for students who were already receiving financial support from LE,NONET was below $5,000 (see Figure 12 below).

Yeah, I know I would have had to quit if I hadn't received the bursary.

LE,NONET student

So I just had like these horrible visions of it being this big long process and it wasn't. At all. Like, either time I applied, it was just ridiculously simple.

LE,NONET student

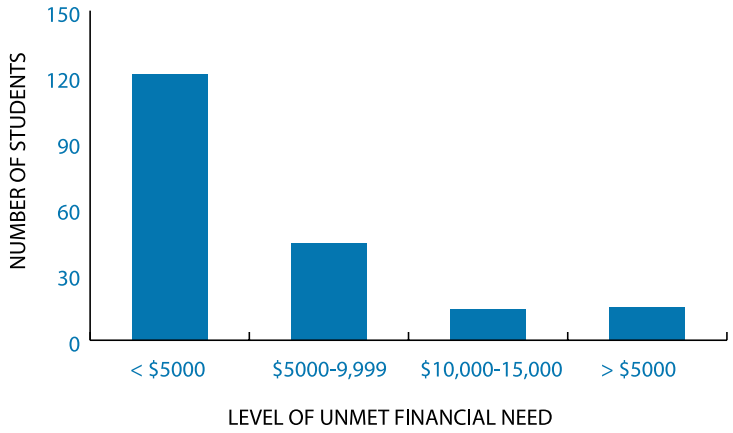
Yeah, it was such a relief. I think I might have cried the first time I heard that I got the bursary, I was just like YES! It was just such a great happy moment.

LE,NONET student

It reduced the fear that my family would be subjected to poverty conditions while I attempted to complete my degree. It created a sense of safety.

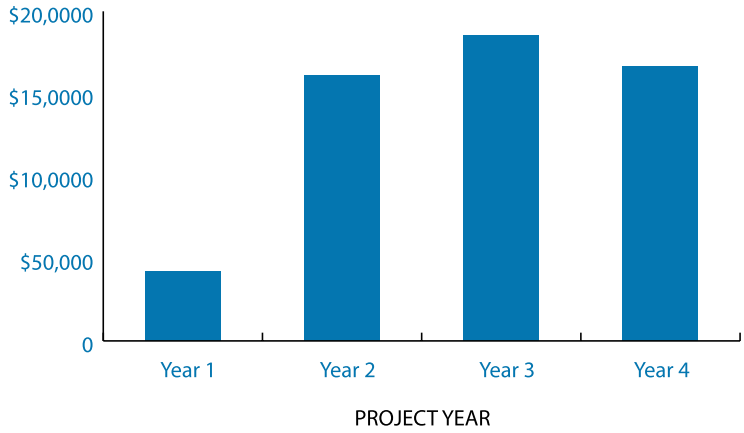
LE,NONET student

Figure 12. Level of Unmet Financial Need in Dollars per Student (After Bursary)



The total unmet financial need of all assessed students per year ranged from $42,125 to $185,199 (see Figure 13).

Figure 13. Total Amount of Unmet Financial Need After Bursary per Year



6.1.3 Summative Outcomes

As explained in the previous section, the evaluation framework from the interim report has been expanded to better account for the summative outcomes. In Table 16, below, outcomes that were anticipated and met are shown in regular text; outcomes that were anticipated but not met or that could not be evaluated at the time of the report are shown in light grey text; and outcomes that were unanticipated but met are shown in bold text. A brief discussion of the outcomes is provided after the table.

Table 16. Summative Project Outcomes (Bursary Program)

Outputs	Early outcomes	Intermediate outcomes	Long-term outcomes
Total number of students who apply for a bursary (also, breakdown by incoming and returning students)	Students' financial difficulties are eased	Lack of finances is not viewed by students as a barrier to staying at school	Improved retention of Aboriginal students
Total number of students granted a bursary	Students have a sense of stability in terms of housing and day-to-day expenses	Students have a sense of stability in terms of housing and day-to-day expenses	Aboriginal students experience "success"
Average amount of bursary funding received	Students who prefer not to be employed while attending the university are able to make this choice without personal hardship	Students who prefer not to be employed while attending the university are able to make this choice without personal hardship	Increased number of Aboriginal students enrolled at the university
Total number of students granted emergency funding	Students have additional time to focus on their academic studies	Students have additional time to focus on their academic studies	Greater student participation in other LE,NONET programs
Average amount of emergency funding received		Students have additional time to focus on cultural activities	
		Financial burden on students' families is eased	
		Students feel increased sense of connection to the Aboriginal community on campus	
		Students access other LE,NONET programs through the LE,NONET office	
		Students develop relationships with LE,NONET project staff	
		Allowable financial costs for student bursaries are broadened to be more culturally relevant for Aboriginal students	

The original summative evaluation framework for the Bursary Program included only a few broad goals related to financial support. However, the qualitative data indicated that a broader range of goals were met through this program, including the strengthening of relationships among students and staff, increased sense of connection to the Aboriginal community through accessing the LE,NONET office, and increased information sharing as a result of the connections LE,NONET staff developed with stakeholders across campus. The only unmet goal was that students would not have to work during their studies. Students indicated that they had to work despite receiving the bursary support, as they still had unmet financial need (as reported in Figures 12 and 13).

6.1.4 Major Themes Emerging from the Qualitative Research

Financial needs of Aboriginal students

Student, staff, and stakeholder respondents reported that Aboriginal students have diverse reasons for having financial need, on top of the usual expenses of textbooks, tuition, housing, and transportation.

- Some students are non-status and so do not qualify for federal funding administered by First Nations bands.
- Unlike some non-Aboriginal students, most Aboriginal students do not have parents or other family members who can provide the financial support needed to attend university.
- The economic situation in Aboriginal communities has a huge impact on Aboriginal

people's representation at universities. Student respondents talked about being the first person in their family to go to university, not because of a lack of interest but because of a lack of financial support.

- Some students are financially responsible for other adult family members (such as aunts and uncles, parents, grandparents, and others).
- For students coming from small communities, the expense of living in a city like Victoria can be overwhelming.
- Additional costs arise through the year for students who have to travel home for family deaths, ceremonies, and other reasons.
- More Aboriginal students are mature and may have additional financial responsibilities, such as mortgages, child care, and similar expenses.

Easing students' financial burden

As expected, the major theme emerging from interviews with student participants in the Bursary Program was that the financial support helped to ease their financial burden and enabled them to stay in school. Many students said the easing of financial stress allowed them to spend more time with their families, reduced the need to work, and supported them in focusing on their school work.

Family and community impact

Some student respondents talked about the broad impacts that the Bursary Program had on their family and community. For example, several students lived with family members, and the bursary helped the whole family to pay for rent and other expenses. A number of respondents who had children said the financial support helped to ease the stress placed on their children and allowed them to spend more time with their children.

Accessibility

Overwhelmingly, student respondents said the Bursary Program was accessible and easy to understand and the program staff were always available to help them complete the applications. Staff and university stakeholders said many students, not just Aboriginal students, find the financial aid process scary and alienating. Because of this aversion to accessing financial support, the informal atmosphere of the LE,NONET office and the friendly and welcoming staff were integral to making the program accessible.

A small number of students said they found the application process difficult because of unclear guidelines about how students' marital status, number of dependents, or other factors would impact their application. Several students who received less bursary funds in some years than others said they had come to expect a certain level of support and were uncertain about why they received less money in subsequent years.

Institutional support

Staff and university stakeholders said the program was largely successful because of the good working relationship that developed between the program coordinator and staff in other university departments. Students experienced a very quick turn-around time and were able to access funding quite quickly compared to the normal wait time for bursaries. In part, this was possible because of individual staff members' commitment to meeting the needs of student applicants.

Cultural relevance

Through the development of a strong working relationship between the program coordinator and SAFA staff, allowable expenses for Aboriginal students were broadened to be more culturally relevant, while still remaining within the established institutional guidelines. For example, students who needed to return home for ceremonies during their studies were able to list those travel expenses on their bursary application. Another example is a student who had a sick relative who was living with and financially dependent on the student. Even though SAFA normally would not consider the relative a dependent, they allowed this consideration within an expanded, more culturally relevant definition of family for the Aboriginal student.

Direct relationship to retention

Through the qualitative interviews, students said the financial support of the Bursary Program had a direct impact on their ability to stay in school. Beyond the financial support for tuition and other expenses, the program made them feel supported and worthy of institutional support. Several respondents said the attitudes of program staff allowed them to keep their pride intact while going through the process of asking for financial help, which can be a difficult process for some students.

> I am very grateful to the Bursary Program. The generous scholarship helped my finances tremendously. I don't have to work as much and I don't have the stress of student loan debt on my back. I am able to fully concentrate on being a student and immerse myself in my studies. The bursary is also a psychological boost. It tells me that outside institutions feel that my educational and career goals are worth pursuing.
>
> LE,NONET student

There are students who would drop out of school because they're short $200 sometimes. Like, that's so little money in the grand scheme of things, and if $200 can keep a student in school, then why don't all universities have emergency relief programs available for all of their students, right?

LE,NONET staff

Fostering Aboriginal identity and community

Many students said the questions about fostering Aboriginal identity and connection to community were irrelevant for the Bursary Program (14.5% left the question about Aboriginal identity blank or said it was not applicable, while 13.5% did the same for the question about community connectedness). However, a surprising number of students said the Bursary Program did help to foster a sense of Aboriginal identity because it made them visible as Aboriginal students and allowed them to feel like part of the community through the LE,NONET office. Student and staff respondents said the Bursary Program was often the first point of contact students had with the LE,NONET Project, and they were subsequently connected with other programs or events.

Financial hardship not completely met

As noted above, despite the financial support of the Bursary Program, some students reported facing continuing financial hardship in their efforts to stay in university. One student remortgaged their house, while another sold their house in order to cover the expenses related to post-secondary education. Sudden life changes also caused some students to face unexpected costs part-way through their university education. For example, one student reported a relationship break-up that left her suddenly coping with the expenses of being a single parent in a large city without any family support.

6.1.5 Recommendations for Future Implementation

Respondents suggested the following improvements to the Bursary Program:

- Remove restrictions on when students can apply (which were only in place because it was part of a pilot project).
- Offer budgeting information or workshops to educate students about how to make their bursary funds last.
- Make funding available to students before they arrive at university to help with moving costs, application fees, and related expenses.
- Provide clearer guidelines on who qualifies for a bursary, how to demonstrate need, and the different level of funding available for single students, parents, and other student categories.

6.2 Emergency Relief Program

6.2.1 Program Overview

The Emergency Relief Fund (ERF) emerged out of the Bursary Program at the end of the first year of the project, in response to the financial crises facing Aboriginal students. The Bursary Program coordinator found that some students did not meet the $1,000 minimum financial need for a bursary and were at risk of dropping out of school if a short-term financial crisis was not resolved. Additionally, the coordinator found that some of the needs of Aboriginal students were culturally specific and required a different approach than the general financial support offered at the university (examples are provided in the section below on themes from the qualitative research).

The program made funds of up to $750 per academic year available to Aboriginal students, with similar requirements to the Bursary Program. Students could apply several times through the year, as long as the total funds received did not surpass the $750 limit. Additionally, funds received through the Bursary Program and ERF could not exceed $15,000 over the four years of the pilot. The assessment for the ERF was done internally rather than through Student Awards and Financial Aid, which resulted in a very quick turn-around time for ERF applications. Once an application was approved by the program coordinator and the Canadian Millennium Scholarship Foundation, a cheque requisition was submitted under "honoraria" through the accounting department at the university. Again, because of the positive working relationship between LE,NONET staff and accounting staff, the cheques had a very quick turn-around time, and students often received funds within two to three days after submitting an application.

Similar to the Bursary Program, the ERF required applicants to complete a form as well as an in-person interview with the program coordinator to discuss their financial need and provide any necessary documentation. The relationship between the student and the coordinator was key to the success of the program, as it increased the likelihood that students would receive the funds they needed. Examples of the benefits of this relationship are explained in detail in the section on themes from the qualitative research.

6.2.2 Program Outputs

A total of $46,942 was given to students through the ERF. The program began in the second project year. The average amount of emergency funding was $680.32 per student participant per year over the three years of program implementation (see Table 17).

Table 17. Summary of Emergency Relief Funding per Year and per Student

Year	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	Project total
Total	0	$5,000	$18,380	$23,562	$46,942
Students	0	7	27	35	69
Average	0	$714.29	$680.74	$673.20	$680.32

The majority (41 of 54 students, or 76%) of ERF recipients participated in this program in only one year. Eleven students (20%) received an ERF in two years and two students (4%) received an ERF in three years.

6.2.3 Summative Outcomes

The evaluation framework created for the Interim Report did not include separate outcomes for the Emergency Relief Fund Program, as it was included in the section for the Bursary Program. However, in order to identify the unique outcomes of this program, which were different from those in the Bursary Program, we have reported the outcomes separately (see Table 18).

Outcomes that were anticipated and met are shown in regular text; outcomes that were anticipated but not met or that could not be evaluated at the time of the report are shown in light grey text; and outcomes that were unanticipated but met are shown in bold text. A brief discussion of the outcomes is provided after the table.

Table 18. Summative Outcomes (Emergency Relief Fund)

Outputs	Early outcomes	Intermediate outcomes	Long-term outcomes
Total number of students who apply for Emergency Relief Funds	Students' financial difficulties are eased	Students receive immediate non-repayable financial support	Aboriginal students experience "success"
Total number of students granted emergency funding	Students receive short-term financial support during personal or family crisis	Students stay in university despite short-term financial crises	Improved retention of Aboriginal students
Average amount of emergency funding received		Students access the LE,NONET office through introduction to the ERF	Greater student participation in LE,NONET programs
		Students referred to other crisis support on campus (e.g., counselling)	Increased number of students accessing university services
		The relationship between LE,NONET and Student Awards and Financial Aid is strengthened	Greater cultural sensitivity in administering funding to Aboriginal students
		Increased awareness of financial needs of Aboriginal students (including culturally relevant needs)	
		Increased awareness of financial support resources among Aboriginal students	

Only a few broad goals in the original evaluation framework pertained to the ERF. As indicated in the above table, outcomes of the program extended beyond financial benefit, as students were connected to other programs, support staff, and the Aboriginal community on campus as a result of applying for funding. Additionally, the creation of the ERF resulted in an increased awareness among university staff about the culturally specific financial crises that Aboriginal students may encounter.

6.2.4 Major Themes Emerging from the Qualitative Research

As with stories about the Bursary Program, the majority of ERF stories emerging from the qualitative data highlighted the direct relationship between financial support and students' ability to stay in school.

I think the relief fund is an excellent aspect of the university that should continue no matter what because it does contribute to students' success. It covers unexpected expenses that one couldn't foresee.

LE,NONET student

I knew that it was there and it was very helpful. It saved my butt. Put food in my cupboards.

LE,NONET student

Without it I would have missed a lot of time at school, I probably would have had to drop out. I had nowhere to go.

LE,NONET student

Support through financial crises

The types of emergencies that students were able to manage with the support of the ERF included

- leaving an abusive relationship
- death in the family, requiring travel home
- car broke down and student commuted to school from outside of Victoria
- late student loans
- broken glasses
- band funding cut off; no way to pay for textbooks
- moving costs used up all of the student's funds and the student needed money to pay rent upon arrival at school
- health-related emergencies

Financial support to stay in school

Many student respondents said they would not have stayed in school if they had not received ERF support. Although the financial support was short-term and for a smaller amount than provided through the Bursary Program, the impact of overcoming short-term financial crises was great. Many students said that the ERF should be seen as essential to supporting Aboriginal students' success, because it is a unique form of support not found elsewhere on campus.

Accessibility

Similar to feedback on the Bursary Program, students, staff, and stakeholders said it was the quick turn-around time (normally two days or less) and the easy application and approval process that made the program such a success. Again, students felt supported during the application process.

Cultural relevance

While the ERF was lacking any overt cultural component, there were several ways in which a culturally relevant lens was used in administering the funding. Students appreciated the financial support to travel home for funerals, care for extended family members, or cover other costs that were acceptable within the culturally sensitive assessment process. Several student respondents said the funding allowed them to go home for events that had a huge spiritual and emotional impact on them, which strengthened their abilities to succeed while keeping them connected to their home community.

Support during a time of crisis

Students often accessed the ERF during a time of emotional stress as well as financial hardship. In addition to receiving the practical support of additional funding, student respondents said the emotional support offered by the LE,NONET staff was a significant source of comfort. Additionally, some students were referred to counselling support and other services both on and off campus through accessing this program.

Contributing to Aboriginal identity

A significant number of ERF respondents did not see the questions about Aboriginal identity as relevant to this program (48% said the question was not applicable). However, similar to responses to questions about the Bursary Program, some students said the ERF contributed to their Aboriginal identity and connection to community because it was targeted toward Aboriginal students and was administered as part of a suite of programs specifically for them.

Problems or barriers

Many of the barriers or problems encountered by students were due to the nature of the pilot program and the requirements of the project as a whole (e.g., the funding cap of $750 per year). In general, there were few barriers to the program; only three student applicants did not receive the funds they applied for, primarily because their situations were not seen as crises by the LE,NONET program administrators. These cases included a student who was requesting funds to participate in a sports tournament overseas and students who had already accessed the ERF several times in the same term.

6.2.5 Recommendations for Future Implementation

Overall, there were few recommendations as to how the program could be improved, as it was well received and administered effectively. The only suggestions (other than making more funding available) were related to developing clearly written

guidelines describing the types of emergencies that qualify under the program, the steps students need to take to prove their financial need, and the turn-around time for processing applications.

6.3 Peer Mentor Program

6.3.1 Program Overview

The Peer Mentor Program employed Aboriginal students with experience at the university to work in a supportive role with less-experienced Aboriginal students in navigating the university. The main objective was for the trained peer mentor to be a key resource in assisting new students to gain access to the university's Aboriginal and community services. Each year, a group of student mentors received training in the types of knowledge and skills they would need to provide one-on-one support to new students. The mentors met on a monthly basis to touch base with one another, deal with any crises that had emerged, and plan upcoming events. Mentors also submitted journals to the program coordinator on a regular basis.

Students requesting a mentor filled out an application form and met with the program coordinator, who then matched the student with a mentor (or, in some cases, two mentors if the student's support needs were more extensive). The matches were not necessarily based on shared academic interests or background, and brought students together across differing experiences and cultural frameworks. Mentors and mentored students met on an individual basis as needed through the year.

Group events were also held on a regular basis and were open more broadly to Aboriginal students and their friends and families. These group events grew in popularity, and in the final year of the project, a senior mentor was hired to coordinate and lead the program activities along with the other mentors.

6.3.2 Summative Outcomes

As explained in the previous sections, the evaluation framework from the interim report has been expanded to better account for the summative outcomes. In Table 19, below, outcomes that were anticipated and met are shown in regular text; outcomes that were anticipated but not met or that could not be evaluated at the time of the report are shown in light grey text; and outcomes that were unanticipated but met are shown in bold text. A brief discussion of the outcomes is provided after the table.

Table 19. Summative Outcomes (Peer Mentor Program)

Outputs	Early outcomes	Intermediate outcomes	Long-term outcomes
Number of students who apply to have a mentor	Mentored students experience a smooth (e.g., less stressful) transition process into university	Mentored students experience positive sense of identity and self-esteem	Incoming Aboriginal students experience the university as a welcoming and supportive environment
Number of mentor/mentored student pairs	Mentored students feel supported in navigating the university environment, in connecting with the university's Aboriginal community and resources, and with cultural resources off campus	Mentored students experience a sense of connectedness with other Aboriginal students and with their culture	Aboriginal students experience strong sense of connection and community among themselves
Number of mentor/mentored student meetings or contacts	Mentored students feel supported in dealing with issues of racism	Mentored students are knowledgeable about university resources and about cultural resources off campus	Aboriginal students strengthen their sense of identity and their connections with Aboriginal communities
Number of peer mentors hired	Peer mentors experience positive sense of cultural identity and self-esteem as mentors	Mentored students improve their coping skills	Mentored students have opportunity to become mentors
Number of peer mentors trained	Peer mentors improve their knowledge about cultural resources and supports on and off campus	Peer mentors experience positive sense of identity and self-esteem as mentors	Aboriginal community on campus is strengthened

Outputs	Early outcomes	Intermediate outcomes	Long-term outcomes
Number of peer mentor supervisors in place	Peer mentors improve their knowledge of coping skills and strategies	Peer mentors experience a sense of community and connectedness with other Aboriginal students and with their culture	Increase in Aboriginal students accessing programs and supports on campus
Peer mentor training curricula and support protocols	Peer mentors gain experience working with other Aboriginal people	Peer mentors strengthen their feelings of connection with their own communities and others	Increased success of Aboriginal students
	Peer mentors earn wages for their work	Peer mentors improve their coping skills	
	Social events strengthen involvement of students' families in campus activities	Mentored students gain academic support through writing workshops, study groups	
		Mature students have increased social and academic support	

I thought the [training] program that was given to us was amazing; covered all of the bases and then some. I found it really beneficial as a mentor and for general life information as well.

LE,NONET student

It led me to define, for myself, what being an Aboriginal person meant, and how to draw on my background to help others who needed support.

LE,NONET student

I'm a mature student and I've had previous experience with the university. I didn't really necessarily feel that it was meant for me to have a mentor at UVic, but it was good to have somebody to meet as a friend.

LE,NONET student

I think one of the best things about that was that I guess it showed me, it gave me a role model, that it was possible for Aboriginal people to succeed in university. So, I think that it gave me hope and helped me believe that I could be one of them.

LE,NONET student

Analysis of the qualitative data indicated that the majority of anticipated goals in the evaluation framework were met. Unmet goals from the interim evaluation framework included the role of mentors in helping students deal with incidents of racism. Qualitative interviews with mentors and mentored students revealed that very few students turned to their mentors specifically for support in dealing with racist incidents. Participation in the mentor program was lower than expected, and one-on-one mentoring relationships were not needed as much as anticipated. Additional unanticipated outcomes emerged due to changes in the program, including more group events and student-led aspects of the program.

6.3.3 Major Themes Emerging from the Qualitative Research

The Peer Mentor Program was largely successful because of the relationship building, leadership skills, and employment opportunities experienced by students, and informal group activities that helped to create a sense of community among student participants. However, as is evident in responses to the common questions (reported in Section 5), student respondents did not feel the Peer Mentor Program was as successful in meeting the project goals as other programs. There were several reasons for this: the one-on-one mentor relationships were needed during the first month of the school year only for many students, and the program lacked an overt cultural focus.

Skill-building and training for mentors

Mentors participated in a group training and orientation session at the beginning of each year. They learned to develop boundaries around their role as mentor and formed supportive relationships among themselves as well as with the program coordinator. Topics in the training sessions included communication skills, lateral violence, and the range of resources available both on and off campus.

One-on-one mentor relationships

Generally, the individual matches between mentors and mentored students worked very well. Many of the mentored students said that they had developed a lasting friendship with their mentors and that the matches were very well made. Most matches were not based on any specific similarities in the students' academic studies, background, or areas of interest. The program coordinator was able to use her own knowledge of the students' personalities and interests in matching students. Because of the number of mentors, the coordinator was able to match a mentored student with another mentor if any difficulties arose.

While most mentor relationships were successful, some respondents said they would have liked to be paired with a mentor whose background was more similar to theirs (i.e., in their field of study).

One-on-one mentoring was particularly useful for students with specific support needs, such as mature students and students with learning disabilities. However, many students did not find the one-on-one mentoring very useful and instead preferred informal group events.

Holistic support

A large number of mentored students said the most significant aspect of the program was knowing they had someone to call on for help if they needed it. Several students said they appreciated not having to ask for help after they were paired with a mentor, because the mentor would call to check up on them. Even if they ended up not needing as much support from their mentor as anticipated, the students took comfort in knowing they had the name and phone number of another student who would be there for them. This was particularly true for students who came from smaller communities or were overwhelmed by being on such a large campus. Student respondents said their mentors provided significant emotional support because they understood what they were going through in adjusting to life at the university. Additionally, when students had academic, financial, family, or other types of crises, the mentors were able to provide support or refer them to the appropriate services. The program coordinator was also a huge source of support for many of the student respondents.

Informal group events

As the program evolved, it became evident that the group events were more accessible than the one-on-one approach to the program. Students felt welcome to drop in to these events, where they could often connect with elders, Aboriginal faculty, and community members. The events did not require that students register with LE,NONET, so it is not known how many students attended these events, but they attracted a wide array of students. Several students said they liked the group events because they brought together a diverse range of students who would not ordinarily have met one another.

Gender differences

Some male respondents said the one-on-one mentor relationships might be more intimidating for males than females. They saw the group events as more attractive to male students than one-on-one relationships. This was partly due to the perceived reluctance of male students to ask for help and the reluctance to create a sense of connection with other men without a point of common interest. On the other hand, some male respondents said they formed lasting friendships with their male mentors, so generalizations cannot be made for all male students.

Employment for mentors

Mentors said the program provided an important source of employment for them during the school year. They appreciated the opportunity to work on campus, to have flexible hours, and to work with other Aboriginal students. For some students going in to social work or other helping professions, the Peer Mentor Program had a direct relationship with their future employment and career goals.

Development of leadership skills

Student participants, including mentors and mentored students, had opportunities to develop leadership skills through the program. Mentors talked about being proud of taking on responsibilities as a role model to other students, leading group activities, and being seen as a resource on campus. As a result of these opportunities, students gained confidence, felt increasingly capable, and developed a greater sense of pride in being Aboriginal students. Respondents also said that it was a good lesson to realize that other people struggle at university too, and to see that they could have a role in helping others to navigate the university. As part of the program, mentored students also had opportunities to lead events such as the craft nights.

Increased knowledge of on- and off-campus resources

Both mentors and mentored students said the program greatly increased their knowledge of resources both on and off campus. They gained practical information in using the library, finding various buildings on campus, and learning about the Native Student Union and other groups for Aboriginal students. Some students who were new to Victoria and came from small communities also deeply appreciated support with buying groceries, navigating the transportation system, and other practical information for living in Victoria.

Level of need

Both student and staff respondents said the one-on-one support was most crucial during the first few weeks of school, but tapered off after that. Some students did not need a mentor after they had become used to the campus or found a group of friends on campus. Those who needed more ongoing support included mature students and those with specific challenges (having a physical disability, learning challenges, and other needs).

> We did all kinds of activities—we had bowling, we went to movies, we went for dinner, and what was really commendable from my mentor was that when I arrived here for school, I was in a wheelchair, so that made getting around very difficult, and she was very good at accommodating the needs that I had at that time, and I really appreciated that she went out of her way to find ways for me to do things.
>
> LE,NONET student

> Like when [a student] was running a craft night, it was a chance for her to really feel like a leader and a successful person and to share her strengths and her gifts. Whereas I think, I mean she's a mature student, so sometimes in her academic life she would feel a little bit overwhelmed. I think it just reaffirmed that other side, that she does have all of these strengths.
>
> LE,NONET staff

> I used to think I would never amount to anything, but I feel I can do almost anything now.
>
> LE,NONET student

Several mentors said they didn't find themselves being called on very often by the students they were mentoring, so they didn't feel very effective. A few students reported eventually ceasing contact with the student they were paired with because there didn't seem to be any need for support. Some mentored students said they were too busy to connect with their mentor once the year got going and they had little need for a mentor overall.

Relationships and community connectedness

The Peer Mentor Program was particularly effective in building relationships and creating a sense of community among students, as well as among their families and other people on campus. Students most appreciated feeling a sense of connection, belonging, and community through the group events. The welcoming attitude of the program coordinator was key to the success of the program, as it was with other LE,NONET programs. Additionally, some mentored students saw their mentor as a friend and said they had formed lasting relationships through the program.

It helps me financially. The position enabled me to pay my rent every month, which is great. It enabled me to have work, have employment on campus. . . .

LE,NONET student

Limits on mentor relationship

Student and staff respondents said there was not a huge need to assert boundaries around the mentor relationship, but it did come up a couple of times in cases where the mentored student had a high level of need for support or was going through a crisis. When crises did emerge, mentors were not able to drop everything to support the student because they were trying to meet their own academic goals and obligations. However, in most cases, boundaries were established around the relationship and the student was referred to more appropriate supports.

It was really cool, because I've never had a university class talk about my own people before. It was really heartwarming. It was nice to have something in a classroom setting be so personal to me.

LE,NONET student

Reciprocity

Many mentored students said that because of the impact of the program on their success at the university, they had a desire to give back and become a mentor the following year. Many mentors talked about the pride they took in being able to support other Aboriginal students, contribute to their well-being, and make a difference.

Cultural components

The Peer Mentor Program did not have an overt cultural component, although the student participants often brought cultural elements to the group activities as well as to the individual mentoring relationships. Some of the cultural components were the inclusion of elders, culturally themed craft nights, and the showing of movies with Aboriginal themes. Some student and staff respondents said they thought the Peer Mentor Program lacked a cultural focus and could have been strengthened by integrating a more overt focus on cultural teachings.

6.3.4 Recommendations for Future Implementation

Respondents suggested the following improvements to the Peer Mentor Program:

- Focus more on group events than on individual mentor relationships.
- Rather than the program being coordinated by the program manager "off the side of her desk," hire a dedicated staff person to run the program, with priority given to hiring an Indigenous person who can bring cultural knowledge and teachings to the program.
- Include a group orientation for mentored students similar to the one for mentors (or an open event for all students involved in the program).
- Include more cultural components, including relationships with elders from local First Nations, outings to local cultural events off-campus, and working with local elders to develop relationships with the land and local plants.
- Start the program in the summer so that mentored students from out of town can connect with a mentor prior to arrival at the university.
- Make more specific matches between students based on areas of interest, academic research, and other shared interests.
- Encourage more diversity among the mentors. It was perceived by some respondents that most of the mentors were from urban environments and did not have a strong cultural grounding, or were of mixed or Métis background. It was recommended that Aboriginal students who are culturally grounded and come from smaller or rural communities, mature students, and others who may have more challenges becoming acculturated to the university environment be supported in becoming mentors.
- Reframe the program away from mentoring and toward creating connections among Aboriginal students. Some mentors were unsure what to call the students they were mentoring. Students who signed up for a mentor had different reasons for doing so, not necessarily because they needed

someone to look up to or aspire to be like, which the word "mentor" implies. Other terminology might better capture the goals of the program.

6.4 Preparation Seminar

6.4.1 Program Overview

The Preparation Seminar was designed to prepare Aboriginal students for placements in the Community Internship and Research Apprenticeship Programs. The seminar was originally co-taught by the two LE,NONET co-principal investigators but was transferred to the Community Internship and Research Apprenticeship program coordinators after year 1. This model allowed the coordinators to develop relationships with the students that would encourage their success in both the Preparation Seminar and the other programs, as they were able to make successful matches between students and advisors. The Preparation Seminar was offered as an Indigenous Studies course and, as with the other LE,NONET programs, was open to Aboriginal students only. The seminar developed a unique learning environment in which Aboriginal students could discuss issues of relevance to their learning needs, academic and personal goals, and cultural knowledge.

The course curriculum covered several main topic areas: local Indigenous traditions and culture; an overview of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit culture and history; general research methods and ethics; and Aboriginal research.

As a prerequisite to the Community Internship and Research Apprenticeship Programs, the Preparation Seminar developed minimum requirements of a B grade and 80% attendance. Students who did not meet either of these requirements were unable to participate in the other programs.

6.4.2 Summative Outcomes

As explained in the previous sections, the evaluation framework from the interim report has been expanded to better account for the summative outcomes. In Table 20, below, outcomes that were anticipated and met are shown in regular text; outcomes that were anticipated but not met or that could not be evaluated at the time of the report are shown in light grey text; and outcomes that were unanticipated but met are shown in bold text. A brief discussion of the outcomes is provided after the table.

> Being Coast Salish I was very happy that our people were acknowledged in this class. It is only appropriate to acknowledge the people whose territory you are situated on.
>
> LE,NONET student

> You know, people sometimes get caught up and they think "I'm the only one facing these scary issues" but being in the seminar, you realize now there's other people who face the same or worse issues than you and you kind of learn and grow and seek out answers to different problems in your community. So I think that's the thing I appreciated and learnt and benefited from the most.
>
> LE,NONET student

Table 20. Summative Outcomes (Preparation Seminar Program)

Outputs	Early outcomes	Intermediate outcomes	Long-term outcomes
Number of co-instructors, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal	Aboriginal students engage in a learning environment with other Aboriginal students	Seminar participants develop a sense of community	Aboriginal students experience "success"
Inclusion in the university academic calendar on ongoing basis	Aboriginal students are better informed about the Research Apprenticeship and Community Internship programs	Seminar participants begin planning for Research Apprenticeship and Community Internship placements	A safe, positive learning environment is created for Aboriginal learners
Number of students who participate in the Preparation Seminar	Aboriginal students develop a relationship with the Research Apprenticeship and Community Internship coordinators	Aboriginal students' sense of identity is strengthened	Relationships among Aboriginal students are strengthened
Number of faculty and staff who take part in research panels	Aboriginal students learn about research related issues	Aboriginal students' sense of connection with Aboriginal communities is strengthened	There is an increase in the number of Aboriginal students who are preparing to do research and community work
Number of community members who take part in community panels	Aboriginal students learn about and practise research skills	Aboriginal students learn skills that are of importance to Aboriginal communities	Increased number of students with degrees that have an Aboriginal specialization
	Aboriginal students gain cultural knowledge	Aboriginal students improve their research and communication/ presentation skills	Increased number of students with Indigenous Studies Minor

Outputs	Early outcomes	Intermediate outcomes	Long-term outcomes
Number of departments/ programs and services that make presentations	Community and research presenters meet Aboriginal student participants	Students develop increased interest in research, having made a stronger connection between research and Aboriginal issues	
		Students develop relationships with guest speakers, including faculty, community agencies, and others	
		Indigenous Studies Minor program experiences increased capacity for meeting the learning needs of Aboriginal students	

All of the anticipated outcomes for the Preparation Seminar were met in the pilot project. A number of additional outcomes resulted from the collaboration between LE,NONET and the Indigenous Studies Minor Program, which emerged in the second year of the project.

6.4.3 Major Themes Emerging from the Qualitative Research

Diversity of Aboriginal student experience

Students in the Preparation Seminar came from different faculties, years of study, cultural backgrounds, ages, and levels of comfort with their Aboriginal identities. This diversity was both a strength of the course and a challenge for some students. Several respondents said they were initially put off by the number of students in their class who did not have a strong grounding in their Aboriginal identity, who had recently discovered their Aboriginal ancestry, or who did not "look" Aboriginal. Some students said that this ended up being a good lesson for them, as they expanded their definitions of who is Aboriginal, and that they learned a lot from other students in the class with different experiences.

Course format

Student respondents had mixed views on the format of the Preparation Seminar, in part based on the approach the instructors took, which varied from term to term because of staff changes. Students appreciated the team teaching model and the link between the course and the Community Internship and Research Apprenticeship Programs. Most students and staff thought the circle format in the classroom (which was used in some, but not all, sessions) was a useful way to encourage discussion. Students also appreciated the inclusion of guest speakers, which was seen by many students and staff as an important means of building relationships among students, faculty, and community members. In particular, several students appreciated having local Coast Salish people speak in the course because it allowed them to represent their own community experiences rather than having them presented through a book or the instructors.

However, some of the other elements of the course format were not seen as particularly effective. Many students felt there were too many assignments and not enough of a link between the readings and assignments. Because the course was a prerequisite for the other programs, some students felt the course was too rigid and there was too much focus on attaining a certain grade level. Some students also felt the course was not Indigenous enough in format and pedagogical approach, in that it was not as much about relationships and meaningful learning as it was about meeting the program requirements.

Course content

The majority of students gave very positive feedback on the topics covered in the course and the scope of material that was used, including readings, guest speakers, and videos.

Some students wanted a more direct relationship between the assignments and the readings, as they felt there was not enough room to integrate the readings through discussion or writing assignments. Some students and staff felt the syllabus tried to cover too many topics given the time frame of the course. Because of the diversity of backgrounds

students brought to the program and the diversity of potential placements they could have through the other LE,NONET programs, the course content could not possibly prepare all students for their internship or apprenticeship placements.

Assignments

Feedback on the course assignments was mixed, with a number of students saying there was not a strong enough connection between the course material and the assignments. The journals received especially poor feedback from some students who did not find them very useful. In general, students wanted to see a more direct link between the course content, the assignments, and the programs the course was preparing them for.

On the positive side, many students appreciated the opportunity to explore their personal identity and family history in the assignments. Staff also commented that they appreciated being able to witness the growth of some students as they explored what it meant to be Indigenous, particularly Métis students or those who grew up away from their Indigenous communities.

Creating community

Students, staff, and stakeholder respondents said the Preparation Seminar was particularly effective in building a sense of community among the student participants. Students came together across diverse cultural backgrounds and had opportunities to share personal teachings, stories, and cultural practices. Sharing food and some ceremonial or spiritual teachings was also appreciated. This sense of community was one of the key outcomes and successes of the Preparation Seminar. Staff also said they developed long-lasting and meaningful connections with students in the course and appreciated seeing students leave the course to further explore their personal, community, academic, and cultural goals.

Supporting identity development

The Preparation Seminar was also successful in supporting the development of students' identities: more than 87% of students said they agreed or strongly agreed that the seminar had helped them to develop a sense of who they were as Indigenous people. This was largely accomplished through the course content—including sections on First Nations, Métis, and Inuit history and culture, and the experiential teachings of Indigenous guest speakers. However, as already stated, students said the course format and pedagogy did not support Indigenous principles, as they were felt to be quite Eurocentric or mainstream.

Aboriginal learning environment

A large number of students said that the Preparation Seminar provided a unique opportunity to learn together with other Indigenous people, which they had not experienced elsewhere on campus. Student respondents said they were able to ask different questions and could explore their own ethical and academic issues in a different way than in a mixed learning environment. Most students saw this exclusively Aboriginal classroom environment as crucial to meeting their learning needs, while a small number said that the course could be opened up to non-Indigenous students, but that it would likely change the purpose and feeling of the course. Staff agreed that the cultural safety developed in the Aboriginal learning environment was crucial in enabling students to feel supported in exploring challenging topics such as lateral violence and residential schools. One staff person talked extensively about the level of respect that was encouraged in the course and the ways in which the course content and teaching style contributed to a sense of trust among participants. Staff and students also said they anticipated some institutional and individual resistance to creating a classroom environment exclusively for Indigenous students, but that it was an important element of the success of the program.

> It was empowering, I would say [to be in a class of only Indigenous students]. It felt really safe and with that feeling of safety I think came, like we all felt more free to explore our ideas a little bit more.
>
> LE,NONET student

> Probably one of the most significant things that sets it apart even from [other courses] is that it's open to students, it brought together students from all different faculties. I mean I had students there from computer science, engineering, microbiology, fine arts, humanities, linguistics. I think I saw just about every faculty represented in the class.
>
> LE,NONET staff

Link to Research Apprenticeship and Community Internship Programs

Many students said the information presented in the Preparation Seminar was directly relevant to their placements. However, the Research Apprenticeship and Community Internship placements were so diverse that it was challenging to make the course material relevant to every placement.

Most advisors who were interviewed said the Preparation Seminar contributed to positive matches because of the relationship that developed between the instructors and students. Most advisors also said it would be difficult for the course to prepare students for every possible type of placement, given the diversity of research projects and community initiatives that students were involved in.

Only a small number of students did not end up with placements, either because they did not

> This idea that they teach us as much as we teach them, and that is absolutely true when it comes to that class, because we sat in a circle and people could share, and I did learn stuff that I didn't know before. So it was still growing too, yeah.
>
> LE,NONET staff

meet the minimum requirements (B grade and 80% attendance) or for other reasons. However, for those who completed the course and were not able to participate in the Community Internship and Research Apprenticeship Programs, there was a sense of disappointment. One student felt this was due to a lack of community connections or ideas for possible placements. Other students simply chose not to go on to do the Community Internship or Research Apprenticeship Programs because of other obligations.

6.4.4 Recommendations for Future Implementation

Respondents suggested the following improvements to the Preparation Seminar:

- Make the cultural components of the curriculum more explicit and better integrated into the curriculum content rather than being left up to the instructor to decide.
- Simplify the learning outcomes somewhat and create stronger links between the readings and assignments.
- Remove some of the rigidity associated with the course being a prerequisite for other programs and "Indigenize" the pedagogical approach.
- Include more experiential learning opportunities, such as trips to visit local communities and more ceremony in the classroom.
- If possible, arrange for the course to be taught by the same instructor over the years to ensure the content can be updated and improved based on student feedback.
- Make ongoing revisions to the course material to keep it up to date.
- Allow greater flexibility in the prerequisite requirements, based on the needs of individual students, to shift the emphasis to a more relational model. Although the prerequisite may have been useful in some ways, many students saw it as a hindrance to truly implementing Indigenous principles in the classroom through the format and structure.
- Provide opportunities for small group work or other ways for students with more skills to work at a higher level of analysis, with first-year students working together at a different level.
- Allow prerequisite exemptions for students with a strong background in Aboriginal community work or a strong focus on Aboriginal issues in their academic program.

I'm extremely excited to have the opportunity to work within my own community, like I wouldn't have imagined that would even be possible, like this is my first year coming here, so I'm super jazzed.

LE,NONET student

It gives you the opportunity to come back to the community that you've been displaced from, that you've been apart from for so long. So that kind of gives you a sense of developing your Aboriginal identity I guess because in that way, 'cause then you've been kind of welcomed back into the community and you're developing that.

LE,NONET student

6.5 Community Internship Program

6.5.1 Program Overview

The Community Internship Program placed students within a community setting or Indigenous organization for a 200-hour internship. The placements were individualized to meet both the personal and academic goals of the students, as well as the needs of the host agencies. During the Preparation Seminar, the Community Internship Program coordinator had an opportunity to learn about the interests of the students, which allowed her to tailor the placements to the strengths of the students. If students already had a community agency or First Nations band in mind for their internship (often in their home community), they would pass the information on to the program coordinator, who would work on setting up the placement.

Guides were developed for both the host organizations and the student in order to outline the expectations and responsibilities of everyone involved. Meetings were held with the student, advisor, and program coordinator at the beginning of the placement as well as for a midterm evaluation and final evaluation.

The placements were national in scope, although the majority of students were placed with organizations in British Columbia. The program coordinator had a travel budget, which supported both student travel and the coordinator's community visits to check up on those students who were completing internships outside of the Victoria area.

The Community Internship Program stood out as a unique opportunity for students to engage in experiential learning in a community setting, and students experienced immense personal growth as a result. Placements varied greatly, including working with a master carver, running youth camps, guiding tours with a community-run ecotourism business, and conducting community-based research on traditional knowledge projects. The explicit focus on immersing students in Aboriginal community settings was one of the key strengths of the program.

6.5.2 Summative Outcomes

As explained in the previous sections, the evaluation framework from the interim report has been expanded to better account for the summative outcomes. In Table 21, below, outcomes that were anticipated and met are shown in regular text; outcomes that were anticipated but not met or that could not be evaluated at the time of the report are shown in light grey text; and outcomes that were unanticipated but met are shown in bold text. A brief discussion of the outcomes is provided after the table.

Table 21. Summative Outcomes (Community Internship Program)

Outputs	Early outcomes	Intermediate outcomes	Long-term outcomes
Number of students who apply to be interns	Community interns gain cultural knowledge and improve their knowledge of issues of importance to Aboriginal communities	Community interns improve their cultural knowledge	Indigenous knowledge and Western knowledge are combined in ways that benefit both students and Aboriginal communities and organizations
Number of students selected to be interns	Community interns learn employment-related skills (e.g., preparing a resume, job interview skills)	Community interns learn skills that are of importance to cultural communities	Relationships between the university and surrounding Aboriginal communities and organizations are strengthened
Number of students participating in on-campus seminar (internship prerequisite)	Community interns learn skills that are important to cultural communities	Community interns gain confidence in articulating and transferring their skills in a community context	Aboriginal students strengthen their sense of identity and their connections with Aboriginal communities
Number of community organizations interested in hosting an intern	Community interns earn wages and course credit for their internship work	Community interns experience positive sense of identity and self-esteem	
Number of community intern placements	Aboriginal communities and organizations obtain assistance in addressing community-identified needs	Aboriginal communities and organizations have a "talent pool" of students with academic skills to draw on for assistance	
Number of community intern advisors	Aboriginal communities and organizations are strengthened by sharing cultural knowledge with interns	Aboriginal communities and organizations are strengthened by sharing cultural knowledge with interns	
Number of hours spent by interns in community organizations		Increased number of students focused on Aboriginal-specific educational programs	
Creation of internship/ apprenticeship database		Students obtain employment through internship placement after their placement ends	

Analysis of the research data indicated that all of the anticipated outcomes for the Community Internship Program were met. Unexpected outcomes included employment opportunities that students experienced as a result of their placements as well as the increased interest in Aboriginal-focused programs reported in student interviews.

6.5.3 Major Themes Emerging from the Qualitative Research

Process of setting up internships

Overall, both student and advisor respondents said the process of setting up the internship placements worked well. The program coordinator served as a liaison between the student and advisor, ensuring all program requirements were met in the process of determining the scope and focus of the placement. The process was clear and well organized, and there were no major problems or recommendations for improving this part of the program.

Individualized placements

Interview respondents repeatedly said the key to the success of the program was the individualized nature of the internship placements. The coordinator was able to match the students' personal, cultural, career, and academic interests with host organizations that allowed the students to experience success and a sense of accomplishment. The internships were not always directly related to the student's career or academic goals; some were designed to allow students to connect with Indigenous people and community organizations in order to further their individual identity as Indigenous people. Others were directly related to the student's career goals and sometimes led the student to further employment opportunities or mentoring. When asked what made the placements successful, advisors overwhelmingly said the student was simply a good match for the organization, whether because of personal outlook or skills.

Fostering new and existing relationships

The relationships that students formed with their advisors and others during their placements were meaningful, and some of them extended beyond the end of the formal placement. Many students said their advisors were extremely supportive and really cared about them on a personal level. Several students completed placements within their home communities, which allowed them to strengthen ties within their own families or with community members. Advisors also spoke highly of the positive relationships they developed with the students, relationships that had a positive impact on the students themselves and on the host community.

Personal growth and meaning

The Community Internship Program had a great impact on the personal growth of many student participants, particularly those who did not previously have much knowledge of their cultural practices or family history.

Cultural aspects

Many of the internship placements gave students exposure to traditional cultural practices and protocols. While this was not an explicit focus of the program, many of the placements included working with elders or traditional knowledge keepers, or participating in ceremonies. In some urban Aboriginal organizations, students were able to bring their own cultural knowledge to their internship and share their practices with others.

Benefits to host organization

Many of the community organizations benefited greatly from the internships, particularly First Nations bands or organizations that would not otherwise have had the funding to hire the student.

Indigenous identity development

The community connections they developed through the placements helped to foster students' Indigenous identities. This was a result of both the individual relationships students formed with supervisors and community members and the experience of being immersed in Indigenous community contexts. Some student respondents had the opportunity to connect with the land, water, and traditional territories around the communities in which they worked. Several other students said they were empowered by being accepted and valued as part of an urban Aboriginal community.

Learning about community issues

Student interns were exposed to a large variety of issues facing Aboriginal communities through their internship placements, including issues related to land and resource use, child welfare, funding, and culture. The hands-on learning opportunities allowed students to gain experience working on issues they were passionate about. The opportunity to move beyond academic knowledge to more experiential knowledge was key.

Becoming a community leader

Many students said the internship experience helped to increase their confidence. Through working in community settings, they began to see themselves in a leadership role and took pride in their skills and accomplishments. Putting their skills, knowledge, and personal strengths into action in a community setting was empowering on both personal and community levels.

Giving back to the community

One of the main strengths of the Community Internship Program, for both student and advisors, was the opportunities it provided students to create change at a community level. Students saw that they could have an impact on an organization or community, in some cases creating resources that will be used for years to come. One example was a resource on language revitalization that the community will use over the long-term.

Opportunities extending beyond program

Many students said the benefits of the program extended beyond the individual placement, whether through employment opportunities or other unique experiences. Some students were able to travel to conferences or participate in training, while others were inspired to change their field of study to one that was more community-oriented. Students said their placements helped to prepare them for future job interviews or graduate school, and inspired them to work toward their future academic or career goals.

Role of the advisor

Only a few student respondents had negative experiences as part of the internship program, and these were due mainly to conflicts between the advisor and the student or because the advisor was very busy and did not have much time to supervise the intern. In large part, these problems were overcome with the support of the program coordinator. Ensuring the advisor was available and supportive throughout the placement was key to the program's success.

6.5.4 Recommendations for Future Implementation

Respondents suggested the following improvements to the Community Internship Program:

- Ensure greater consistency across departments in recognizing the Community Internship course as a credit toward students' major/minor degrees.
- Replace the poster-making session at the end of the placement. Some students felt the activity was unnecessary. Other types of wrap-up activities could have been used instead of the poster, especially as most of the posters ended up being recycled or thrown out rather than being of use to the student.
- Allow more flexibility in terms of the responsibilities laid out in the contract at the beginning of the placement. Some students said that their role became clearer as the placement unfolded, and that it would have been helpful to write out their responsibilities a few weeks into the placement.
- Expand the program in order for students to complete more than one placement or to do more than 200 hours. Some students even said they would do a placement just to "have the experience" even if they were not receiving a stipend or course credit.
- Extend the duration of the placement or find some other way for students to complete projects they start during their internship. A few students were not able to complete projects they had started, and the advisors felt that this had a negative impact at the community level.
- Expand opportunities for students to share the outcome of their experiences, such as a web page about each student's experience, a blog, or other ways that would promote more community awareness or awareness within the host organization about the student's role.
- Expand the role of the community advisors on campus, or the community members on campus.
- Allow students to look into their own placements or to make an initial connection with the advisor if they already have something in mind.
- Help prepare advisors who are not Aboriginal but work for an Aboriginal organization by having them complete the online SFACT modules. In a few cases, the advisor was not Aboriginal but worked for an Aboriginal organization. Several people suggested that the SFACT units which focused on the needs of Aboriginal students may have been a good way of preparing the advisor to work with the student.
- Prepare students to deal with potential conflicts that could arise while working in a community setting, particularly in cases where students worked in their home communities. This could be done within the Preparation Seminar or as part of setting up their placement.

I felt really, really encouraged and motivated by the supervision that I had.

LE,NONET student

The internship changed my whole perspective on career aspirations, challenged me, and gave me invaluable experience and drive to continue on with my dreams.

LE,NONET student

6.6 Research Apprenticeship Program

6.6.1 Program Overview

The Research Apprenticeship Program paired students with faculty at the university, providing them with an opportunity to complete 200 hours of work on a research project. This program had less of an Aboriginal focus than the Community Internship Program, as students could be paired with any faculty member in any department who was interested in advising an Aboriginal student. Students were not restricted to areas of research that were directly linked to their own educational goals or academic department. This flexibility allowed the program coordinator to create placements that met students' personal and cultural interests, as well as their career and academic goals.

I just feel like I'm a lot more well rounded person and very happy with where I am in my life because of the opportunity I had to do my internship and working out here.

LE,NONET student

Travel funds were available to support student participants in attending conferences or to travel as part of their work on the research project (such as for data collection).

6.6.2 Program Outcomes

As explained in the previous sections, the evaluation framework from the interim report has been expanded to better account for the summative outcomes. In Table 22, below, outcomes that were anticipated and met are shown in regular text; outcomes that were anticipated but not met or that could not be evaluated at the time of the report are shown in light grey text; and outcomes that were unanticipated but met are shown in bold text. A brief discussion of the outcomes is provided after the table.

Table 22. Summative Outcomes (Research Apprenticeship Program)

Outputs	Early outcomes	Intermediate outcomes	Long-term outcomes
Number of students who apply to be an apprentice	Apprentices learn about research-related issues, including ethical issues in research (from a cultural perspective)	Apprentices improve their knowledge of research issues and their research and communication skills	Aboriginal students strengthen their sense of identity and their connections with faculty/ researchers
Number of students selected to be an apprentice	Apprentices learn and practise research skills (e.g., data collection and analysis methods)	Apprentices experience positive sense of identity and self-esteem/confidence	Aboriginal students strengthen their sense of connections with other student researchers
Number of students participating in on-campus seminar (apprenticeship prerequisite)	Apprentices learn and practise research-related writing and presentation skills (e.g., knowledge transfer)	Apprentices increase their sense of comfort with research	Aboriginal students have stronger sense of themselves as researchers and academics
Number of researchers interested in sponsoring an apprenticeship	Apprentices earn wages and course credit for their apprenticeships	Apprentices develop positive relationships and a sense of connection with the university's research community, including other student researchers	Increased number of Aboriginal students in graduate studies
Number of apprenticeship placements	Research advisors obtain assistance in undertaking research activities	Research advisors obtain assistance in undertaking research activities	Increased number of Aboriginal students employed in research projects (both academic and community-based)
Number of hours spent by apprentices in research projects	Research advisors gain knowledge about Aboriginal culture and research-related issues from a cultural perspective	Research advisors gain knowledge about Aboriginal culture and research-related issues from a cultural perspective	
Creation of internship/ apprenticeship database		Increased number of students focused on Aboriginal-specific educational programs	
		Students obtain employment beyond the end of their RA placement	
		Increased interest in graduate studies	
		Students exposed to academic opportunities (e.g., publishing, conferences)	

All of the anticipated outcomes for the Research Apprenticeship Program were met during the LE,NONET Project. Analysis of the qualitative research indicated that students experienced a range of unexpected benefits from the program, including employment, an interest in graduate studies, and a number of academic opportunities. Additionally, students indicated an increased interest in Aboriginal-specific educational programs as a result of working on Aboriginal-specific research projects.

6.6.3 Major Themes Emerging from the Qualitative Research

Process of setting up placements

In general, both students and advisors said the process of setting up the Research Apprenticeship placements was clear and accessible. The program coordinator worked to ensure both the students and advisors were aware of their responsibilities and had resources to use in evaluating the placement as it unfolded.

The one barrier that emerged from interviews with advisors was the requirement that faculty complete the online SFACT modules prior to their involvement with the program. This created problems for faculty because of the time constraints they were under and the huge volume of information included in the modules. While many faculty said the information was valuable in the end, the fact that it was a requirement rather than a resource was seen as a barrier to setting up the placements in some cases.

Individualized placements

As with the Community Internship Program, both student and advisor respondents said one of the reasons the program was so effective was the individualized nature of the placements. Advisors were willing to tailor the research project to the interests and skills of the student, and generally said their focus was on providing a meaningful learning experience for an undergraduate student.

Elements of successful matches

Overwhelmingly, faculty respondents said the matches were successful because of the positive attitude of the students. This was seen as linked to the Preparation Seminar, not because of the specific skills that students learned through the seminar but because of the relationships the instructors built with the students, and the supportive relationships that were formed.

Fostering new relationships

Both student and faculty respondents consistently said the relationships they developed through the Research Apprenticeship Program were very valuable, enriching, and personally meaningful. Students said their advisors were incredibly supportive and encouraging, and they felt the relationship would last beyond the placement term. Faculty advisors said they learned a lot from the student apprentices and valued the knowledge the students brought to the research initiatives.

Range of research programs explored

The Research Apprenticeship placements were very diverse and included both Indigenous and non-Indigenous research projects across diverse faculties and departments. Areas of focus included Aboriginal health, engineering, Aboriginal theatre, arts and culture, and Aboriginal youth programming, and other areas of interest to Indigenous communities.

> We thought the program was really good. I really enjoyed being the recipient of the two [students], and if that's the quality or caliber of the student and there happened to be someone in this area that wanted to come to us again, we'd be very happy.
>
> Advisor

Working with Indigenous faculty

For the students who worked with Indigenous faculty members, the program was enriching through the mentoring relationship that developed. Students said the program gave them a unique opportunity to learn from Indigenous academics who are leaders in their field. These placements allowed the students to see that it may be possible for them to attain that same level of achievement within a university and to bring their Indigenous perspective to research initiatives.

Seeing research as relevant in Aboriginal contexts

Student respondents said the experience they gained through the Research Apprenticeship Program allowed them to see research as relevant to the goals of their communities and families, as well as to their own academic path. Some students said that they had never considered research as part of their academic goals or vision but that the Research Apprenticeship experience inspired them to see research as relevant to Aboriginal communities.

> And also, the relationships that I've built have changed me and changed my view and the feeling that I've actually made a difference, that I've helped, even if it's being able to kick start a kid's language ability, that's something that I feel has been successful, and so that feeling of success has been beneficial for me.
>
> LE,NONET student

Cultural components

While culture was not an explicit focus of the program, many of the placements had a cultural component and provided opportunities for the students to either share their own cultural teachings or to learn about cultural practices and histories through the research projects.

Student responsibilities

For the most part, both students and faculty said the initial process of setting up the Research Apprenticeship placements was clear and accessible, and helped to clearly establish the scope of work the student would be undertaking. Several students said they ended up doing different work than was originally set out for them; few respondents saw this as a barrier, as the majority of respondents in this situation still had a good experience and learned through the process of negotiating their duties.

Skill development

You know what, to be honest I think the most successful ones in my mind, were with Indigenous faculty. And I know that there isn't a lot of Indigenous faculty, but the ones that were able, that did do that, they were really good.

LE,NONET staff

Students in the program gained research and writing skills, public speaking and interviewing experience, skills in using library and archives to conduct research, experience meeting with advisory committees, and other research-related skills and experiences. Students also had opportunities to put their skills into practice in new areas of interest, sometimes resulting in a renewed focus on a particular issue, such as health in Aboriginal communities.

Opportunities extending beyond program

Just the skills that I acquired through learning how to research, I can't even—like I'm a better student tenfold, no doubt about it.

LE,NONET student

Students and faculty were asked if any unexpected outcomes emerged from the Research Apprenticeship placements. A large number of students (80.5%) reported being offered jobs as a result of their placement, while others said they developed a strong working relationship with their advisor, which led to future opportunities. Both faculty and student respondents said the program resulted in new relationships, both individual relationships and more broad connections with the LE,NONET program staff and research staff in individual departments or projects. Students also said they would be provided with letters of reference for future job applications, which would be a huge help to them.

Negative experiences

Very few students reported negative experiences in their Research Apprenticeship placement. One source of confusion stemmed from placements where the student was not working directly with a faculty member but as part of a research team or larger project and the other team members did not provide enough direction to the student. In other cases, students said their placements were too constricting because of the institutional environment or bureaucratic organization they were placed in. A couple of students said the placements were not as stimulating or interesting as they were hoping, but they generally still saw them as helpful because of the course credit and stipend they received. In general, students who encountered challenges in their placements reported being supported by the program coordinator or faculty advisor in working through any problems or challenges as they arose.

6.6.4 Recommendations for Future Implementation

The key recommendation emerging from the qualitative research was to give the program a more explicit Aboriginal focus, pairing students with Aboriginal faculty or research projects. Additionally, as with the Community Internship Program, the Research Apprenticeship Program would benefit from more consistency across various departments in recognizing it as a course toward students' major/minor degrees. Respondents also suggested the following improvements to the Research Apprenticeship Program:

Program expansion

Both students and faculty said they would like to see the Research Apprenticeship Program expanded in order for students to do multiple placements to gain a greater breadth of research experience. Students also said they would have liked to add more hours to their placement in order to continue working on the same project.

Student support

Although the majority of students said they felt supported by the program coordinator and their advisor, a few students said they were hesitant to talk about the challenges they faced in their placement. These students feared they would be penalized by not being given the stipend if the placement did not go well.

Faculty recognition

Faculty respondents recommended that the program include more recognition of the amount of time faculty members invest in supervising students.

Faculty prerequisites

Suggestions specific to the SFACT module content are included in Section 7. Completion of the online SFACT Module was a prerequisite for the Research Apprenticeship Program. While most faculty

respondents agreed that the intent behind this prerequisite was positive (sensitizing faculty to Aboriginal issues before taking on an Aboriginal student apprentice), the particular way the program was administered was prohibitive to some and was offensive to a number of Aboriginal faculty.

In addition to recommending a number of changes for the online SFACT Module, faculty respondents suggested the following changes in preparing them for their role in the program:

- Rather than online training, hold a half-day workshop for all faculty who are taking on students through the Research Apprenticeship Program. This would facilitate the development of new relationships and information sharing. It was suggested that local First Nations elders could participate in order to ground the program in the local territory.
- The online module should serve as a resource rather than a prerequisite.

6.7 Discussion of Findings

6.7.1 Programs Offering Financial Support

Students were eligible to receive a maximum of $15,000 from the Bursary Program and Emergency Relief Fund over the four years of the project. Only five students received the maximum amount. Of the 161 students who received financial support from these programs, the largest number (70 students) received below $5,000 (see Figure 14).

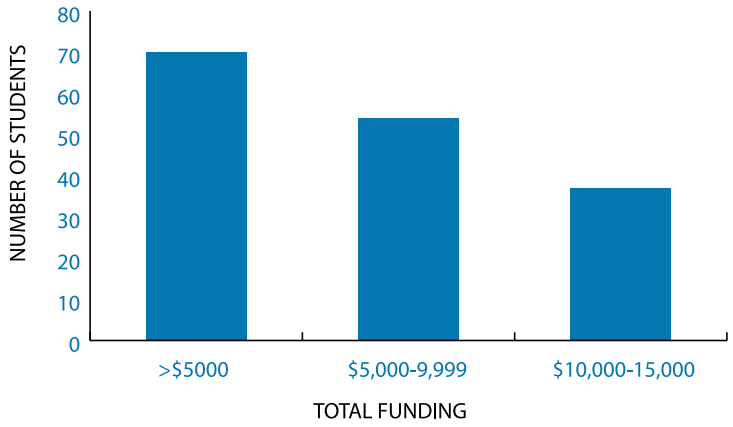
I know that some doors have been opened up for students that would not have been there if LE,NONET was not here on campus. Especially through Community Internships and Research Apprenticeships, like people are doing research on campus now or they're doing masters with their supervisors, or have jobs with the communities that they initially did the Community Internship with, so I think that's been really successful, yeah.

Faculty advisor

I'm definitely more open to the idea of going on to do a master's and to do a thesis. It seems like something I might actually be able to accomplish. If I hadn't done the apprenticeship I don't know if I'd be so confident in my ability to do something like that.

LE,NONET student

Figure 14. Total Funding Received Through Bursary and Emergency Relief Funds



The financial support students received through these programs was hugely beneficial, and student respondents repeatedly expressed their gratitude for having this funding available. The accessibility of the funding application was made especially effective because it was administered out of an Aboriginal project space. Many Aboriginal students who accessed the Bursary Program and Emergency Relief Fund had not identified as Aboriginal in their application to the university.

6.7.2 Program Models: Courses for Academic Credit

The Preparation Seminar, Community Internship Program, and Research Apprenticeship Program worked together to provide students with culturally relevant, meaningful learning opportunities for which they received academic credit. These three courses, offered in partnership with the Indigenous Studies Minor Program, brought together students from across various disciplines to gain experience in putting their academic skills and knowledge into practice in research and community settings. The programs were successful because of the ways they complemented each other and allowed students to build upon the strengths gained across the programs. These three courses contributed to many students' academic record. Although some faculties did not recognize the courses toward students' majors, student respondents still saw the courses as worthwhile on both personal and academic levels.

A more institutionalized approach to these types of programs for academic credit could have an even

It allowed me to connect back a lot of what I'm learning, especially through my botany classes right now, and to feel like I can see where it ties in sort of in my life, and I think that helps with confidence and motivation.

LE,NONET student

greater impact on Aboriginal students. Experiential, hands-on learning opportunities are rare for undergraduate students except in co-op education programs and other highly structured models. Research at UVic has shown that Aboriginal students have lower participation rates in co-op education programs than the overall university student population, which could reflect the lack of culturally relevant placements available through co-op (Office of Indigenous Affairs, 2008). The LE,NONET programs provided students with exciting opportunities to participate in credit courses that brought their education to life and made a direct relationship between their education and community interests.

The strongest link between these programs was the relationships built between the program coordinators, students, and advisors. Advisors for students in Research Apprenticeship and Community Internship placements consistently reported that the program success was largely due to the excellent matches made between the host organizations or supervisors and the students. The Preparation Seminar provided an opportunity for the instructors to get to know the students' strengths, interests, and personal goals, as well as the areas they needed to strengthen. Advisors also said they were interested in creating placements that met the students' interests and goals, and this individualized approach to the placements also contributed greatly to the outcomes.

Students in the Community Internship and Research Apprenticeship Programs were asked if any opportunities arose out of their placements, such as career or academic opportunities. The response was extremely positive, with 80.5% of Research Apprenticeship respondents and 88.9% of Community Internship respondents reporting new opportunities emerging from their placements. The long-term impact of these opportunities will not be known for many years, as students take advantage of the opportunities for employment, graduate school, collaboration, or networking.

Staff respondents said one of the most powerful aspects of this series of programs was the direct link students were able to make between their personal histories, the knowledge they gained in class, and the implementation of that knowledge through the internships or apprenticeships. One example is that of a student who grew up away from her Aboriginal family members, learned about the history of the child welfare system in Canada and the number of people who were displaced from their families, then had a placement with an organization where she was able to work on issues of child welfare, working to make things better for Aboriginal children today. These types of experience were meaningful on a personal level, as well as for the students' career paths. Of course, not all students had this level of personal connection to the program content or experiences, but these were seen as a key success of the program models.

6.7.3 Program Models: Aboriginal Focus

Many student respondents called for a greater integration of Aboriginal protocols and principles in all program models, including the credit courses and career-focused activities. Some staff also said that Aboriginal initiatives, such as the LE,NONET Project, have an opportunity to create a space where the needs of Aboriginal students are addressed in both the program design and implementation. The greater university offers many programs that are open to all students and are administered without an Aboriginal framework, which students can access if they are looking for these types of opportunities (such as co-op, research assistant positions, directed studies courses).

Students called for an integration of Aboriginal principles in the policies and guidelines for programs that have prerequisites or rigid requirements for participation, as these were seen to be prohibitive in some cases. This does not mean lowering academic standards for Aboriginal students but requires focusing on culturally sensitive principles such as relationship-building and seeing students within the greater context of their family and community. Staff and stakeholder views on this were mixed; a couple of respondents said it was important to uphold the same standards and regulations for Aboriginal students as for non-Aboriginal students, while a significant number felt it was important to dismantle the institutional boundaries around programs for Aboriginal students.

As was recommended in the previous analysis of the Research Apprenticeship Program, emphasis should be placed on pairing Aboriginal students with Aboriginal faculty, research projects with an explicit Aboriginal focus, or Aboriginal community organizations. Respondents said that facilitating relationship-building was an important aspect of the LE,NONET programs, as this can be an intimidating process for many students. The process of building relationships with faculty members, staff, and

community organizations was done in a context in which students' self-esteem and sense of identity were being supported. This combination has a powerful impact on student success.

6.7.4 Programs for Mature Students

Many of the staff, stakeholder, and student respondents commented that the program models were particularly effective for supporting mature Aboriginal students. As was noted in Section 3.2, LE,NONET students were five years older, on average, than the overall student population at the university. Some older participants needed computer support, extra help navigating the campus, and general assistance in becoming acculturated to the university. Some mature students also had a history of residential school abuse and found support at LE,NONET in working through reconciling that history with their current role as a university student. Integrating an awareness of the needs of mature students into the program implementation and design was one of the key strengths of the project.

6.7.5 Lower Cost Models for Program Implementation

Since the initiation of the LE,NONET Project, the pool of funding for post-secondary institutions has dwindled due to widespread economic turmoil in Canada and internationally. While the financial support students received from the Bursary Program and Emergency Relief Fund made a significant impact on the retention of student recipients, several of the other programs could be offered without student stipends, thereby decreasing the base funding needed to deliver the programs.

Although the funds students received from the Community Internship and Research Apprenticeship Programs was an important source of financial support for the participants, the programs could be run for academic credit alone and would still benefit student participants. Several program advisors said they deeply appreciated the student stipends provided by LE,NONET because they thought the work should be paid but did not have any funding available to pay the student. However, if the students received course credit (similar to a directed studies course), the model may still be effective.

While a low-cost model could be developed similar to co-op education programs, in which organizations pay part of the student stipend, the model may exclude many Aboriginal communities and organizations that are short on funding.

In order to reduce staffing costs, the Preparation Seminar, Community Internship, and Research Apprenticeship Programs could be coordinated by a single staff person rather than two, with a more controlled cohort group. These three programs complemented one another and provided unique opportunities for students but could be offered with a smaller budget if the key components and best practice principles were maintained. Although some budgetary considerations would need to be taken in to account in order to maintain the cultural and community components of the programs (such as honoraria for guest speakers and funds for food and gifts), the budget could be reduced significantly.

7 | STAFF AND FACULTY ABORIGINAL CULTURAL TRAINING (SFACT)

7.1 Program Overview

The Staff and Faculty Aboriginal Cultural Training (SFACT) was created in order to contribute to the overall project goal of making the university a more welcoming environment for Aboriginal learners. Literature on the experiences of Aboriginal students in post-secondary education reflects the need for a shift in the level of understanding that university faculty and staff have of Aboriginal issues. Additionally, the program was seen as an important tool in making faculty and staff aware of the unique needs of Aboriginal students, the diversity of backgrounds and experiences Aboriginal students bring to the campus, and the ways in which faculty and staff could support Aboriginal students to succeed.

The SFACT Advisory Committee originally consisted of project staff and was focused on the development and implementation of program material. In the final year of the project, the committee was expanded to include representatives from other university departments in order to gain more broad-based interest in utilizing the curriculum beyond the end of the pilot project, as well as to inform the development of the SFACT workshops. The committee included representatives from various university departments with interests in equity, human resource, and Aboriginal issues, as well as Aboriginal faculty and staff, Aboriginal students, and other interested groups.

The SFACT component of the LE,NONET Project comprised three major initiatives:

- a needs assessment
- online modules
- workshop modules

7.1.1 Needs Assessment

A needs assessment was conducted to inform the development of the SFACT workshop modules as well as future awareness-raising initiatives for staff and faculty at the university. A total of 267 people participated in the assessment, including Aboriginal students (both undergraduate and graduate), professionals in Aboriginal education, and university staff and faculty. The needs assessment report was released in 2009; a summary of the findings is presented below (Section 7.3).

The elders put wisdom, kindness, and even humour into the "information" thus making it "shared knowledge." They are the critical difference from all the workshops/ seminars/ courses that I have taken over the years. Their humility and grace exemplifies what our common humanity should be – but at the same time does not diminish our own pain or responsibility.

Workshop participant

7.1.2 Online Modules

Eight online units were created by specialist consultants who were hired to write the curriculum, and included text and multimedia content on a range of issues. Completion of the units was a requirement of faculty advisors as part of the Research Apprenticeship Program and was monitored by the Research Apprenticeship coordinator.

I felt teary throughout. This was uncomfortable. Experiencing the vulnerabilities of our Indigenous people made me feel ashamed but hopeful for change.

Workshop participant

The content areas of the online modules were

1) Indigenous worldview
2) Colonization
3) Local First Nations
4) Inuit Peoples
5) Métis Peoples
6) Urban Aboriginal Peoples
7) Racism
8) Decolonizing Research

The online modules were evaluated through online questionnaires at the end of each module as well as through interviews with faculty advisors (as outlined in Section 4.5).

7.1.3 Workshop Modules

Five half-day workshops were created by curriculum development consultants who worked with the SFACT Advisory Committee and LE,NONET staff on determining the workshop content and format. The Elders' Voices group on campus was involved in the delivery of the workshops and brought cultural teachings and knowledge that helped to ground the workshops in the local territory.

The guiding threads through the workshops were *building respectful relationships and an Indigenous Knowledge framework of responsibility, reciprocity, relationship, respect reverence and balance.* The workshops were organized around the following five themes:

1) Taking your place in the circle, engaging local communities
2) Taking responsibility for history, the present, and the future
3) White privilege, social location, and Aboriginal presence in universities
4) Honouring Indigenous Knowledge: language, medicines, and the land
5) Aboriginal issues in the classroom

7.2 Summative Outcomes

As explained in the previous sections, the evaluation framework from the interim report has been expanded to better account for the summative outcomes. In Table 23, below, outcomes that were anticipated and met are shown in regular text; outcomes that were anticipated but not met or that could not be evaluated at the time of the report are shown in light grey text; and outcomes that were unanticipated but met are shown in bold text. A brief discussion of the outcomes is provided after the table.

Table 23. Summative Outcomes (Staff and Faculty Aboriginal Cultural Training Program)

Outputs	Early outcomes	Intermediate outcomes	Long-term outcomes
Number of faculty and staff who apply to participate in culturally focused professional development activities	Faculty and staff have increased awareness regarding Aboriginal peoples' history, culture, and perspectives	Faculty and staff have increased awareness regarding Aboriginal peoples' history, culture, and perspectives	A safe, welcoming, positive learning environment exists for Aboriginal learners
Number of faculty and staff who take part in professional development activities	Faculty and staff who supervise research apprentices have improved confidence in relation to their knowledge of Aboriginal historical and contemporary realities	Faculty, staff, and services work collaboratively to support Aboriginal student retention and success	Aboriginal students, as well as faculty and staff, experience support from an integrated array of services and resources, as needed
Number of seminars/ workshops (professional development activities) delivered to faculty/staff	Faculty and staff who participate in professional development activities receive recognition for their efforts	Faculty and staff competency models are redefined to include cultural knowledge and sensitivity	Stronger relationships are established between UVic staff and faculty who are interested in supporting Aboriginal students
PD curriculum for faculty/staff		Increased discussion about needs of Aboriginal students on campus	UVic faculty are better prepared to deal with cross-cultural issues in the classroom
		A committee of UVic stakeholders is formed to continue delivery of SFACT modules	
		Elders' Voices develops relationships with staff and faculty through involvement in workshops	

The SFACT Program was successful in meeting most of the goals outlined in the original evaluation framework. However, the program did not meet the goal of recognizing staff for their participation in the program, as responsibility for accreditation or other forms of recognition falls beyond the reach of the project. The same is true for the goal of revising faculty and staff competency models. Some unanticipated outcomes included impacts of the program on the broader university environment, the formation of a committee to continue the program beyond the LE,NONET Project, and the establishment of long-term relationships among stakeholder groups.

7.3 SFACT Needs Assessment Findings

The needs assessment provided evidence of the ongoing inequities facing Aboriginal students at the university, including incidents of racism, misunderstanding of Aboriginal issues, and inadequate attention to the particular learning needs of Aboriginal students. Although students said their experiences with staff and faculty were improving, they felt that much more education was needed to expand the level of understanding more broadly across campus. Specifically, students said that faculty need to improve their ability to address incidents of racism, misunderstanding, or ignorance of Aboriginal issues in the classroom. Respondents demonstrated widespread support for Aboriginal awareness initiatives at the university, including interest from faculty, staff, and students in improving the environment for Aboriginal students through increased cross-cultural understanding.

The needs assessment included a broad range of suggested content areas and delivery formats for Aboriginal awareness initiatives as well as concrete next steps for implementing this type of training at the university. Key topics included historical contexts, contemporary realities facing Aboriginal communities, cultural practices and teachings, local peoples and land, the diversity of Aboriginal peoples' experiences, relationship building, and practical tools. Participants overwhelmingly supported a face-to-face delivery model, with an emphasis on hearing from Aboriginal knowledge keepers and participating in group workshops and interactive activities.

Respondents were asked whether the training should be made mandatory for all university staff and faculty, and responses generally indicated that doing so would be prohibitive to gaining support for the initiative. Students also said they feared a backlash if the training were made mandatory. However, respondents suggested ways of encouraging staff and faculty to participate, including recognition of the training time in their HR file or departmental evaluation and ensuring the format is flexible enough to account for the busy schedules of faculty and staff.

7.4 Results of Qualitative Analyses: Workshop Format

> These kinds of workshops need to be held more frequently (or at least annually). Although I have learned much of what I heard here before, I realized as I sat here that I had forgotten much of it. It is so easy to get pulled into the institutional machine – this workshop helped re-open my heart of knowing – too much that goes on here is head learning!
>
> Workshop participant

All of the workshops were well received—between 85 and 100% of respondents said they would recommend the workshops to others. The third workshop, which focused on White privilege, received the lowest rating. This workshop challenged participants to look at the dominant culture rather than Aboriginal cultures and traditions, and brought up issues that participants may not have expected. While this content is an important part of the workshop series because it challenges participants to examine their own role in Indigenous struggles, it was not received as well as the cultural or historical content. Respondents rated the second workshop the most highly when asked to what degree the workshops had increased their knowledge of Aboriginal peoples. This workshop included a greater emphasis on elders sharing stories, knowledge, and ceremonies with participants. Participants generally appreciated the opportunity to hear from elders and community members, and spoke highly of the stories and cultural knowledge content.

Reframing knowledge

Workshop participants appreciated the inclusion of various types of knowledge that extended their learning beyond historical or current facts about Aboriginal people. The curriculum emphasized the importance of using "heart knowledge" and personal experience rather than purely academic or intellectual information. The workshops included opportunities for participants to share their own experiential knowledge, as well as to hear stories and experience Indigenous traditions and ceremonies as part of their learning. This emphasis on valuing diverse types of knowledge created an open learning environment, despite the institutional context in which the workshops were offered.

Participants were not just there as part of their official role at the university, but were also valued as individuals.

One interesting tension that emerged during the workshops, and was noted by participants in the evaluation forms, was the use of academic language (on the part of the facilitators) in talking about colonialism (as shared through elders' stories). Despite the facilitators' respect for traditional wisdom and knowledge, the academic language that some participants and facilitators used was seen by some elders to be representative of continued colonialism. This disconnect was not resolved in the workshop but was noted as interesting by participants.

Involvement of elders

Members of the Elders' Voices group on campus played a large role in the creation and implementation of the workshops. Formed in 2009 through the Office of Indigenous Affairs, this group leads ceremonies, protocols, and celebrations on campus and also provides support to students through the Elders in Residence Program. Members of this group worked closely with the curriculum developers to determine how Indigenous knowledge and cultural practices could be respectfully and meaningfully woven into the workshops. Participants appreciated the connections they were able to make with the elders and the ways in which they openly shared knowledge, stories, and cultural ceremonies. The elders had an important role in the success of the workshops, as they brought the guiding thread of building respectful relationships to life in their teaching styles. Participants consistently mentioned the generosity and openness of the elders in their questionnaire responses.

Participatory format

Participants consistently named the small group activities and experiential learning as highlights of the workshops. This participatory format created an open environment in which the participants were able to bring their own perspective to the workshop and to learn from other participants as well as elders and the facilitators. The inclusion of ceremonial practices from local First Nations cultures as well as traditional Indigenous languages and teachings were other highlights for participants. They were able to take part in meaningful elements of the workshops along with the elders and other participants, which had a great personal impact.

Sharing and personal growth

Some of the activities asked participants to investigate their own personal lineage and family history, as well as their current role in supporting Indigenous students and communities. While participants said these activities had a very positive impact on them, they also said they posed challenges because of the institutional context in which the workshops were offered. Several workshop participants expressed concern about the challenge of participating in the training along with co-workers and supervisors. However, other participants said the facilitators succeeded in creating a safe environment in which people could openly share their experiences and perspective with others.

Examining difficult issues

Participants said they valued the information they learned about colonization, including the impact of residential school and other forms of colonial control. However, several participants said they experienced grief, sadness, and challenge in processing this information. Some participants also said they experienced shame or guilt as people of European or settler ancestry and would have liked more exploration of the role of non-Aboriginal allies and moving beyond feelings of guilt.

Continued learning: Follow-up

Workshop participants said they would have liked an opportunity to ask more questions during the workshop or to follow up with the elders and facilitators after the end of the workshops. The facilitators of the pilot workshops were not university staff, but if future offerings of the workshops are facilitated by staff, it would be more possible for participants to follow up with the facilitators if they had questions or wanted more information.

Support for continuation of the workshops

The vast majority of participants said they would recommend the workshops to others. None of the participants said that they would not recommend them, while only one or two from each workshop said they were unsure. Many participants noted on the evaluation questionnaires that they hoped the workshops would continue to be offered at the university, and several workshop participants either wrote to the LE,NONET staff or the university administration to express support for the program (at least one staff member wrote a letter to the president of the university and sent a copy to LE,NONET).

7.5 Results of the Qualitative Analyses: Online Format

Localized knowledge

A major common theme of the interviews with Research Apprenticeship advisors was the localized knowledge that grounded the SFACT online modules in the local Coast and Straits Salish communities. The unit on local First Nations was rated the most highly by participants as being relevant to their interactions with Aboriginal students and was also rated as the most interesting of all the topics. Faculty said they appreciated having a better understanding of the territories on which the university is situated. Many said they would have preferred a workshop format for these teachings, in order to bring the contents to life through experiential and relational learning.

> The training module was excellent, especially for a pilot. The biggest challenge I faced was the amount of time needed to read, think, write, and follow up on the extra resources. It took me much longer than I had hoped or anticipated, particularly because I didn't want to rush through, and because my time was often broken up during a given unit.
>
> Online participant

Personal meaning

The majority of faculty respondents said that they learned a great deal from the online modules and that it had personal meaning for them. The content of the modules and the feedback questions scattered throughout were appreciated by some participants as a learning opportunity. Many respondents said they experienced growth on a personal level rather than professionally, as the contents helped them to address their role as an ally to Indigenous struggles.

> I think that this program has a lot of promise and it seems well-thought out and informed and a lot of great work and dedication must have gone in to have it at the point it's at right now. This is challenging and important work and I really salute all the people who have worked on it and hope that the First Nations students here will really benefit from it, and that it could exist as a permanent component of a UVic education.
>
> Online participant

Time commitment

Interview respondents consistently said that the online modules were very time consuming and that completion of the modules was somewhat of a barrier to their participation in the Research Apprenticeship Program. In particular, some Aboriginal faculty said they were already overburdened because of the pressure to be on various committees, mentor Aboriginal students, and remain involved in Aboriginal community initiatives, on top of their regular duties as faculty.

Balancing content

Several respondents said that the online units placed too much emphasis on the marginalization of Aboriginal people, and that they would have liked to see more positive stories included. A balance of

both strengths and challenges facing Aboriginal people today was said to be missing, particularly in the areas on contemporary issues such as research and education.

Overall tone and approach

In both faculty interviews and the online questionnaires, respondents said the tone of the curriculum was condescending in some places, particularly in the units on racism and decolonizing research. These topics can be challenging to address in a web-based format, where dialogue is not possible, and a face-to-face format may provide a more appropriate environment for exploring these issues.

Link to Research Apprenticeship Program

In the qualitative interviews as well as the online feedback, respondents said it was not appropriate for the online training to be a requirement of the Research Apprenticeship Program. The majority of faculty who completed the evaluation questionnaire for the online SFACT units reported a high level of experience working with Indigenous students, the majority of which was of a personal nature. Respondents suggested that rather than being a requirement, the training be offered as a resource to faculty and staff working with Aboriginal students in various capacities.

Appropriateness for Aboriginal faculty

Many respondents felt that Aboriginal faculty and academics with a long history of working in Aboriginal communities or on Aboriginal issues should not have to complete the online units. Several students were unable to work with Aboriginal faculty members because the faculty members chose not to complete the online modules, in part because they were insulted by the requirement. Indeed, if the purpose of SFACT was to raise awareness of Aboriginal issues and student needs, Aboriginal faculty are likely not the target audience for whom the content was intended.

7.6 Recommendations for Future Implementation

Detailed recommendations for this type of training for university faculty and staff are outlined in the SFACT needs assessment. Additionally, participant feedback from the online and workshop modules suggests the following improvements for future implementation:

Revisions to online module content

- Substitute some of the longer readings with shorter readings or assignments.
- Remove the reflective questions, or make them optional.
- Make the site easier to navigate.
- Allow access to the website for anyone at the university rather than restricting it to faculty members interested in the Research Apprenticeship Program.
- Use the online units as a resource for the workshops rather than as a stand-alone initiative.

Revisions to workshops

- Provide opportunities for follow-up with facilitators or elders if participants have lingering questions.
- Address the possibility that some participants may work together or have power-over relationships that may create difficult situations when sharing personal information in the group.
- Better explain the purpose and meaning of ceremonies in the workshops.

Staff and faculty respondents suggested that workshop participants be required to complete the workshops in sequence (i.e., workshop 1 is a prerequisite for workshop 2, and so on) rather than allowing participants to take the workshops in the order they choose.

Blended model

Interviews with Research Apprenticeship advisors and needs assessment respondents revealed that a combination of face-to-face workshops and online resources was a model that appealed to many faculty and staff. Respondents said that an online resource that was available as needed and was framed as a resource rather than a program prerequisite would be very useful. This model would allow for a combination of experiential learning, relationship-building, and immersion in local cultural practices, as appropriate, and would also give participants an online resource for follow-up at their leisure.

8 | RESULTS OF THE QUANTITATIVE ANALYSES

This section summarizes a set of quantitative analyses of administrative data on the demographic characteristics and retention and graduation patterns of three different groups of students: an historical cohort (pre-LE,NONET comparison group), LE,NONET participants, and non-participants (current Aboriginal students who elected not to take part in LE,NONET programs). The section begins with a description of data sources and the methods used to identify students who are Aboriginal within the overall student population (see also Section 2.4).

8.1 Student Gender and Age by Group

As shown in Table 24, the gender distribution is remarkably consistent across the groups, with approximately 70% of identified students being female.

Table 24. Number and Percentage of Students (by Group and Gender)

	Gender		
Group	Female (%)	Male (%)	Total
Historical cohort	698 (70.0)	299 (30.0)	994[a]
Participants	141 (70.5)	59 (29.5)	200
Non-participants	575 (70.2)	244 (29.8)	818[a]

a Gender was not recorded for three students in the historical cohort and one non-participant.

One-way analysis of variance revealed that students in the historical cohort were slightly but reliably younger than students in the other groups: F2, 2009 = 10.856, p<.001 (see Table 25). Female students were reliably older than their male counterparts (28.3 years vs. 25.17 years): F 1,2010 = 43.023, p<.0001. No age differences were found between LE,NONET participants and non-participants: F 1, 1016 = .194, ns.

Table 25. Average Age of Students (by Gender and Group)

	Gender		
Group	Female	Male	Total
Historical cohort	27.2	24.5	26.4
Participants	28.8	28.5	28.7
Non-participants	29.7	25.2	28.3

8.2 Year of Study at First Registration by Group

There was a slightly higher proportion of first-year students in the LE,NONET participant group due to program selection criteria, which were designed to attract first-year students (see Table 26). Selection criteria for the Preparation Seminar and the Research Apprenticeship and Community Internship Programs also limited the number of fourth-year students who qualified—resulting in slightly fewer fourth-year students in the participant group. Most student mentors were in their third year of study. The largest difference between the groups, however, was found in the "Unclassified" category. This admission category includes transfer students as well as students in non-degree and certificate programs. This resulted in a significant difference between the groups according to a Pearson chi-square test: $\chi 2(10) = 150.97$, $p > .001$. When the "Unclassified" category is omitted from the analysis and proportions are compared for the participant and non-participant groups only (see Table 27), the proportions of students in years 1–5 are equivalent: $\chi 2(4) = 7.34$, ns.

Table 26. Year of Study at First Registration (Percentage of Students by Group)

	Year of study						
Group	**First**	**Second**	**Third**	**Fourth**	**Fifth**	**UNC[a]**	**Total**
Historical cohort	35.9	17.2	24.1	0.8	0	21.9	100
Participants	35.5	17.0	31.5	8.0	1.5	6.5	100
Non-participants	26.5	15.5	24.1	12.7	1.0	20.1	100

a UNC = Unclassified (typically used for transfer students or those lacking a qualification)

Table 27. Year of Study at First Registration (Percentage of Students by Group)

	Year of study					
Group	**First**	**Second**	**Third**	**Fourth**	**Fifth**	**Total**
Participants	38.0	18.2	33.7	8.6	1.6	100
Non-participants	33.2	19.4	30.2	15.9	1.2	100

8.3 Faculty of Study at First Registration by Group

Relative to the historical and non-participant cohorts, LE,NONET participants were overrepresented in the Faculty of Law (see Table 28). This was due to the large number of bursary applicants from that faculty.

Table 28. Faculty of Study at First Registration (Percentage of Students by Group)

	Group		
Faculty	**Historical cohort**	**Participants**	**Non-participants**
Business	0.2	0.5	0.6
Education	4.9	3.5	7.1
Engineering	3.7	1.5	3.5
Fine Arts	12.0	8.5	9.9
Human & Soc. Devt.	23.1	22.5	22.6
Humanities	17.8	15.5	19.3
Law	3.6	11.0	2.3
Science	9.7	9.5	10.7
Social Science	21.8	27.5	23.9
Total	**97.0**[a]	**100.0**	**100.0**

a 30 of the historical cohort students (3.0%) were registered in the "Faculty of Arts & Sciences," which no longer existed when the LE,NONET Project began, in 2005.

8.4 Expected Degree by Group

The variable "expected degree" is based on the program students select at first registration. Although there was some variability across the groups with respect to the degree that students expected to receive when they entered their studies, this variability does not appear to have been systematic (see Table 29). That is, the LE,NONET participants do not appear to differ from either their non-participating peers or students in the historical cohort. Although percentages were lower for LE,NONET participants in the certificate, diploma, and non-degree categories, this is due to participant selection criteria, which focused on full-time students in degree-granting programs. As with faculty of study, percentages were higher among students expecting a law degree due to the high number of bursary recipients in that degree program.

Table 29. Expected Degree (Number and Percentage of Students by Group)

	Group		
Expected degree	**Historical cohort (%)**	**Participants (%)**	**Non-participants (%)**
Bachelor of Arts (BA)	234 (23.5)	62 (31.0)	207 (25.3)
Bachelor of Child & Youth Care (BCYC)	--	4 (2.0)	2 (0.2)
Bachelor of Commerce (BCom)	2 (0.2)	1 (0.5)	5 (0.6)
Bachelor of Education (BEd)	16 (1.6)	3 (1.5)	27 (3.3)
Bachelor of Engineering (BEng)	22 (2.2)	2 (1.0)	18 (2.2)
Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA)	33 (3.3)	11 (5.5)	33 (4.0)
Bachelor of Music (BMus)	6 (0.6)	1 (0.5)	7 (0.9)
Bachelor of Science (BSc)	116 (11.6)	18 (9.0)	105 (12.8)
Bachelor of Software Engineering (BSENG)	1 (0.1)	2 (1.0)	3 (0.4)
Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN)	31 (3.1)	9 (4.5)	33 (4.0)
Bachelor of Social Work (BSW)	77 (7.7)	18 (9.0)	64 (7.8)
Certificate	64 (6.4)	4 (2.0)	70 (8.5)
Diploma	55 (5.5)	2 (1.0)	23 (2.8)
Bachelor of Law (LLB)	35 (3.5)	21 (10.5)	19 (2.3)
Non-Degree	106 (10.6)	7 (3.5)	73 (8.9)
Professional specialization certificate	1 (0.1)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.1)
Undeclared	198 (19.8)	37 (18.5)	123 (15.0)
Total	**997 (100.0)**	**200 (100.0)**	**819 (100.0)**

Concentrating attention on the LE,NONET participant and non-participant groups only, and combining categories for degrees that are low incidence but within the same program (e.g., combining the categories of Bachelor of Social Work and Bachelor of Child and Youth Care), the resulting distribution of expected degrees is shown in Table 30.

Table 30. Expected Degree (Percentage of Students by Group)

	Group	
Expected Degree	**Participants**	**Non-participants**
BA/BEd	34.8	35.9
BCom/BEng/BSENG	1.6	4.0
BFA/BMus	6.4	6.1
BSc	9.6	16.1
BSN	4.8	6.0
BSW/BCYC	11.8	10.1
LLB	11.2	2.9
Undeclared	19.8	18.9
Total	100.0	100.0

When subjected to chi-square analysis, the proportions are not equivalent across the groups ($\chi^2_{(7)} = 28.48$, $p > .001$)—a result that is due to the higher proportion of law students in the participant group.

8.5 Degree Granted by Group

The actual degree received by students who graduated did not differ systematically across the groups (see Table 31).

Table 31. Degree Granted (Number and Percentage of Students by Group)

		Group	
Degree granted	**Historical cohort (%)**	**Participants (%)**	**Non-participants (%)**
BA	93 (9.3)	23 (11.5)	88 (10.7)
BCYC	0 (0.0)	1 (0.5)	0 (0.0)
BCom	7 (0.7)	0 (0.0)	2 (0.2)
BEd	10 (1.0)	2 (1.0)	14 (1.7)
BEng	2 (0.2)	1 (0.5)	8 (1.0)
BFA	3 (0.3)	4 (2.0)	17 (2.1)
BMus	1 (0.1)	2 (1.0)	1 (0.1)
BSc	32 (3.2)	5 (2.5)	29 (3.5)
BSENG	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.1)
BSN	4 (0.4)	5 (2.5)	20 (2.4)
BSW	36 (3.6)	13 (6.5)	33 (4.0)
Certificate	14 (1.4)	4 (2.0)	10 (1.2)
Diploma	16 (1.6)	1 (0.5)	3 (0.4)
LLB	12 (1.2)	8 (4.0)	14 (1.7)
Prof. specialization certificate	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.1)
Total degrees granted	230 (23.1)	69 (34.5)	241 (29.4)

A comparison of degrees granted to students within the Participant and Non-Participant groups appears in Table 32. When subjected to chi-square analysis, the proportions are equivalent across the groups ($\chi^2_{(7)}$ = 9.31, *ns*).

Table 32. Degree Granted (Percentage of Students by Group)

	Group	
Degree granted	**Participants**	**Non-participants**
BA/BEd	12.5	12.6
BCom/BEng/BSENG	0.5	1.3
BFA/BMus	3.0	2.2
BSc	2.5	3.5
BSN	2.5	2.4
BSW/BCYC	7.0	4.0
LLB	4.0	1.7
No degree granted	68.0	72.2
Total	100.0	100.0

Because student records include all degrees and certificates earned regardless of time period, degrees granted prior to the observation window were excluded. For example, a non-participant who received a certificate in 1992 and went on to pursue a BEd during the project period would have the certificate removed from the data set. The resulting distribution of degrees granted by group is shown in Table 33.

Table 33. Number and Percentage of Students Granted Degrees (by Group)

Group	Students	Granted degrees	% of group
Historical cohort	997	230	23.1
Participants	200	64	32.0
Non-participants	819	218	26.6

A chi-square analysis of the number of degrees granted per group revealed significant differences between the groups: $\chi^2_{(2)} = 8.10$, $p < .05$. As shown in Table 34, fewer degrees than expected were granted to students in the historical cohort, and more degrees than expected were granted in the participant and non-participant groups. The number of expected degrees is calculated as part of the chi-square analysis. The result for the historical cohort group (because it was obtained over a longer observation period) suggests that degree attainment is improving over time.

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Table 34. Number and Percentage of Students Granted Degrees (by Group)

Group	Observed	Expected	Ratio
Historical cohort	230	349.1	0.908: 1
Participants	64	50.8	1.260 : 1
Non-participants	218	208.0	1.048: 1

8.6 Grade Point Average by Group

Among the several measures of grade point average (GPA) that could be derived from university records, "degree GPA" was judged to be the most accurate measure of current student performance by staff within the Office of Institutional Planning and Analysis (see Table 35). Because the variables secondary average, post-secondary average,

cumulative GPA, and degree cumulative GPA include grades earned at other educational institutions, degree GPA was selected as the measure of current student performance. A one-way analysis of variance revealed no statistically significant differences in the degree GPA measure across the groups: $F_{(2, 455)} = 1.743$, *ns*.

Table 35. Grade Point Average (by Group)

	Group		
GPA measure	Historical cohort	Participants	Non-participants
Secondary average	80.67	83.12	81.81
Post-secondary average	5.59	5.59	5.50
Cumulative GPA	5.99	5.22	5.29
Degree GPA	6.24	6.43	6.12
Degree cumulative GPA	5.99	6.43	5.97

The comparisons reported above show that the three groups were remarkably similar in terms of gender, age, year of study, and grade point average. Where the groups appear to differ, however, is in the proportion of students receiving degrees during the study period. This difference is further explored below in analyses of term-to-term retention rate, withdrawal rate, and graduation patterns.

8.7 Term-to-Term Retention

Registration records for each of the three comparison groups were examined for term-to-term registration. The standard University of Victoria academic year affords two registration opportunities: the Winter term (which runs from September to April), and the Summer term (May to August). The observation window for the historical cohort included a total of 12 of these registration opportunities (Summer 2000 to Winter 2005). For the LE,NONET participant and non-participant groups, there were just seven registration opportunities in this reporting period (Winter 2005 to Summer 2009).

Without correcting for the difference in the total number of registration opportunities afforded each group, term-to-term retention was significantly different across the groups: $F_{2, 1995} = 227.10$, $p < .001$. When retention rates for the historical cohort were transformed from a 12-term scale to a 7-term scale to match the other groups, rates were significantly different both *across* and *between* the groups: $F_{2, 2013} = 123.19$. $p < .001$. LE,NONET participants had reliably higher term-to-term retention than non-participants, and non-participants were reliably higher than students in the historical cohort (see Table 36).

Table 36. Term-to-Term Retention (Mean Number of Terms by Group)

Mean number of terms	Historical cohort	Participants	Non-participants
Raw total	2.79 (of 12)	3.04 (of 7)	2.17 (of 7)
Standardized total[a]	1.60 (of 7)	3.04 (of 7)	2.17 (of 7)

a Historical cohort scores transformed to 7-term scale (number of terms/12 x 7)

8.8 Retention, Withdrawal, and Graduation Rates

Table 37 displays the number (and percentage) of students within these groups who were known to have graduated, continued their studies at the University of Victoria, or withdrawn at the close of the observation window. For statistical purposes, students were considered to be withdrawn from their studies if they had not graduated and were not registered in the final term of the observation period.

Table 37. Registration Status (Number and Percentage of Students by Group)

	Group		
Registration status	Historical cohort, Sept 2005 (%)	Participants, Sept 2009 (%)	Non-participants, Sept 2009 (%)
Continuing	486 (48.7)	110 (55.0)	202 (24.7)
Graduated	230 (23.1)	64 (32.0)	218 (26.6)
Withdrawn	281 (28.2)	26 (13.0)	397 (48.5)
Total	997 (100)	200 (100)	819 (100)

The differences in the proportion of students in each status as a function of group was significant: $\chi^2_{(4)} = 170.12$, $p < .001$. While no age differences were found between participants and non-participants, the selection criteria for LE,NONET programs were designed to target those who were earlier in their academic career (e.g., only first-year students were initially eligible for bursaries). Although non-participants were further along in their studies, there

is a statistical trend indicating LE,NONET participants were more likely to have graduated within the reporting period: $\chi^2_{(1)} = 2.33$, $p = .076$. Students in the historical cohort were least likely to have graduated, despite the fact that the observation window was a full year longer for this group.

In terms of withdrawals, rates were lowest among LE,NONET participants and highest among non-participants. The number of observed and expected rates of withdrawal, retention, and graduation (as determined by chi-square analysis) are shown in Tables 38 to 40.

Table 38. Number of Observed and Expected "Withdrawn" (by Group)

Group	Observed	Expected	Ratio
Participants	26	70.0	0.371 : 1
Non-participants	399	286.8	1.391: 1
Historical cohort	281	349.1	0.805: 1

Table 39. Number of Observed and Expected "Continuing" (by Group)

Group	Observed	Expected	Ratio
Participants	110	79.2	1.399: 1
Non-participants	202	324.2	0.623: 1
Historical cohort	486	394.6	1.232:1

Table 40. Number of Observed and Expected "Graduated" (by Group)

Group	Observed	Expected	Ratio
Participants	64	50.8	1.260:1
Non-participants	218	208.0	1.048:1
Historical cohort	230	253.2	0.908:1

Among LE,NONET participants, withdrawals (13%) were lower than expected, while the number of students continuing (55%) and graduating (32%) was higher than expected. For non-participants, withdrawals (48.5%) and graduations (26.6%) were higher than expected, while the retention rate (24.7%) was lower. Finally, for students in the historical cohort, observed rates were lower than expected for withdrawal (28.2%) and graduation (23.1%), but higher for retention (48.7%). Concentrating on LE,NONET participants and non-participants only, a clear pattern emerges: retention and graduation rates were higher than expected for LE,NONET participants, while withdrawal rates were lower.

8.9 Summary of Demographic Analyses

The aim of the analyses reported above was to examine the demographic, academic performance characteristics, and retention patterns of three different groups of students: the cohort of Aboriginal students who attended the university in the five years prior to the start of LE,NONET (historical cohort); currently registered Aboriginal students who participated in LE,NONET programs (participants); and current Aboriginal students who elected not to participate (non-participants).

Using information contained in LE,NONET program files, in university administrative records, and in files held by the BC Ministry of Education, a total of 997 students were identified in the historical cohort, 200 in the LE,NONET participant group, and 819 in the non-participant group. There was a difference across the groups in the likelihood that students would self-identify as Aboriginal at registration or appear in Ministry of Education files. This difference appears to have stemmed from an increasing tendency for students to self-identify. It was also the case that 24 LE,NONET participants appeared in neither of these data sources. That is, they did not self-identify and, because many of them completed their elementary and secondary education outside the province, they did not appear in the BC Ministry of Education data files. These students nevertheless met the selection criteria established for the LE,NONET programs and several were also admitted to the university under special access rules for Aboriginal applicants. In all, these efforts revealed that the size of both the current and historical population of Aboriginal students was larger than anticipated.

The groups were comparable on most demographic and academic performance variables. Gender distribution was consistent across the groups, with roughly 70% of each group being female. Age was also consistent across the groups for female students, although students in the historical cohort were slightly but significantly younger than current students. In terms of year of study, faculty of study, and expected degree at first registration, the groups were again comparable, although more first-year students appeared in the participants group due to the emphasis on first-year students in LE,NONET programs. No differences were found in academic performance (i.e., GPA) across the groups.

This comparability was prerequisite to the planned survival analyses of student retention and graduation data.

8.10 Survival Analyses

Survival analysis was used to quantify the effect of LE,NONET program interventions on student retention and graduation. Survival models are an improvement over multivariate linear regression when the dependent variable is censored, as it is in this case, since many students would still be attending the university after the project ended. This quantification is complicated by three key features of the project design. The first concerns differing levels of exposure to programs. Participation in the program was not "all-or-none," as students were free to avail themselves of differing levels of participation. That is, some received bursary monies but did not take part in mentorship or research apprenticeships; others did not receive bursaries but elected to complete a research apprenticeship or a community internship. Because the Preparation Seminar was a prerequisite to the apprenticeships and internships, we cannot assess the impact of apprenticeships and internships alone. The second complication arises from the fact that students were recruited into these programs over the entire course of the study. For some students, the effect of mentoring can be assessed over the full length of the study. For others, data may be limited to the final year of the study (for example, students who entered university in year 2 of the study, but waited until their year 4 to undertake a research apprenticeship). Thus, both the level and duration of participation varied across students. Finally, because the project ended before most students had completed their studies, the data set is necessarily incomplete. (It should be noted, however, that the university intends to continue gathering relevant data on an ongoing basis and therefore will be able to determine the rate of program completion over a longer time frame.)

Our analytic efforts focus on a series of survival curve analyses that chart the number of students who "survived" each successive academic term. Though designed to measure such things as "time until patient death" following diagnosis or surgery, the technique is appropriate (although unfortunately named) to this context, in which the survival function illustrates the probability of continued success on the outcome of interest (e.g., retention, graduation) through time t.

Because we did not have the luxury of waiting until the last of our participants completed their studies, and because we had planned to include several predictors and covariates (some categorical, others continuous), we needed a way to separately assess the effect of each predictor/covariate on the shape of the retention curve as it evolved over the course of the study. The standard Kaplan-Meier method for analyzing such data would be inappropriate in these circumstances. Proportional hazard survival regression as outlined by Cox (see Klein & Moeschberger, 1997) allows us to quantify these effects, however. A general description of the Cox proportional-hazards regression method is given by Pezzullo (2007):

To understand the method of proportional hazards, first consider a "baseline" survival curve. This can be thought of as the survival curve of a hypothetical "completely average" subject—someone for whom each predictor variable is equal to the average value of that variable for the entire set of subjects in the study. This baseline survival curve doesn't have to have any particular formula representation; it can have any shape whatever, as long as it starts at 1.0 at time 0 and descends steadily with increasing survival time.

The baseline survival curve is then systematically "flexed" up or down by each of the predictor variables, while still keeping its general shape. The proportional hazards method computes a coefficient for each predictor variable that indicates the direction and degree of flexing that the predictor has on the survival curve. Zero means that a variable has no effect on the curve—it is not a predictor at all; a positive variable indicates that larger values of the variable are associated with greater mortality. Knowing these coefficients, we could construct a "customized" survival curve for any particular combination of predictor values. More importantly, the method provides a measure of the sampling error associated with each predictor's coefficient. This lets us assess which variables' coefficients are significantly different from zero; that is: which variables are significantly related to survival.

The advantage of the proportional-hazard model for this application derives from the fact that it does not depend on any assumptions about the underlying survival distribution. Instead, the model assumes that the underlying hazard rate (rather than survival time) is a function of the independent variables (covariates). No assumptions are made about the nature or shape of the hazard function. This model is often considered semiparametric.

The Cox regression model may be written as:

$$h\{(t), (z_1, z_2, ..., z_m)\} = h_0(t)*\exp(b_1*z_1 + ... + b_m*z_m)$$

where *h(t,...)* denotes the resultant hazard function at time *t*, given the values of the m covariates for

the respective case (z_1, z_2, ..., z_m) and the respective survival time *(t)*. The term $h_0(t)$ is called the *baseline hazard;* it is the hazard for the respective individual when all independent variable values are equal to zero (*b* is the regression coefficient, *exp* is the exponential function, and $\exp(b_1*z_1 + ... + b_m*z_m)$ is the survival function at time *t*).

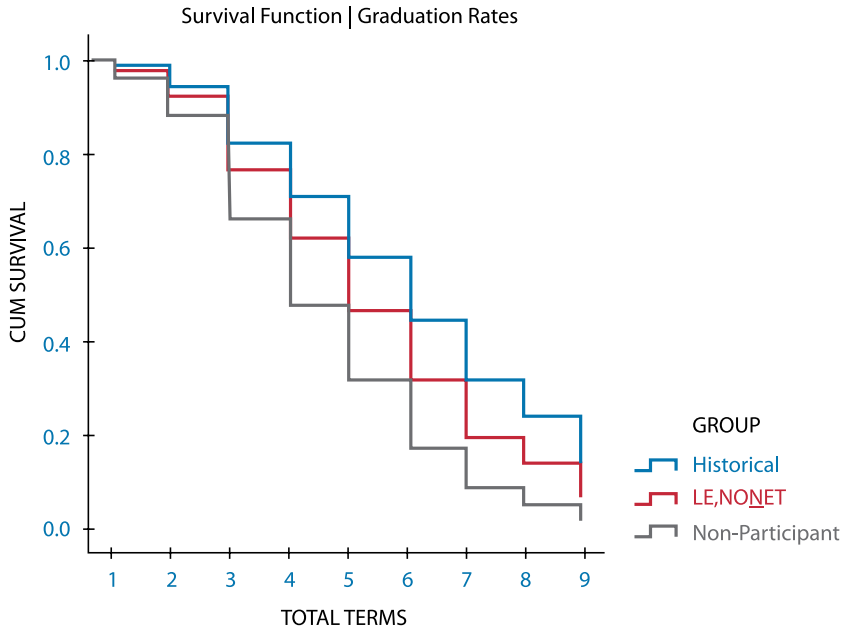
Finally, the Cox model can be employed for stratified analyses that determine whether or not the relationships between independent variables and retention/graduation are identical across different groups of students. This feature will be especially useful in determining whether some groups of students within LE,NONET programs benefited more than others.

8.11 Cox Regression Models for Graduation Rates

The Cox regression procedure was used to test a series of proportional hazard models. The hazard function is a measure of the potential for an event to occur at a particular time *t*, given that the event has not yet occurred. Larger values of the hazard function indicate greater potential for the event to occur.

As reported above, the LE,NONET participant group had the highest graduation rate (32%), followed by the non-participant group (26.6%), and the historical cohort (23.1%). The survival function for graduation appears in Figure 15. This figure illustrates graduation over time. The function is steepest for the non-participant group—suggesting that students in this group were graduating "faster" than students in the other groups.

Figure 15. Survival Function for Graduation



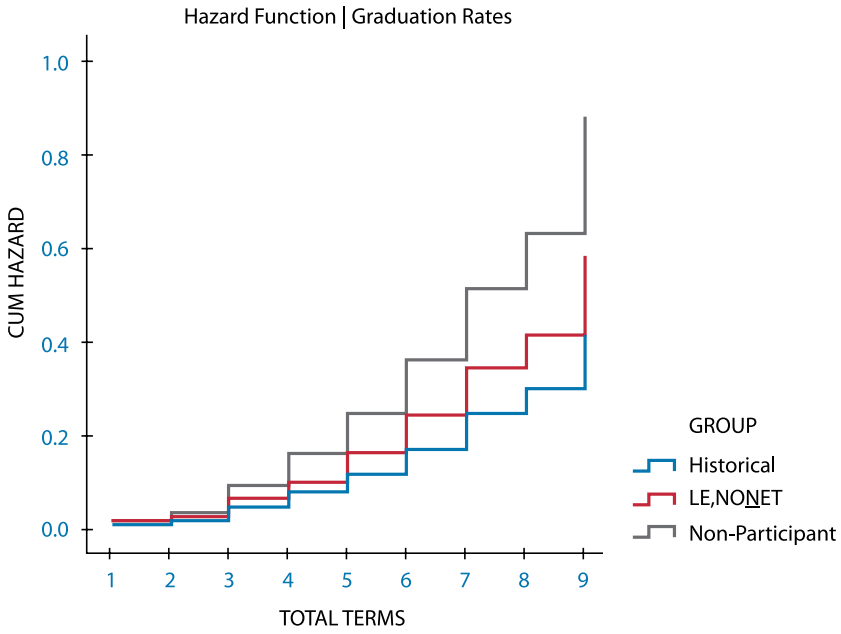
In the analysis of graduation rates across the groups, age and gender were included as covariates. Age and gender were not significant predictors of graduation: $\chi^2_{(2)} = 4.99$, $p = .085$, while group was significant: $\chi^2_{(2)} = 57.63$, $p = .001$. Table 41 displays the variables in the model, which uses the non-participants as the reference group. In this table, Exp(B) indicates the predicted change in the hazard for a unit increase in the predictor. By this analysis, students in the historical cohort were 53.1% less likely to graduate than those in the non-participant group, while LE,NONET participants were 34.3% less likely to graduate than non-participants.

Table 41. Cox Regression Model 1 (Reference = Non-Participant Group)

Variables in the equation						
	B	SE	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Gender	.170	.102	2.815	1	.093	1.186
Age	.004	.005	.571	1	.450	1.004
Group			58.633	2	.000	
Historical	-.757	.099	58.389	1	.000	.469
Participants	-.419	.143	8.593	1	.003	.657

Although the participant group had the highest overall proportion of graduates, the hazard function for graduation was highest for the non-participant group. This finding is illustrated in the hazard function for graduation shown in Figure 16.

Figure 16: Hazard Function for Graduation



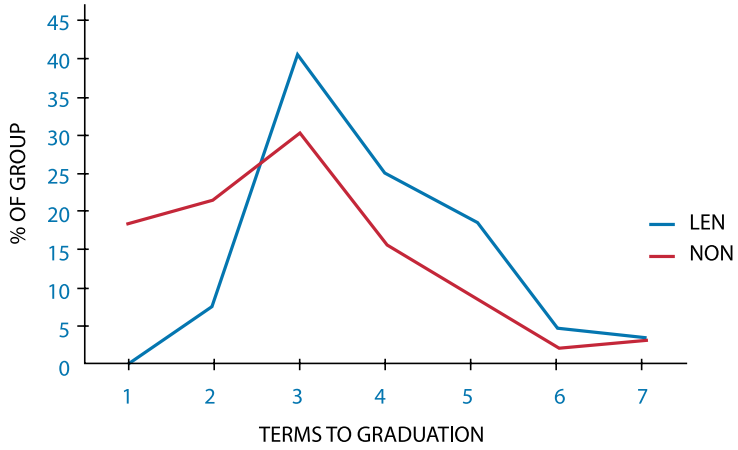
This result is somewhat counterintuitive given that LE,NONET participants had the highest rate of graduation (32% for participants, 26.6% for non-participants, 23.1% for the historical cohort). This arises from the different temporal patterns of graduation within the groups.

When the frequency of graduation is plotted by the number of terms of study, the non-participant group is much more likely to graduate after just one or two terms of study, while LE,NONET participants show a more normal distribution (see Table 42 and Figure 17). In effect, the non-participants were graduating "faster." Because the analysis predicts the probability of graduation (the "hazard" of graduating) in each successive period from the rates observed in the previous period, this early weighting for the non-participants was magnified over time. This difference will likely resolve itself as graduation data are collected for subsequent academic terms.

Table 42. Percentage of Graduates by Group and Number of Terms

Total terms to graduation	Participants	Non-participants
1	0.0	18.3
2	7.8	21.6
3	40.6	30.3
4	25.0	16.1
5	18.8	8.3
6	4.7	2.3
7	3.1	3.2

Figure 17. Percentage of Graduates by Group and Number of Terms



When the analysis is conducted with the historical cohort as the reference group, age and gender do not predict graduation: $\chi^2_{(2)} = 4.94$, $p = .082$, while group is significant: $\chi^2_{(2)} = 57.63$, $p = .001$. The participant and non-participant groups show greater predicted change in graduation per unit change in the predictor than the historical group (see Table 43).

Table 43. Cox Regression Model 2 (Reference = Historical Cohort Group)

Variables in the equation						
	B	SE	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Gender	.170	.102	2.815	1	.093	1.186
Age	.004	.005	.571	1	.450	1.004
Group			58.633	2	.000	
Participants	.337	.145	5.383	1	.020	1.401
Non-participants	.757	.099	58.389	1	.000	2.132

8.12 Cox Regression Models for Withdrawal Rates

With the non-participants as the reference group, age and gender are significant predictors of withdrawal $\chi^2_{(2)} = 82.58$, $p = .001$. Age slightly, but significantly, increases the risk of withdrawal by 3.2% per year (see Table 44). Group is also a significant predictor: $\chi^2_{(2)} = 129.37$, $p = .001$. The survival function for withdrawal appears in Figure 18. The hazard function appears in Figure 19.

Table 44. Effect of Age and Gender on Withdrawal

Variables in the equation						
	B	SE	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Gender	-.041	.085	.235	1	.628	.960
Age	.032	.003	91.286	1	.000	1.032

In this model, students in the historical cohort were 46.8% less likely to withdraw, and participants were 80% less likely to withdraw than students in the non-participant group (see Table 45).

Table 45. Cox Regression Model 3 (Reference = Non-Participant Group)

Variables in the equation						
	B	SE	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Gender	-.039	.085	.210	1	.647	.962
Age	.030	.003	82.775	1	.000	1.031
Group			108.700	2	.000	
Historical	-.633	.080	63.042	1	.000	.531
Participants	-1.611	.203	63.074	1	.000	.200

Figure 18. Survival Function for Withdrawal

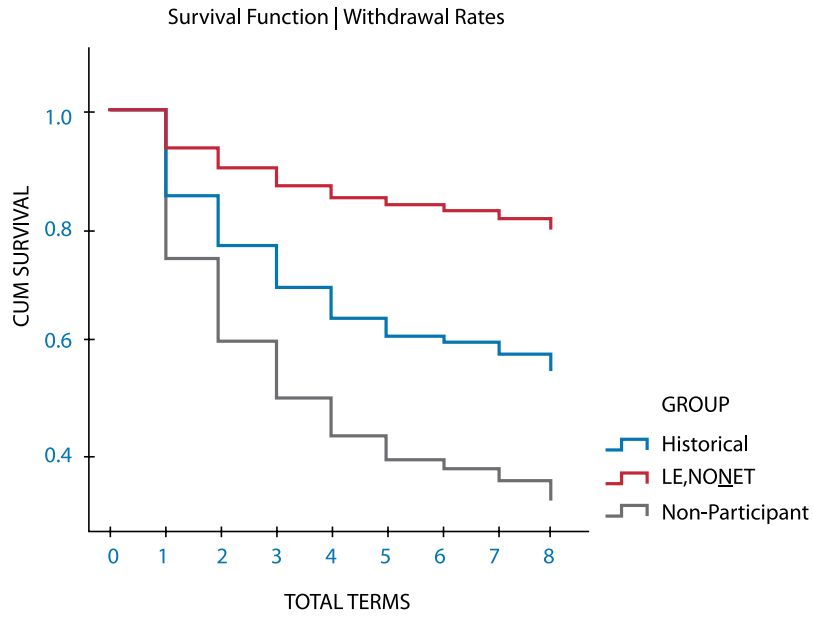
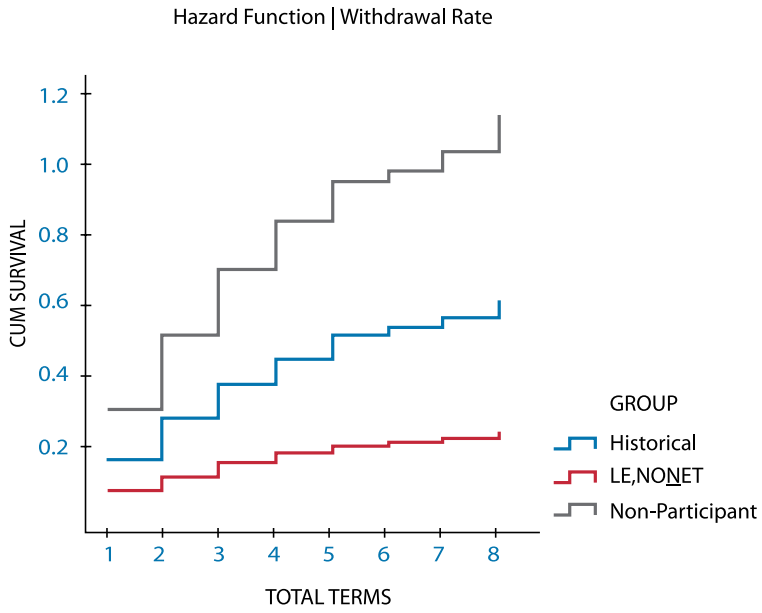


Figure 19. Hazard Function for Withdrawal



With the historical cohort as the reference group, participants were less likely to withdraw and non-participants more likely to withdraw (see Table 46).

Table 46. Cox Regression Model 4 (Reference = Historical Cohort)

Variables in the equation						
	B	SE	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Gender	-.039	.085	.210	1	.647	.962
Age	.030	.003	82.775	1	.000	1.031
Group			108.700	2	.000	
Participants	-.979	.206	22.620	1	.000	.376
Non-participants	.633	.080	63.042	1	.000	1.883

8.13 Cox Regression Models for Retention Rates

With the non-participants as the reference group, age and gender are significant predictors of retention: $\chi^2_{(2)} = 33.87$, $p = .001$. Age slightly, but significantly, increases the risk of withdrawal by 2.3% per year (see Table 47). Group is also a significant predictor: $\chi^2_{(2)} = 23.85$, $p = .001$. Both the historical cohort and participant groups display higher hazard rates for retention than the non-participants: Exp(B) = 1.42 and 1.64, respectively. The survival function for retention appears in Figure 20. The hazard function appears in Figure 21.

Table 47. Cox Regression Model 5 (Reference = Non-Participants)

Variables in the equation						
	B	SE	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Gender	-.059	.076	.601	1	.438	.943
Age	-.023	.004	26.269	1	.000	.978
Group			22.922	2	.000	
Historical	.351	.085	16.917	1	.000	1.421
Participants	.495	.119	17.247	1	.000	1.641

Figure 20. Survival Function for Retention

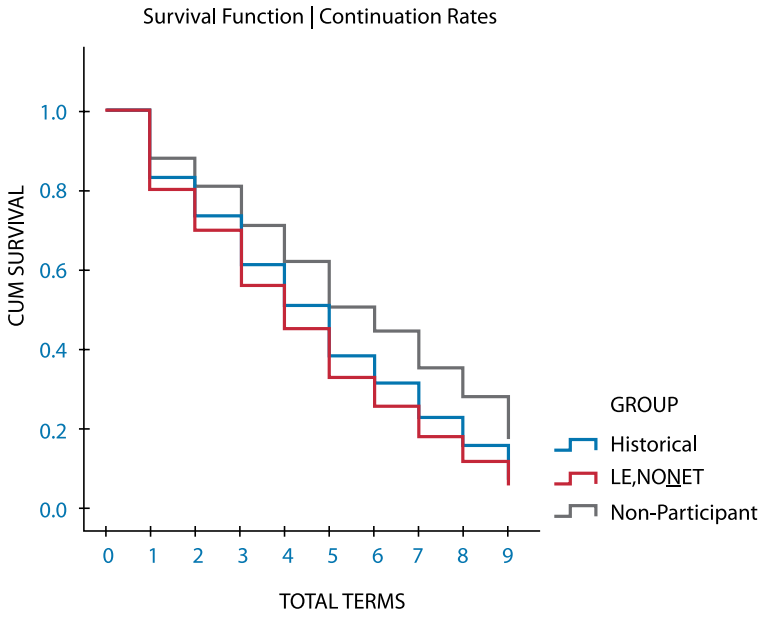
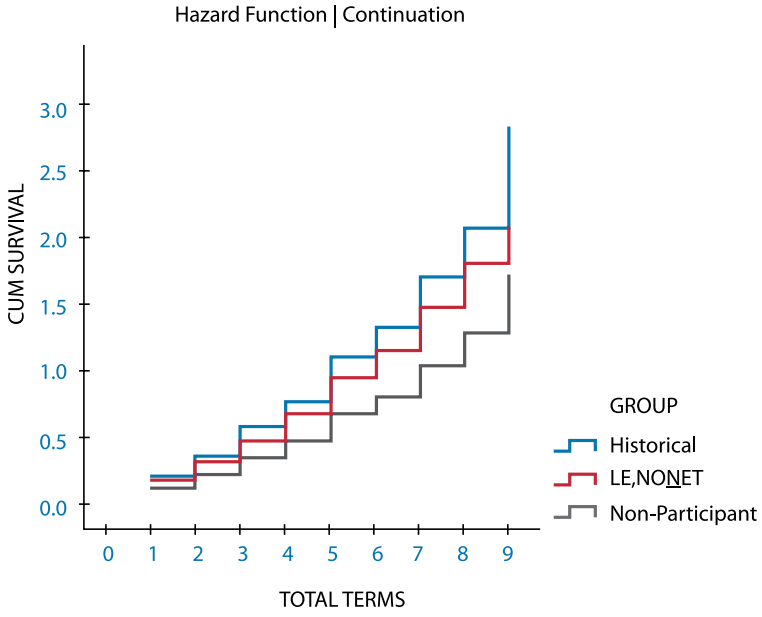


Figure 21. Hazard Function for Retention



LE,NONET participants were not different from the historical cohort, but both were more likely to continue in their studies than non-participants (see Table 48).

Table 48. Cox Regression Model 6 (Reference = Historical Cohort)

Variables in the equation						
	B	SE	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Gender	-.059	.076	.601	1	.438	.943
Age	-.023	.004	26.269	1	.000	.978
Group			22.922	2	.000	
Participants	.144	.107	1.793	1	.181	1.155
Non-participants	-.351	.085	16.917	1	.000	.704

The Cox regression models reveal a clear pattern with respect to retention and withdrawal: participants were more likely to continue their studies over the course of the project and less likely to withdraw than their non-participating peers. The analyses also showed that the "hazard" for graduating was higher for non-participants. This was somewhat unexpected, given that the participant group had the highest overall rate of graduates. As noted above, this finding may be due to project selection criteria that produced artificial differences between the groups in the number of terms of study prior to graduation (lower for non-participants).

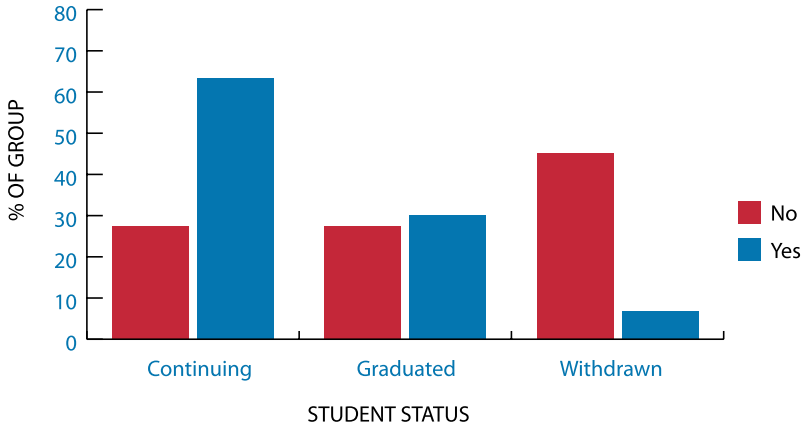
8.14 Student Status By Program Participation

The original project proposal included a plan to analyze the separate effectiveness of each of the LE,NONET programs. This plan was hampered, however, by the success of our recruitment efforts, which resulted in multiple participations in all of the programs. In the end, very few students elected to participate in only one of the programs on offer. For example, just four of the 200 participants took part only in the Preparation Seminar, just four took part only as mentors, just five only as mentored students, and just eight received only emergency relief funds. The Bursary Program was the only program with a sufficient number of bursary-only participants (56) to warrant further analysis. Nevertheless, it was still possible to examine the status of students who participated in each program relative to those who chose not to participate. In the sections that follow, comparisons are made between students who participated in each individual program and the group of students who did not—this latter group includes all non-participants as well as any LE,NONET participants who did not take part in that particular program.

8.15 Preparation Seminar

As calculated through chi-square analysis, higher than expected retention and graduation rates and lower than expected withdrawals were observed among students who completed the Preparation Seminar: $\chi^2_{(2)} = 63.76$, $p < .001$ (see Figure 22). There were only four students who participated only in the Preparation Seminar—too few to allow assessment of this program in isolation.

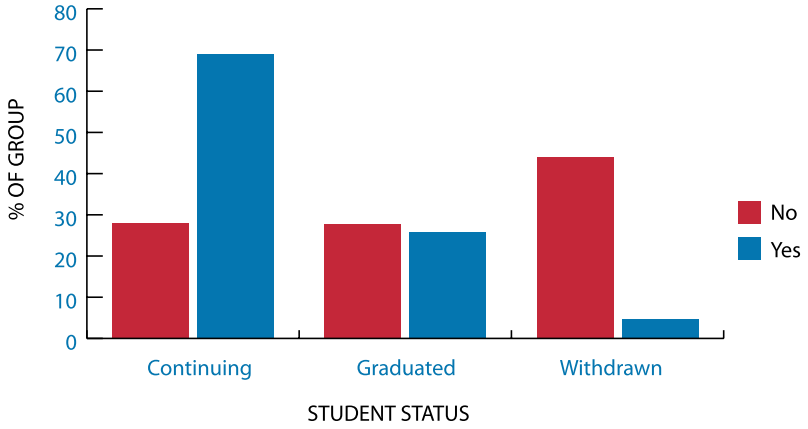
Figure 22. Student Status by Participation in the Preparation Seminar



8.16 Research Apprenticeship Program

As calculated through chi-square analysis, higher than expected retention and graduation rates and lower than expected withdrawals were also observed among students who completed a research apprenticeship: $\chi^2_{(2)} = 53.95$, $p < .001$ (see Figure 23). Because completion of the Preparation Seminar was prerequisite to entering a research apprenticeship, this program could not be assessed in isolation.

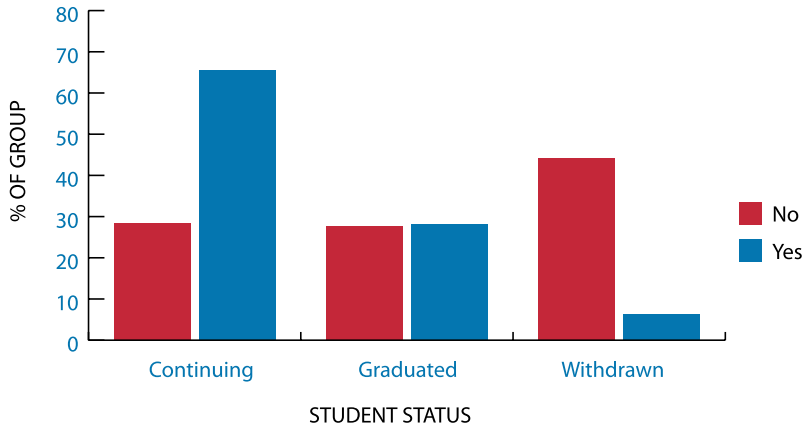
Figure 23. Student Status by Participation in the Research Apprenticeship Program



8.17 Community Internship Program

As calculated through chi-square analysis, higher than expected retention and graduation rates and lower than expected withdrawals were observed among students who completed a community internship: $\chi^2_{(2)} = 47.92$, $p < .001$ (see Figure 24). Because completion of the Preparation Seminar was prerequisite to entering a community internship, this program could not be assessed in isolation.

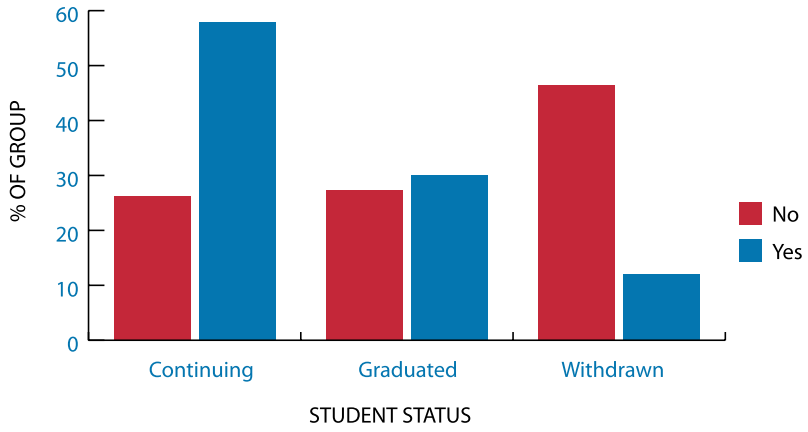
Figure 24. Student Status by Participation in the Community Internship Program



8.18 Bursary Program

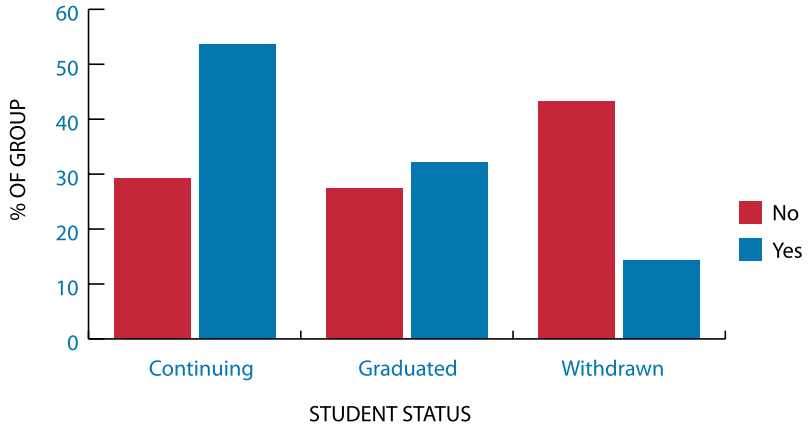
As calculated through chi-square analysis, higher than expected retention and graduation rates and lower than expected withdrawals were observed among students who received bursary funds: $\chi^2_{(2)} = 73.66$, $p < .001$ (see Figure 25).

Figure 25. Student Status by Participation in the Bursary Program



The same pattern of findings is observed when the analysis is restricted to the 56 students whose only participation in LE,NONET was to receive bursary funding: $\chi^2_{(2)} = 21.31$, $p < .001$ (see Figure 26).

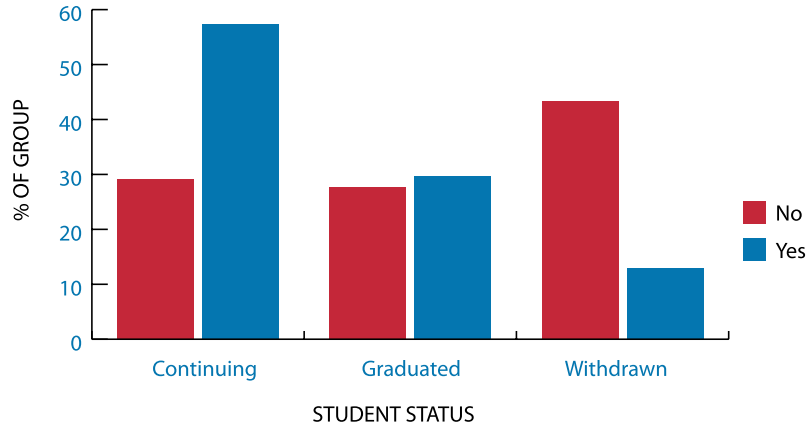
Figure 26. Student Status by Participation in the Bursary Program Only



8.19 Emergency Relief Fund

As calculated through chi-square analysis, higher than expected retention and graduation rates and lower than expected withdrawals were observed among students who received emergency relief funds: $\chi^2_{(2)} = 27.74$, $p < .001$ (see Figure 27). There were only eight students who participated only in the Emergency Relief Fund Program—too few to allow assessment of this program in isolation.

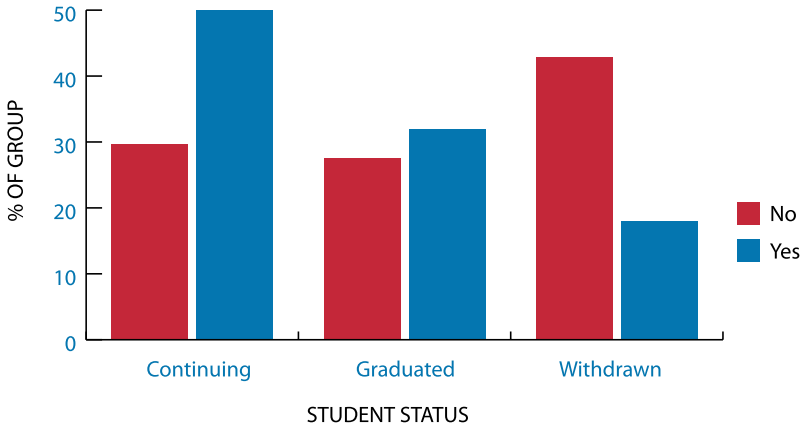
Figure 27. Student Status by Participation in the Emergency Relief Fund



8.20 Peer Mentoring Program

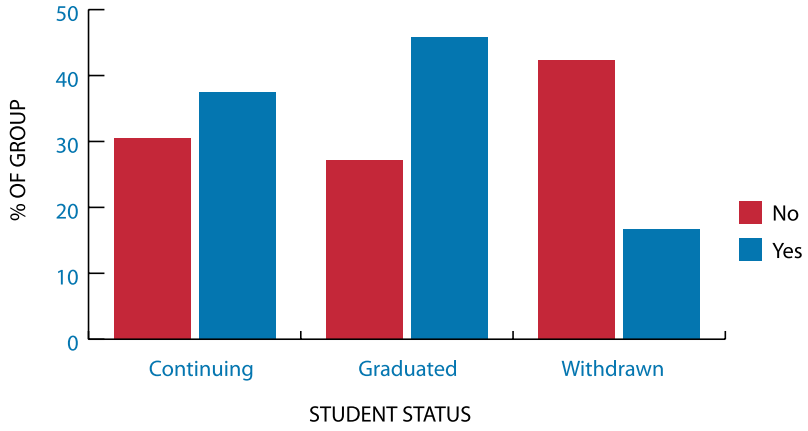
As calculated through chi-square analysis, higher than expected retention and graduation rates and lower than expected withdrawals were observed among students who were mentored as part of the Peer Mentor Program: $\chi^2_{(2)} = 13.89$, $p < .001$ (see Figure 28). There were only five students who participated only in the Peer Mentor Program as mentored students—too few to allow assessment of this program in isolation.

Figure 28. Student Status by Participation in the Peer Mentor Program (Mentored)



As calculated through chi-square analysis, higher than expected retention and graduation rates and lower than expected withdrawals were also observed among students who acted as mentors as part of the Peer Mentor Program: $\chi^2_{(2)} = 7.00$, $p < .05$ (see Figure 29). There were only four students who participated only in the Peer Mentor Program as mentors—too few to allow assessment of this program in isolation.

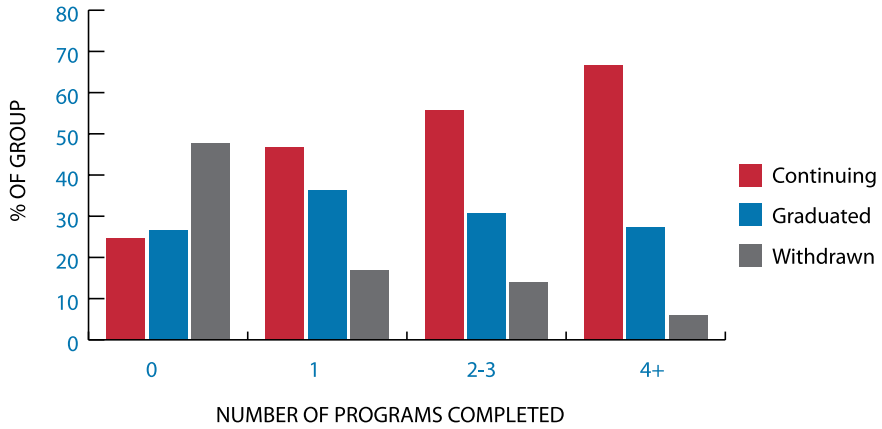
Figure 29. Student Status by Participation in the Peer Mentor Program (Mentors)



8.21 Total Number of Programs Completed

During the study period, a total of 1,019 Aboriginal students were eligible to complete LE,NONET programs. Of these, 200 students completed a total of 484 individual programs. Figure 30 displays student status by the number of programs completed

Figure 30. Student Status by Total Number of Programs Completed



8.22 Summary of Quantitative Analyses

The observation window for current students was shorter than that for the historical cohort (7 terms vs. 12 terms), but the percentage of students who earned a degree after LE,NONET began was actually higher than in the historical cohort (27.7 vs. 23.1%). Also, the percentage of students in the LE,NONET participant group who graduated (32.0%) was higher than that of the non-participant group (26.6%). This despite the fact that students participating in LE,NONET programs tended to be at an earlier point in their post-secondary studies because of the bias of LE,NONET toward students in their first year of study, particularly in the Bursary Program—the program with by far the largest enrolment. The number of students who could be considered "withdrawn" from university (i.e., had not graduated and were not registered at the end of the study window) was reliably lower among LE,NONET participants than among non-participants. Term-to-term retention was also significantly higher for LE,NONET participants.

The survival analyses provide suggestive evidence regarding the impact of the project and the LE,NONET programs. The Cox proportional models show that LE,NONET participants were more likely to continue their studies over the course of the project and less likely to withdraw than their non-participating peers. It should be noted, however, that because participants were self-selected and able to participate in multiple programs, our ability to evaluate the impact of individual programs is limited.

9 | LE,NONET RESEARCH PROJECT EXPENSE SUMMARY

The LE,NONET Project was provided with a generous budget, 47% of which was distributed directly to Indigenous students in the form of bursaries, stipends, and wages. The remainder was spent on running the programs, general administrative costs, and the qualitative and quantitative research. The following sections provide a breakdown of the overall project budget, as well as budgets for each program and year. Additionally, due to the overlap of the annual honouring celebration with various other budgetary categories, expenses for the event are summarized in a separate section.

The individual program budgets are provided in more detail than the overall budget summary, as they include a breakdown of student stipends and coordinator salaries. Figures are rounded to the nearest dollar.

As the project unfolded, some staffing positions changed or were eliminated. Two administrative positions were eliminated in 2007, due to lack of work, and these salary funds were reallocated to increase necessary research assistant hours. The research assistant position for the SFACT needs assessment was a short-term position, developed specifically for the needs assessment.

9.1 Overall Project Budget Summary[12]

A summary of the overall project budget appears in Table 49. In-kind contributions for the general project administration were primarily in the form of staff time:

- The Associate Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs had oversight for the project. He contributed approximately 10 hours per month for the duration of the project.
- University Indigenous staff and faculty sat on the LE,NONET Project Advisory; membership varied, but typically there were at least three staff members as well as Indigenous community members and representatives from Camosun College. The advisory met every two to three months in the first and second year, and then as necessary in the final two years of the project.

12 The administrative costs include all expenses that did not fall under a specific program budget or under the research budget.

Table 49. Overall Project Budget Summary

General administration						
Item	**Spent year 1**	**Spent year 2**	**Spent year 3**	**Spent year 4**	**Sept–Dec 2010**	**Total Costs**
Renovations to HSD A260	70,684	0	0	0	0	70,684
Travel	461	515	411	916	0	2,303
Supplies	4,694	5,310	3,887	5,612	304	19,806
Courier	18	106	120	32	0	276
Services/consultations/ honoraria	4,350	3,070	4,206	5,047	458	17,130
Hospitality	4,905	1,031	2,780	4,180	0	12,896
Printing & duplicating	2,292	1,103	1,985	1,762	0	7,142
Mail services	229	356	391	153	0	1,129
Phone & long distance	2,516	247	314	536	182	3,795
Photocopying	365	439	550	37	280	1,670
Project advisory (meetings, gifts, catering)	400	400	400	400	0	1,600
SFACT–Fostering Indigenous Knowledge	15,000	8,950	3,118	23,335	16,360	66,763
SFACT–Faculty/staff development	18,211	975	743	2,777	0	22,706
General administration sub-total	**124,123**	**22,502**	**18,904**	**44,787**	**17,584**	**227,900**
Salaries, benefits & staffing						
Release time researcher	11,606	17,725	13,917	5,998	10,001	59,247
1.0 FTE researcher	58,375	61,196	72,297	65,594	15,829	273,291
1.0 FTE RA coordinator	61,562	59,932	48,002	80,720	0	250,215
1. 0 FTE CI coordinator	56,828	59,932	49,353	63,804	0	229,916
1.0 Project manager	49,004	47,576	60,227	69,471	0	226,279
1.0 FTE project admin assistant	22,394	37,669	37,729	37,455	1,053	136,301
1.0 FTE RA/CI admin asst. position (eliminated in 2007)	28,985	26,068	0	0	0	55,053

General administration						
.5 FTE admin assistant position (eliminated in 2007)	12,227	4,063	0	0	0	16,290
Research assistants	5,346	30,202	67,068	74,275	8,992	185,883
SFACT needs assessment research assistant		4,563	22,606	0		27,169
Consulting (line item added in year 2)	0	0	24,748	21,378		46,126
Staff benefits	38,049	35,843	36,568	39,714	2,201	152,374
Salary & benefits subtotal	**344,375**	**384,768**	**432,517**	**458,409**	**38,075**	**1,658,143**
Direct student funding						
Student bursaries & emergency funds	78,720	236,841	321,714	299,859	149,991	1,087,125
Student mentors salary	49,377	63,774	48,691	66,807	0	228,649
Community intern stipends	29,693	56,439	71,529	70,100	0	227,760
Research apprenticeship stipends	5,250	56,183	68,912	99,430	0	229,775
Direct student funding subtotal	**163,040**	**413,237**	**510,846**	**536,196**	**149,991**	**1,773,309**
Community Internship Program						
Travel	1,757	3,792	596	4,726	0	10,872
Supplies	1,155	2,557	1,111	2,606	0	7,429
Courier	0	0	0	0	0	0
Services/consultation/ honoraria	400	4,631	1,600	800	0	7,431
Hospitality	349	605	853	3,293	0	5,100
Printing and duplicating	376	1,522	1,611	600	0	4,109
Mail services	73	159	159	120	0	510
Phone & long distance	883	183	200	152	0	1,417
Photocopying	0	0	93	0	0	93
CI subtotal	**4,994**	**13,449**	**6,223**	**12,296**	**0**	**36,962**
Research Apprenticeship Program						
Travel	137	0	0	0	0	137
Supplies	1,153	1,487	781	242	0	3,662
Courier	0	0	0	0	0	0
Services/consultation/ honoraria	150	882	1,116	825	0	2,973
Hospitality	103	369	605	849	0	1,925
Printing & duplicating	520	1,775	1,554	738	0	4,586
Mail services	0	0	159	0	0	159
Phone & long distance	109	28	45	67	0	249
Photocopying	0	0	0	0	0	0
RA subtotal	**2,171**	**4,541**	**4,259**	**2,719**	**0**	**13,690**

General administration						
Student Peer Mentor Program						
Supplies	522	476	1,467	1,942	0	4,407
Services/consultations/ honoraria	556	306	111	877	0	1,850
Printing & duplicating	313	802	901	161	0	2,177
Mail services	0	0	0	0	0	0
Phone & long distance	109	0	32	30	0	171
Photocopying	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mentor subtotal	**1,499**	**1,584**	**2,512**	**3,010**	**0**	**8,605**
Total Annual Budget & Spending	**$640,202**	**$840,080**	**$975,261**	**$1,057,417**	**$205,650**	**$3,718,610**

9.2 Research Apprenticeship Program

A summary of the expenses for the Research Apprenticeship Program appears in Table 50. In-kind contributions for the Research Apprenticeship Program included faculty hours to supervise research apprentices.

Table 50. Expense Summary for Research Apprenticeship Program

Item	Total over 4 years	Averaged by year/seminar session	Item description
RA Coordinator salary	250,215.00	62,554.00	RA Coordinator job description also included ongoing program promotion & development, co-leading the seminar, recruiting, and preparing faculty supervisors (note that this salary was slightly higher than CI Coordinator salary due to maternity/sick leave coverage).
Employee benefit costs	30,026.00	7,506.00	Standard benefits, MSP, extended health, estimated at 12% of salary
Program promotion	2,083.00	521.00	Printing of brochures & newsletters
General supplies	2,735.00	684.00	Averaged over 4 years, includes first year set up, excluding furniture & computer
Program manuals	1,966.00	491.00	Program manuals for student apprentices and faculty supervisors.
Telephone & long distance	249.00	62.00	Includes charges for set up and monthly voicemail services.
Seminar: guest speakers	2,398.00	400	6 seminar sessions over 4 years; as per protocol, honoraria, gifts, and parking passes for guest speakers
Seminar: AV rentals	349.00	58.00	6 seminar sessions over 4 years, overhead projectors, audio-video equipment, etc.
Seminar: hospitality	1,422.00	237.00	6 seminar sessions over 4 years; as part of protocol, food was served in class when there were special guests
Special events	494.00	494.00	1 x event—catering and room rental for RA & CI student presentation event
Student stipends (includes travel bursaries)	229,775.00	38,296.00	Averaged by 6 because there were 6 student cohorts per seminar who could do a RA placement.
Total cost estimate for one year		**$111,303.00**	

9.3 Community Internship Program

A summary of the expenses for the Community Internship Program appears in Table 51. In-kind contributions for the Community Internship Program included on-site community supervisor hours to supervise community interns.

Table 51. Expense Summary for Community Internship Program

Item	Total over 4 years	Averaged by year/ seminar session	Item description
CI coordinator salary	229,916.00	57,479.00	Job description included ongoing program development and promotion, recruitment of community organizations for intern placements, co-instructing seminar, travel to internship sites, and helping with development of Indigenous community relations
Employee benefit costs	27,590.00	6,897.00	Standard benefits, MSP, extended health estimate at 12% of salary
Program promotion	2,278.00	569.00	Printing of brochures & newsletters for promotion
Travel	8,084.00	1,347.00	Averaged over 6 CI student cohorts; coordinator travelled to internship sites
General supplies	2,693.00	673.00	Averaged over 4 years, includes first year set up, excluding furniture
Program manuals	1,503.00	376.00	Program manuals for student interns and community supervisors.
Telephone & long distance	1,417.00	354.00	Includes set up, voicemail box charges from university, and use of cell phone in years 1 & 2
Mail services	510.00	127.00	Includes mail outs to community organizations
Seminar: guest speakers	4,224.00	704.00	6 seminar sessions over 4 years, as per protocol: honorarium, gifts, and parking passes for guest speakers
Seminar: AV rentals	475.00	79.00	6 seminar sessions over 4 years, overhead projector, audio-video, etc.
Seminar: hospitality	2,282.00	380.00	6 seminar sessions over 4 years; as part of protocol, food was served in class when there were special guests
Special events	47.00	47.00	Printed material for RA & CI student presentations in January 2009, a one-time event
Student stipends (includes travel bursaries)	227,760.00	37,960.00	Averaged by 6 because there were 6 student cohorts per seminar who could do a CI placement.
Cost estimate for one year		**$106,945.00**	

9.4 LE,NONET Bursary Program and Emergency Relief Fund

A summary of the expenses for the Bursary Program and Emergency Relief Fund appears in Table 52. This expense summary includes more detail than the overall budget page. It differs for several reasons:

- The bursary amounts and emergency relief funds are reported separately here.
- Project years ran from August 1 to July 31 each year; bursaries and ERF were available year round as long as there were funds remaining to disburse.
- The cost estimate for one year only includes the dollar value of the funds distributed to students but no program operation costs.

In-kind contributions for the Bursary Program and Emergency Relief Fund included the following:

- A financial aid officer in the Student Awards and Financial Aid office contributed approximately 20 hours each term completing financial need assessments for bursary applicants.
- A bursary clerk in the Student Awards and Financial Aid office contributed approximately 25 hours each term to making bursary deposits to student accounts.

Table 52. Expense Summary for Bursary Program and Emergency Relief Fund

Item	Project total	Average per project year	Item description
Coordinator salary			The project manager coordinated this program—no specific salary amount was dedicated to the role of bursary program coordinator
Bursaries	1,039,932.00	231,096.00	Averaged over 4.5 project years; bursaries were given out from August 2005 to December 2009.
Emergency relief funds	47,192.00	18,877.00	Averaged out over 2.5 project years; emergency relief fund started in January 2007 and funds were given out until August 2009
Cost estimate for one year		**$249,973.00**	

9.5 LE,NONET Peer Mentor Program

A summary of the expenses for the Peer Mentor Program appears in Table 53. This expense summary includes more detail than the overall budget page. It differs in that

- it includes student mentor salaries
- honouring celebration expenses are deducted from this breakdown into a separate category
- the Peer Mentor Program operated each year from September to April

In-kind contributions for the Peer Mentor Program included the Indigenous Student Counsellor's time participating in annual mentor orientations.

Table 53. Expense Summary for Peer Mentor Program

Item	Total over 4 years	Averaged by 4 years	Item Description
Peer Mentor Program coordinator salary			The project manager coordinated this program—no specific salary amount was dedicated to the role of Peer Mentor Program coordinator
Student mentor salaries	210,357.00	52,589.00	In year 1, there were 10 student mentors hired; in years 2 to 4, there were 8 student mentors; in the final year, 1 student mentor took on a coordinator role and was paid at a slightly higher rate. Average mentor salary was 15/ hour for 13 hrs/week
Mentor benefits costs	18,292.00	4,573.00	Student mentor benefits estimated at 8%, included standard benefits, CPP, EI, but no extended health
Program promotion	1,807.00	452.00	Printing of program brochures & newsletters
General supplies	1,209.00	302.00	Averaged over 4 years; supplies include items for various craft nights, DVD rentals for movie nights
Telephone & long distance	342.00	86.00	Averaged over 4 years; includes initial phone set up in year one & cell phone charges. Mentors were hired over the summer so many interviews took place by phone long distance, including calls for reference checks. Also includes university charges for voicemail box and phone rental.
Hospitality	5,107.00	1,277.00	Includes catering, pizza, snacks for mentor activities, as well as tickets to events and honoraria or gifts for guest speakers. There was an average of two mentor group activities each month,
AV Rental	160.00	40.00	Rental of audio-video equipment from university for film nights.
Total cost estimate for one year		**$59,319.00**	

9.6 LE,NONET Honouring Celebration

A summary of the expenses for the LE,NONET Honouring Celebration appears in Table 54. As previously mentioned, expenses for the honouring celebration were shared over several program- and general-administration budgets. The honouring celebration was first held in the second year of the project, so the budget only accounts for three such events. The honouring celebration was a special event, the one time each year when LE,NONET staff and students celebrated together with community members and other supporters. Significantly, the CEO of the Canadian Millennium Scholarship Foundation attended every celebration and the university's Associate Vice President with oversight for LE,NONET also made it a priority to attend two of these celebrations.

Table 54. Expense Summary for Honouring Celebration

Item	Total over 3 years	Averaged by 3 years	Item description
Staffing expenses			Celebrations were organized by LE,NONET staff, primarily the CI coordinator and project manager.
Space rental	750.00	250.00	Averaged over 3 celebrations; spaces were Songhees Longhouse and Mungo Martin House at the Royal BC Museum
Catering	9,020.00	3,007.00	Indigenous caterer was used 2 out of 3 years; a commercial caterer who specialized in catering Indigenous events was used one year
Gifts	3,900.00	1,300.00	LE,NONET t-shirts, tote bags (2 styles), water bottles, mugs, blankets were given as a way to honour project supporters, RA and CI supervisors, advisory members, UVic partners, and students (extra gifts were used throughout the year)
Printed materials	565.00	188.00	Printing of handouts and programs
Honoraria	2,570.00	857.00	As per protocol, local Indigenous people were asked to act as speakers, fire keepers, etc. and paid honoraria
Photographic services	1,280.00	427.00	Hired UVic photographer to record the honouring ceremonies.
Total cost estimate for one year		**$6,029.00**	

9.7 LE,NONET Staff and Faculty Aboriginal Cultural Training (SFACT)

A summary of the expenses for the Staff and Faculty Aboriginal Cultural Training Program appears in Table 55. The SFACT Program was delivered and developed in two sections: the online units were created May to June 2006 and updated in 2007, while the workshops were developed and delivered in 2009. Curricula for both the online units and workshops remain with the University of Victoria, and it is hoped that the SFACT committee will find the means to sustain the online modules and continue to offer the workshops.

In-kind contributions for SFACT included the following:

- The online course developer from Distance Education Services contributed approximately 70 hours to create the SFACT online framework.
- The developer uploaded and maintained the SFACT site and also continued as a member of the SFACT committee.
- University staff contributed time to sit on the SFACT committee, which was expanded beyond LE,NONET staff in November 2008 and continued after the project end in December 2009.

SFACT Members (excluding LE,NONET Staff)

- Director, Office of Equity and Human Rights
- Equity Advisor, Office of the President
- Director of Aboriginal Education, Faculty of Education
- AVP Academic and Student Affairs
- Two members from the Office of Indigenous Affairs
- Representative, UVic Learning and Teaching Centre
- Member, Indigenous Faculty Caucus

- Human resources consultant, UVic HR Department
- Director, Aboriginal Programs, UVic Faculty of Law
- Two Indigenous student representatives
- Online course developer, UVic Distance Education Services

Table 55. Expense Summary for Staff and Faculty Aboriginal Cultural Training

Item	Online units	In-person workshops	Item description
Staffing expenses			Responsibility for coordinating the SFACT program was shared among LE,NONET staff—the RA coordinator & project manager primarily; in the final year, one of the co-principal investigators played a large role.
Consultant fees & expenses	29,950.00	25,743.00	Online consultants to research, write, and revise SFACT online units. Consultants hired to create workshop & pilot SFACT workshops.
Grad student	12,210.00		Note: This student was hired through ABLO office in 2005 to do research for SFACT development; eventually realized the task required a different skill set and level, so consultants were hired.
Research assistant–needs assessment	27,169.00		Research assistant who worked on needs assessment, which was intended to inform SFACT.
Honoraria for needs assessment participants	638.00		
Honoraria for elders involved in SFACT workshops		14,750.00	
Printed material		728.00	Handout copies for workshops.
Workshop space & catering		5,034.00	Space rental at UVic and basic catering for four workshops, morning coffee break and sandwich lunch (20-50 people).
Technical support	880.00		Techs hired to help create online research tool for SFACT needs assessment.
Total per SFACT section	70,847.00	46,255.00	
SFACT total		**$117,102.00**	

10 | CONCLUSIONS

The LE,NONET Project demonstrated that post-secondary institutions can create culturally relevant programming to support the success of Indigenous post-secondary students.

While the full impact of the programs on student retention, graduation, and withdrawal rates may not be fully understood until several years after the end of the project, the quantitative research revealed that LE,NONET participants experienced lower withdrawal rates and increased graduation and retention rates.

Key principles and best practices in supporting Indigenous post-secondary students were identified through the qualitative research (see Table 56). Students, staff, faculty, and community members identified six common elements running through the LE,NONET programs. This summary includes examples of the ways in which these principles can be put into practice in program development and delivery.

Table 56. Summary of Key Principles and Best Practices

Reciprocal learning	Students have opportunities to share their strengths, knowledge, and experiences, as well as to learn from the skills and knowledge of professors, staff, mentors, and other students. Students have as much to offer as they have to gain and know that their perspective is valued.
Supporting Indigenous identity development	Students feel seen and respected as Indigenous people. Students from diverse backgrounds and identity perspectives (rural, urban, culturally grounded, displaced, Métis, First Nations, Inuit, and other) are valued and supported. Indigenous identity is multifaceted and complex, and this diversity is given room to grow.
Culturally relevant programming	Cultural activities and knowledge are integrated into programs for students. This includes the use of local traditional practices, involvement of local elders, and the incorporation of students' own cultural teachings into the program activities.
Community building	Indigenous students are provided with a space in which a sense of community is facilitated, encouraged, and supported. Students have opportunities to build ongoing connections with Indigenous faculty, staff, and other students on campus, as well as with the broader Indigenous communities off campus. Community is developed out of a sense of being cared for, nurtured, valued, and embraced as a whole person; extended family is also welcome, including children and partners.
Relationship building	Students develop lasting relationships with Indigenous faculty, UVic staff, community members, and other students. Relationship building is seen as a central part of program delivery, including continuation of staff in key positions. Staff and faculty develop meaningful connections with students that are nurtured from year to year.
Individualized programming	An intersectional understanding of individual students' lives includes taking cultural practices, community needs, academic area of study, personal learning needs, and other factors into account. Programs include opportunities for students to develop their own strengths and interests, and allow enough flexibility for students to succeed on their own terms.

We hope that the University of Victoria and other post-secondary institutions will use these research findings and key principles as a jumping-off point for enhancing existing programs and for creating new programs to enhance the success of Aboriginal students.

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LE,NONET CONTRIBUTORS

The success of the LE,NONET Project was the result of many people's commitment to improving the experiences of Aboriginal students. We would like to thank and acknowledge the following individuals who were involved over the course of the project (2005–2010).

LE,NONET Program and Research Staff

Jim Anglin

Haley DeKorne

Kerissa Dickie

Ruth-anne Donellsen

Jennifer Fletcher

Kathy Harrison

Sarah Hunt

Roger John

Marigayl Kilgour

Amanda Laliberte

Chris Lalonde

Ruth Lyall

Roxanne Paul

Auburn Phillips

In-In Po

Lyanne Quirt

Julie Robertson

Yvonne Rondeau

Dawn Smith

Quvi Robin Taylor

Vanessa Watts

Bill White

LE,NONET Project Advisory Members

Taiaiake Alfred, Indigenous Peoples Research Chair & Director of UVic Indigenous Governance Program

Ami Brosseau, Student Representative

Jocelyn Charron, Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation

Karen Collins, Adult Education Advisor, Cowichan Tribe Post-Secondary Cultural and Education Centre

Charles Elliott, Artist, Tsartlip First Nation

Lola James, Educational Coordinator, Songhees Nation

Shelly Johnson, Executive Director, Surrounded by Cedar Child and Family Services

Amanda Laliberte, Student Representative

Maxine Matilpi, Director of Aboriginal Programs, UVic Faculty of Law

Nella Nelson, First Nations Education Coordinator, School District 61

Victoria Pruden, Métis Nation of BC

Heather Raven, Faculty, UVic Faculty of Law

Janice Simcoe, Chair, First Nations Education and Services, Camosun College

Larry Underwood, Education Resource Advisor, Victoria Native Friendship Society

Barbara White, SFN Education Administrator, Snuney-muxw First Nation

Lorna Williams, Director of UVic Aboriginal Teacher Education

Staff and Faculty Aboriginal Cultural Training (SFACT) Advisory Committee Members

Jim Anglin, AVP Academic and Student Affairs

Gordon Celesta, Student Representative

Katy Chan, Distance Education

Sarah Cormode, Office of Indigenous Affairs

Sandy Cull, UVic Department Human Resources

Ruth-Anne Donellsen, LE,NONET Project

Sarah Hunt, LE,NONET Project

Maxine Matilpi, Graduate Student Representative

Onowa McIvor, Aboriginal Education, UVic Faculty of Education

Eli Nix, Graduate Student Representative

Christine O'Bonsawin, Indigenous Faculty Caucus

Cindy Player, Office of Equity and Human Rights

Lyanne Quirt, LE,NONET Project

Yvonne Rondeau, LE,NONET Project

Valia Spiliotopoulos, UVic Learning and Teaching Centre

Dale Whitford, Student & Ancillary Services

Grace Wong Sneddon, Student and Ancillary Services

Ruth Young, Office of Indigenous Affairs

University
of Victoria