

Building a Strong Fire

**Indigenous Quality
Assurance Standards
in Ontario Colleges**

Weweni

“Looking after something properly” by working together to meet Indigenous community expectations in culturally responsive, responsible, and respectful ways



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Indigenous Quality Assurance Standards in Ontario Colleges

This working framework is being piloted, along with supporting tools and activities, and will be finalized by May 2018.

To learn more and obtain tools and materials, please visit www.canadorecollege.ca/indigenous-quality-assurance-standards

January 2018

Indigenous Quality Assurance Standards are a first in Ontario colleges.

Envisioned by Indigenous leaders and knowledge holders, the standards reflect and respond to the worldviews, educational needs, and priorities of diverse northern Ontario Indigenous peoples, specifically Anishinaabe, Mushkegowuk and Métis communities, on whose traditional lands the colleges reside.

The standards were developed collaboratively over three years with six participating colleges – Cambrian College, Canadore College, Collège Boréal, Confederation College, Northern College and Sault College – through a project funded by the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development.

Indigenous leaders and knowledge holders worked actively with the Indigenous Quality Assurance Steering Committee and quality assurance representatives from each college to foster understanding of Indigenous visions of education.

The standards address quality assurance at two levels:

Institutional

college-wide areas and functions (e.g. indoor and outdoor space, procedures, decision-making)

Program

academic programs, support services, and community relationships (e.g. program development, recruitment, transition support)

To acknowledge the Medicine Wheel and Seven Grandfather Teachings, there are Four Quality Assurance Standards, each with Seven Requirements and Four Directions (see, relate, understand, act) to help colleges reflect on and monitor change.

While the standards hold colleges accountable, they do not prescribe methods for implementation. This respects *weweni*. Embodying the concepts of “that good way” and “looking after something properly,” *weweni* is from the Anishinaabe language of Anishinaabemowin. Those involved at the local college level – Elders and other Indigenous community members, Indigenous Education Councils, quality assurance professionals, college administrators and educators, etc. – ensure *weweni* by working together to meet community expectations in culturally responsive, responsible, and respectful ways.

Acknowledgements

We acknowledge that we are situated on the traditional homelands of the Anishinaabek, Mushkegowuk and Métis.

We acknowledge and pay respect to the grandmothers, grandfathers, aunts and uncles throughout time whose perseverance ensured that the embers of Indigenous knowledges did not burn out when faced with centuries of structured attempts to assimilate Indigenous peoples and extinguish the fires of Indigenous cultures and languages.

We acknowledge the First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners, their families and communities, and their contributions that helped inform our work.

We acknowledge the people who made individual contributions to the development of the standards.

We acknowledge the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development for the financial support provided through the Targeted Initiatives Fund.

Welcome from the Indigenous Knowledge Gifters' Council

We were inspired by the words of *Tatanka Iyotake* (Sitting Bull), who said, "let us put our minds together and see what kind of life we can make for our children."

Recognized as knowledge holders within our communities within the Anishinaabek, Mushkegowuk and Métis nations, and as Elders in Residence at the six participating colleges, we were invited to provide leadership and direction on the development of Indigenous Quality Assurance Standards and to guide the process in a good way.

We accepted the invitation to guide this work and now we begin the process of sharing this work with you.

We have experienced firsthand the struggles of bringing Indigenous knowledges into our colleges, but at the same time we recognize how important it is.

We see how much it means to Indigenous learners and how it can positively impact the attitudes and actions of non-Indigenous Canadians, so we persist.

Through these quality assurance standards, we envision and work toward a life in which our children know about the eagle staff, our cultures, spirituality, languages and homelands.

We envision and work toward a life in which all children embrace the Seven Grandfather Teachings, and the original Thirteen Moon Teachings from which these were derived.

Through the standards, we are building a strong fire to support our vision.

The Seven Grandfather Teachings Are the Backbone of Who We Are as Indigenous Peoples

Zaagidwin (Love):

when love is in our every action, we are prepared to honour others

Aakodewin (Bravery):

doing what you know in your heart to be right and taking responsibility for a mistake

Mnaadendimowin (Respect):

accepting everyone as they are and not being judgemental

Gwekwaadziwin (Honesty):

being upfront in everything that you say and do without a hidden agenda or ulterior motives

Dibaadendiziwin (Humility):

being modest and not bragging about one's own importance

Debwewin (Truth):

to believe and have faith in the teachings

Nbwaakaawin (Wisdom):

the best use of wisdom is helping people learn from their mistakes and misfortune

There are many variations on the Seven Grandfather Teachings; these were the teachings shared with us by the knowledge gifters.





Individuals and Groups Participating in the Development of Indigenous Quality Assurance Standards

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Introduction

Indigenous Quality Assurance Standards Will Help Colleges Act on Their Commitments to Us

Indigenous Quality Assurance Standards are a first in Ontario colleges.

Envisioned by Indigenous leaders and knowledge holders, the standards reflect and respond to the worldviews, educational needs and priorities of diverse northern Ontario Indigenous peoples, specifically Anishinaabe, Mushkegowuk and Métis communities, on whose traditional lands the colleges reside.

Developed in collaboration with six participating colleges – Cambrian College, Canadore College, Collège Boréal, Confederation College, Northern College and Sault College – these standards are part of our ongoing work to advance the well-being of Indigenous peoples.

While the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's *Calls to Action* (2015) are a recent and significant catalyst for mobilizing action in response to the destructive legacy of colonization, the seeds for creating Indigenous quality assurance standards were sown long before.

Indeed, quality assurance has always been important to Indigenous peoples. Traditionally, Indigenous peoples lived according to the natural cycle of life. A strong spiritual connection

assured that things were done at a standard that was respectful of all of life and not limited to the short sightedness of the individual as we are interdependent on one another. When things fell out of balance, everyone was impacted in some way. Quality assurance involves monitoring each of our actions so as to assure that any impacts can be addressed.

And while there has been growing recognition that there is a “place” for Indigenous ways of knowing and doing in colleges,¹ Indigenous peoples have not been formally included.

Despite this, Indigenous educators and researchers have been building a body of literature on Indigenous knowledges and pedagogy regarding Indigenous concepts of quality and success for postsecondary learners, programs and settings.²

In 2015, Indigenous leaders began to explore creating our own quality assurance standards. Grounded in Indigenous knowledges and educational priorities, what might these standards include? We brought Indigenous Elders, knowledge holders and educators together and, in keeping with Medicine Wheel Teachings, we invited others to join us.

This framework describes the standards we created and the process we used to create them.

¹ *Aboriginal Postsecondary Education and Training Policy Framework*, 2011, p. 15

² “Bridging a River: Reflecting on divergent shores and bridge building in the quality assurance of Indigenous based programs in Ontario colleges.” Prepared for the Indigenous Quality Assurance Project, March, 2017.

The Medicine Wheel Is the Source of Many of Our Teachings

Each nation has stories of the directions, the colours, and their meanings. The teachings help us understand the journey our spirits take in the physical realm and help us walk in balance and understand our relationship with all of creation.

As Anishinaabek, we refer to the Medicine Wheel as the source of our teachings about how we should live our lives. It represents the wisdom of our peoples through the ages and has evolved from the life experiences of many generations of our ancestors. The Medicine Wheel emulates the Creator's intent for us and the natural world in which we live. Like the wheel, the natural world must be in balance to thrive and we must also strive for internal balance in our own lives.

The Medicine Wheel is divided into four sections. Each section or direction represents part of the balance, each helps with healing and renewal, and each gives us the teachings we need for life. It provides a sense of direction and guidance to our lives, and interconnectedness with all creation. It helps people achieve a greater understanding of ourselves in relation to all of creation.

The four directions – east, south, west and north – represent many concepts, including the:

Four principles: kindness, honesty, sharing, and strength

Four stages of life: childhood, youth, adulthood and old age

Four seasons: spring, summer, fall and winter

Four sacred medicines: tobacco, cedar, sage and sweet grass

Four sacred colours: yellow, red, black/blue, and white representing the four races/nations of humanity

Four sacred foods: berries, corn, wild rice, and wild meat or fish

The Anishinaabek believed at the time of creation, that the Creator gave us movement of all things, the four winds of the four directions evolved, and they are forever moving. We believe that all have spirits. Similar to the changes of the seasons or a spiral moving upward, we will change and grow. The spiral within the wheel represents change and movement toward another level of growth and development. We all go through these cycles.

When we look at the earth, it completes a full cycle of the four seasons. We also mature as we complete a full circle. The Anishinaabek saw fire, earth, water and air as lifegivers. Animals share common elements with human beings and were seen as brothers and sisters. Anishinaabek had the Eagle in the East, the Deer to the South, Buffalo in the West, and the Bear in the North. Anishinaabek and other Indigenous peoples view the circle as sacred. As we see it, there is no beginning and there is no end.

When sitting in a circle all are equal, no one is greater than anyone else, there is strength within a circle. In our Creation stories, the Creator made the sun (Grandfather Sun) and the moon (Grandmother Moon) in a circular fashion thus creating duality. The Star life and the earth (Mother Earth) are also circular. These are common beliefs of Indigenous peoples. Many dances and ceremonies follow the path of the sun. Even the birds build their nests in that circular fashion.

We were always taught to be kind, and when people came over to visit, to be generous to them.

Teaching shared by Anishinaabe Elder Martina Osawamick

Words, Terms and Spellings

We use a variety of words, terms and spellings in this document, all reflecting the diversity of Indigenous languages and practices. Some are explained here in order to aid understanding; others are explained within the teachings and stories.

Cultural safety is a term used to describe the spiritual, social, emotional and physical safety experienced by Indigenous peoples when changes are made to policies and practices that are oppressive, marginalizing and disrespectful.

Elder is an individual of Indigenous ancestry who is recognized by his or her community as possessing extensive cultural and community knowledge accumulated through life experiences.

Indigenous peoples is a blanket term to include Elders, knowledge holders and individuals who self-identify as Indigenous and are often

members of Indigenous communities.

Knowledge gifter is an individual of Indigenous ancestry recognized by his or her community as someone who possesses and practices traditional and cultural knowledge and passes it to others through ceremony or apprenticeship.

Knowledge holder is an individual of Indigenous ancestry recognized by his or her community as someone who possesses and practices traditional and cultural knowledge.

Knowledges is being increasingly used to emphasize the incredible diversity of Indigenous traditional and cultural knowledge across communities and nations.

Quality assurance is a term used to describe the ability of an institution to fulfill its stated vision, mission, and goals.

Wholistic is spelled with a 'w' to represent 'wholeness'.

Indigenous Quality Assurance Standards

Four Standards

Celebration and Sharing

Indigenous ways of knowing and doing are celebrated as invaluable to the entire college community and shared openly in well-informed and culturally-based ways.

Honour and Respect

Indigenous peoples are respected as collective authorities on their knowledge systems and are honoured through active participation in key college activities.

Place and Purpose

The college is reflective and supportive of Indigenous learners and their experiences, and helps prepare them for *mino-bimaadiziwin* - to live a good life of treating oneself, other people, and the land with respect and kindness.

Relationship to Land

The college community acknowledges Indigenous peoples' relationship to land, with earth as their mother, and develops its own close connection with the land, supporting efforts of reconciliation and peace.

Seven Requirements

1. Learners are provided with an opportunity to learn about Indigenous peoples, cultures, and histories
2. Achievements and commitments in Indigenous education are recognized, communicated and reported to the college community and Indigenous peoples
3. Learners are presented with Indigenous knowledges that are accurate and reflective of Indigenous peoples
4. Learners experience through Indigenous ways of knowing and doing
5. Elders in Residence and/or other Indigenous knowledge holders play an integral role in the delivery of Indigenous knowledges
6. College employees are knowledgeable of and experience Indigenous ways of knowing and doing
7. Adequate resources are in place to support the practice of Indigenous ways of knowing and doing

1. Engagement activities and planning initiatives are respectful and inclusive of Indigenous peoples and processes
2. Resource allocation meaningfully involves Indigenous peoples
3. Indigenous peoples are represented at leadership and decision-making tables
4. Indigenous peoples are meaningfully involved in assessing quality, competencies and qualifications related to the development, delivery and management of Indigenous education
5. Indigenous peoples employed at the college experience cultural safety
6. Indigenous peoples are meaningfully involved in the development, delivery and management of Indigenous education
7. Research and development projects meaningfully involve Indigenous peoples and are respectful of Indigenous processes

1. Physical spaces and events are reflective of Indigenous cultures and peoples
2. Administrative policies and procedures are supportive of Indigenous education authority processes
3. Administrative policies and procedures are supportive of Indigenous community processes
4. The college recognizes Indigenous learners' prior experience and community-based learning
5. Pathways are in place that reflect the needs of Indigenous learners and their communities
6. Indigenous learners are provided with wholistic and culturally-based support services
7. Indigenous learners are provided with opportunities to explore and foster their cultural identity, including the original teachings and creation stories of their nations

1. Learners are provided opportunities to explore Indigenous understandings of land in relation to self
2. Employees are provided opportunities to explore Indigenous understandings of land in relation to self
3. The college community is knowledgeable of local Indigenous peoples, cultures and histories
4. College operations promote environmental ethics and sustainability for the next seven generations
5. The college community includes reconciliation as a factor in decision-making processes
6. Members of the college community are knowledgeable about the historical and ongoing impacts of settlers and the State on Indigenous peoples
7. Efforts are made to ensure Indigenous learners maintain their connections to their homelands and communities while attending college

Why Are Indigenous Quality Assurance Standards Needed?

Access to Indigenous Knowledge Systems in Post-Secondary Institutions Is a Fundamental Right

Today, there is growing recognition of the importance of Indigenous knowledge systems to Indigenous peoples and the broader society, as well as the necessity of including Indigenous knowledge systems in our education systems.

Provincially, the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development's *Aboriginal Postsecondary Education and Training Policy Framework* acknowledges Indigenous worldviews and cultures as valid ways of knowing and affirms the place of Indigenous knowledge systems in the development and delivery of post-secondary education and training programs, services, curriculum and evaluation mechanisms.

Nationally, the *Calls to Action* put forth by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada also highlight the importance of Indigenous education. Among the *Calls to Action* to government bodies, are calls to ensure adequate resources are in place to support the integration of Indigenous knowledge, teachings and methods into classrooms, the implementation of mandatory Indigenous curriculum, and the creation of degree and diploma programs in Indigenous languages.

Internationally, access to Indigenous knowledge systems in post-secondary institutions is a fundamental right of Indigenous peoples. Articles 14 and 15 in *The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP), ratified by the Canadian

Government, speak to the right of Indigenous peoples to have access to education that is reflective of their own knowledge systems.

By signing the *Indigenous Education Protocol for Colleges and Institutes*, many colleges in Canada have not only recognized the importance of Indigenous knowledge systems, they are now obligated to commit to making Indigenous education a priority.

However, while work has begun to include Indigenous knowledge systems in the colleges, Ontario's quality assurance system has not kept pace: Indigenous peoples have not been involved in developing standards or principles to guide the evaluation of programs or broader college functions. This has led to concerns about the quality of Indigenous education and/or the appropriateness of how this quality is assessed.

Indigenous Quality Assurance Standards, created as part of the Indigenous Quality Assurance project, and developed collaboratively with Indigenous knowledge holders, community members and college staff and learners, reaffirm and build upon these commitments.

By implementing the standards, colleges will adhere to the highest standards in Indigenous education as put forth by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, the United Nations, and local Indigenous communities and bodies.

This is paramount as colleges operate on the traditional territory of Indigenous peoples, are situated near Indigenous communities, and have Indigenous student populations.

The Spirit of the Eighth Fire Inspires Our Work

Five hundred years of denying who we are as Indigenous peoples has left a destructive legacy.

When Europeans came to Turtle Island (North America), they tried to take our teachings away from us. They tried to take away our cultures and our ways of life.

Many of our people, our youth, are disconnected from the land and from their spirit. This is true for the Anishinaabek, Mushkegowuk and Métis.

Despite this, we continued to persist. We had knowledge keepers who retreated into the mountains and into the bush who secretly smoked their pipes during those dark times to carry that knowledge forward for us.

Some say our people are waking up, that our grandmothers are waking up. Some say they

have always been awake, but now they are standing strong. We see this as we stand up to the mining and oil industries and other resource development projects to protect our lands and waters.

We call this the Spirit of the Eighth Fire. According to an Anishinaabe prophecy, the eighth fire is a time when we will reclaim our ceremonies and ways of life. It is a time when we do not have to hide anymore. It speaks to an age of spirituality and humanity, where the teachings are shared with all races.

It is the right time to do the work of bringing our knowledges into our colleges. Through Indigenous Quality Assurance Standards and other continuing work, we seek to rebuild a learning system that is rooted in our teachings and that supports the emotional, physical, mental and spiritual well-being of Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in colleges and beyond.

Creating Indigenous Quality Assurance Standards

At the beginning, we offered *assemma* to each of the knowledge keepers to ensure we were proceeding with our work in a good way.



Offering *Assemma* (Tobacco)

Assemma is the first of the medicines that was given to Anishinaabe. It is the medicine that comes before all else.

When we are seeking healing, direction, or to offer our thanksgiving, we offer *assemma* to acknowledge to the universe that it is I that is petitioning the *manitowuk*—spirits—and the purpose for my petitions.

In the natural world, when we are taking whatever it is we need for life, be it water, plants, trees, medicines or the life of an animal for our food and clothing, we would offer our *assemma* and ask for forgiveness as we are taking life. It is always done in a good and kind way, one of respect.

When we are asking for help from an Elder or a healer, we offer tobacco in a good way so that they are able to communicate our needs with the *manitowuk*; and with our *assemma* we are also showing respect for the one we are asking to help us in our petition.

All our energy, thoughts and prayers are put into that tobacco and carried in the medicine when it is laid on to the earth, or into the water or burned in a sacred pipe or sacred fire.

The act of giving and receiving tobacco is a reciprocal relationship with responsibilities for both the giver and the one that accepts that *assemma*, including our Earth Mother.

Assemma is a powerful medicine and its petitions are always answered according to the law of the Creator.

Building a Strong Fire Takes Preparation

When we, the knowledge gifters, were asked about the role we saw for ourselves in Indigenous quality assurance, we conferred, and then replied, “we are the fire keepers.” Indigenous quality assurance is not unlike building a fire.

As the fire keepers, it is our responsibility to ensure that the embers of Indigenous knowledges at the colleges are cultivated into fires that burn strong, creating an eternal fire.

Quality assurance standards, like the logs that feed the fire, support the fire to grow and burn strong.

We placed four logs on the fire:

- Celebration and Sharing
- Honour and Respect
- Place and Purpose
- Relationship to Land

Historically, and even to this day, fire elicits our inclination to communicate through story. When we gather around a fire we naturally engage in the telling of many kinds of stories. The fire also draws us in, allowing us to concentrate and be better listeners to other’s stories.

Continuing the tradition of storytelling, each standard is accompanied by a cultural or personal story shared by one of the knowledge gifters. Through these stories, the reader is provided with a culturally-based context to enhance understanding.

The stories come from the traditions of the Anishinaabe, Mushkegowuk and Métis peoples. Although different versions of the stories and the figures within them exist, we chose not to standardize them but instead to honour the differences among us and the way they were told by the knowledge gifters.



Building a Fire Is not Easy

For colleges, as with many post-secondary institutions, implementing Indigenous education priorities in a system that was created within a western or euro-centric paradigm is an ongoing process.

As *A Story of Perseverance* depicts, there are challenges that must be addressed and overcome in thoughtful ways and through persistence.

In preparation for this work, we undertook a review of the literature, completed in March 2017.³

We organized and held three two-day gatherings which took place in August 2016, November 2016 and February 2017, bringing together a diverse group of Indigenous knowledge carriers from across northern Ontario. Members of the Indigenous Quality Assurance Steering Committee, quality assurance representatives from the colleges and the project team also participated in the ceremony and discussions over the six-day period.

Each gathering began with ceremony to ensure that the process was grounded in Indigenous ways of knowing and doing.

The standards were envisioned by the knowledge gifters and then discussed with the quality assurance professionals from the colleges. This way we could arrive at a mutual understanding of what was desired by Indigenous leaders and how it could be implemented by the colleges. The standards were also presented to the broader college communities.

³“Bridging a River: Reflecting on divergent shores and bridge building in the quality assurance of Indigenous based programs in Ontario colleges.”

Ceremony, Teachings and Stories Help Ensure Weweni

Ceremony, teachings and stories ensure *weweni*. Embodying the concepts of “that good way” and “looking after something properly,” *weweni* is from the Anishinaabe language of Anishinaabemowin. Ceremony, teachings and stories were helpful during the gatherings on several levels—they directly influenced the standards we created and they helped to actively bring the non-Indigenous participants into the fold of Indigenous worldviews and pedagogy.

A Story of Perseverance

One day when it was raining outside, two children were instructed by their grandfather to go outside to build a fire. Their grandfather told them that this fire was needed and it would help to warm them all up. Reluctantly, they went out and began the task of starting the fire. The kindling was damp and so was the wood. The children would get the fire to start and then it would die out. This was very difficult and they tried and tried many times. Because the branches were wet, the fire kept smoking and they began to cry from smoke getting into their eyes. Eventually after many tries and from learning from their mistakes they were able to start the fire and keep it burning. When they went in and told their grandfather how hard it was to start the fire, he replied that nothing that is worthwhile is easy but if you don't try you will never succeed.

Story told by Moose Cree Elder David Faries

“
Teachings help us to live a good life, and how to grow as a human being, with positive teachings. The teachings help us to find our inner strength, our inner spirit.

Semaa (tobacco) was offered first, before the teaching could take place.

We want to include the spirit in our teaching. Our inner spirit—jiiby. The spirit that comes into our physical body in the womb of our mother. Jiiby travels with us all of our life until our last breath and our heart stops beating. The spirit then travels back to our Creator and Gaagiizhgang—the place where we will all go, no matter what colour we are.

Our spirit belongs to our Creator—Gzhemnidoo. Nbi (water) is part of the ceremony. Creation would not survive without the lifeblood of mother earth. Nbi flows through mother earth. The gift of nbi was given to the kwewag (women) by the Creator.

Kwewag are carriers of nbi and they have to ensure that it is clean and to always be there for the next seven generations. Nbi is sacred. Kwewag need to take responsibility more seriously. It is becoming polluted. Josephine Mndamin is bringing awareness. Nbi is in balance with fire.

Dewegan—drum—is used to send Invitation songs about the doorway. There are four doorways—one in each direction. Think about the life of that doorway that is forever and ever. It is beyond our realm of thinking. It is the Creator's doorway. We send songs to the Creator's doorway for the life that comes through that doorway.

When you light your fire, use your semaa. Think about the Creator's light – the Fire.

Grandfather Giizis (sun) – it is the same fire we will be working with, since the beginning of time. It is the Creator's power. As nini (man), that is your connection to the Fire.

Sing the Invitation Song: Zhaawendimooyaa Wii biinidgeyaa. All of my relations.

The song opens Waabnong – the Eastern Doorway. The Fire is lit. We are ready to do the work. People will begin to approach the fire with their semaa and mshkiki (medicine). Other songs take place like Relation songs.

You can sing as the fire is burning. Those are the two firekeeper songs: Invitation song and Relations song. When we sing these songs, we invite the spirit realm, animal world, plant world, and fish world... The song travels all over.

When you sound your dewegan four times, you are calling on the four doorways. All the relations pay attention. Spirit is called that the ceremony will take place. Then you sing your song.

You will then smoke a man's pipe. The men will smoke it, the women can touch it. Next, pass out the semaa from a bowl. Offer semaa to the people. Ask them to put their thoughts in their semaa, and what they have to be thankful for, and why they are here today. Collect the semaa in another bowl, from the people. Smoke this semaa in the pipe, and offer some to the sacred fire.

Teaching shared by Peter Beaucage

Indigenous Quality Assurance Standards

What Are They and What Do They Mean?

Indigenous Quality Assurance Standards were envisioned by Indigenous leaders and knowledge holders to reflect and respond to the worldviews, educational needs and priorities of diverse northern Ontario Indigenous peoples, specifically Anishinaabe, Mushkegowuk and Métis communities, on whose traditional lands the colleges reside.

Four Standards

Four standards serve as the foundation for formally bringing Indigenous ways of knowing and doing into colleges.

The standards reflect four concepts that are very important to Indigenous peoples and during our time gathered together, they emerged and re-emerged in the stories, experiences and visions shared in the circle.

Relationship to Land

The college community acknowledges Indigenous peoples' relationship with the land, in which earth is their mother, and the college community develops its own close connection with the land, supporting efforts of reconciliation and peace.

Place and Purpose

The college is reflective and supportive of Indigenous learners and their experiences, and helps prepare them for *mino-bimaadiziwin*⁴ – to live a good life of treating oneself, other people and the land with respect and kindness.

Celebration and Sharing

Indigenous ways of knowing and doing are celebrated as invaluable to the entire college community and shared openly in well-informed and culturally-based ways.

Honour and Resepct

Indigenous peoples are respected as collective authorities on their knowledge systems and are honoured through active participation in key college activities.

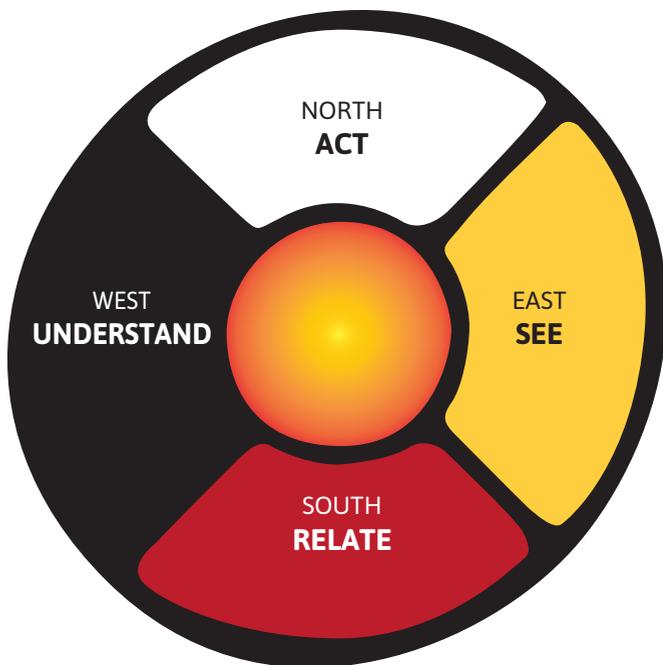
⁴ The closest translation of *mino-bimaadiziwin* is the "good life." It is an Anishinaabe word that means treating yourself, other people and the land with respect and kindness. The Cree version of the word is *mino-pimatsiwin*.

Seven Requirements

To acknowledge the Seven Grandfather Teachings, each standard has Seven Requirements. The requirements reflect the different levels involved in achieving the standard. The teachings of the Seven Grandfathers remind us that as we go through life, we must always strive to carry ourselves with respect, love, kindness, honesty, and to demonstrate bravery in the face of challenges while practicing humility as we are all a part of Creation.

Four Directions

To acknowledge Medicine Wheel Teachings, this picture, adapted from the work of Bell, 2014,⁵ illustrates how learning involves moving through different tiers or 'Four Directions' of awareness, from the east ("seeing it") to the south ("relating to it") to the west ("figuring it out and understanding") to the north ("doing it or taking action"). Learning does not follow one direction and is not a linear process.



⁵ Bell, 2014: <http://www.cea-ace.ca/education-canada/article/teaching-medicine-wheel>

How Will They Be Used?

The standards are not intended to prescribe how each college should bring the standards to life. Each college will choose how to implement the standards.

This respects *weweni*. Embodying the concepts of "that good way" and "looking after something properly," *weweni* is from the Anishinaabe language of Anishinaabemowin.

Those involved at the local college level – Elders and other Indigenous community members, Indigenous Education Councils, quality assurance professionals, college administrators and educators, etc. – will ensure *weweni* by working together to meet community expectations in culturally responsive, responsible, and respectful ways.

Additional tools and continuing guidance provided by Indigenous knowledge holders will support college administrators and quality assurance professionals to implement the standards and monitor progress in achieving them.



Standard 1: CELEBRATION AND SHARING

Indigenous ways of knowing and doing are celebrated as invaluable to the entire college community and shared openly in well-informed and culturally-based ways.

This standard ensures that:

1. Learners are provided with an opportunity to learn about Indigenous peoples, cultures, and histories
2. Achievements and commitments in Indigenous education are recognized, communicated and reported on to the college community and Indigenous peoples
3. Learners are presented with Indigenous knowledges that are accurate and reflective of Indigenous peoples
4. Learners experience through Indigenous ways of knowing and doing
5. Elders in Residence and/or other Indigenous knowledge holders play an integral role in the delivery of Indigenous knowledges
6. College employees are knowledgeable of and experience Indigenous ways of knowing and doing
7. Adequate resources are in place to support the practice of Indigenous ways of knowing and doing

Standard 1: CELEBRATION AND SHARING

Indigenous ways of knowing and doing are celebrated as invaluable to the entire college community and shared openly in well-informed and culturally-based ways.

SEVEN REQUIREMENTS	FOUR DIRECTIONS			
	SEE	RELATE	UNDERSTAND	ACT
1. Learners are provided with an opportunity to learn about Indigenous peoples, cultures, and histories	Indigenous-centred learning is accessible to learners on their own time	Indigenous-centred learning supplements or enhances program learning activities	Indigenous-centred learning is optional and formally recognized by the college	Indigenous-centred learning is mandatory and formally connected to program requirements
2. Achievements and commitments in Indigenous education are recognized, communicated and reported on to the college community and Indigenous peoples	The college community is aware of new and ongoing initiatives and commitments to Indigenous education	Initiatives in Indigenous education are easily accessible and identifiable to the college and broader community	Structures are in place to support achievements and commitments in Indigenous education	The college actively reports on achievements and commitments in Indigenous education to Indigenous peoples
3. Learners are presented with Indigenous knowledges that are accurate and reflective of Indigenous peoples	Learning resources and tools that have been vetted by content specialists are available	Learning resources developed by Indigenous peoples are utilized	Indigenous peoples deliver Indigenous-centred learning activities	There are partnerships in place with communities and organizations to support content delivery and programming
4. Learners experience through Indigenous ways of knowing and doing	Learning by doing is accessible to learners on their own time	Learning by doing supplements or enhances program learning activities	Intensive forms of learning by doing such as cultural camps, land-based learning and cultural placements/mentorships are available to learners and formally connected to program requirements	Learners are provided with the opportunity to complete program requirements in an Indigenous language
5. Elders in Residence and/or other Indigenous knowledge holders play an integral role in the delivery of Indigenous knowledges	Elders and knowledge holders come to the college during special events and occasions	Elders and knowledge holders are readily available to learners and employees at all campuses	Elders and knowledge holders are integrated into program learning activities	Elders and knowledge holders guide faculty and employees to implement Indigenous education
6. Adequate resources are in place to support the practice of Indigenous ways of knowing and doing	Employees are aware of Indigenous ways of knowing and doing	There are formal opportunities for employees to learn about and experience Indigenous ways of knowing and doing	Indigenous-centred professional development is connected to employee professional development plans and evaluation mechanisms	There are mechanisms to assess employee knowledge level of Indigenous ways of knowing and doing
7. College employees are knowledgeable of and experience Indigenous ways of knowing and doing	Elders and knowledge holders receive consistent and appropriate compensation for Indigenous-centred learning activities	Time and financial resources are allocated to support Indigenous-centred professional development	Time and financial resources are allocated to support Indigenous ways of knowing and doing for learners	Capital investments are made to support the maintenance and expansion of Indigenous ways of knowing and doing

Pipe Ceremony - Prayer with the Pipe

Use the men's pipe because we are doing a fire teaching. Women are welcome to hold the pipe and pray with the pipe.

Shkode Nini (fire man/chief) is a big responsibility. Not just to make fire, but to work with the fire. When you walk on Sema Miikan (tobacco/medicine road), semaa is one of the most sacred medicines. You may stray off the road of the good life sometimes. It takes a lot of work to walk mnobimaadziwin (good life). We also learn about ourselves as males. Shkiniigi – young man. We also need to learn.

Respect the other side of the human beings – kwewag (women). One day we will look for a partner. And kwe (woman) will look for a partner. It is important to understand about mnobimaadziwin, one of the most important teachings is to carry respect. Before you can respect others, you have to respect yourself. Use the Seven Grandfather Teachings as your guide. They help you to pursue mnobimaadziwin. Never disrespect a

kwe. If you do that, then you disrespect the Creator. He gave kwewag the gift of creating life.

When using semaa, you are carrying those teachings and ready to work as a young man. There is absolutely no excuse to disrespect kwe for any reason whatsoever. You can't say you drank too much. If you want to work with fire, you need to do that in the most respectful manner. Respect your fire and respect all things.

Set up the Sacred Fire

Begin your circle. The circle is an honour. There are protectors. It is relaxing. It is a good feeling.

Migiisii Miigwaan (eagle feather). When we use the eagle feather in the circle, the words are Sacred. You cannot tell lies, only truth. Words of the Heart.

Families are starting to use the Sacred Fires. It is healing for our community, and helping us grow as a nation.

Teaching shared by Peter Beaucauge



The Mouse Frees the Sun!

The sun used to travel across the sky and the people would say “that’s the sun’s road” and Chakabess (Cha-Kah-Bess) he somehow went on into the sky and he found that road and he sat on the road and the sun came along and the sun said, “You’re sitting on my trail, you’ll have to move.” Chakabess didn’t move so he said, “I don’t want to move.” And the sun said, “I can’t stand right here, I’m supposed to be moving, I’m asking you to move off my road.” So Chakabess didn’t listen so the sun said, “I’m going to have to step over you.” And, he said, “Go ahead.” So, the sun stepped over him and he was very hot and Chakabess got sunburned and he was angry. The sun kept going and Chakabess was very angry. He went back and he got - I’m not sure what he used for a snare. I want to think it’s a hair from someone’s head. So, he went back to the trail and set a trap for that sun and when the sun came, he stepped in Chakabess’s snare and he got caught, and the people could see the sun not moving and the sun was getting brighter and brighter because he was angry I guess. So, they sent the animals to try and free the sun. Many, many animals tried to go but it was too hot for all of them. At last they asked the little mouse to go and free the sun and the little mouse went and he chewed the twine or hair, whatever Chakabess used to snare the sun. Anyway it was the little mouse who freed the sun and the sun went on his way again.

Story told by Moose Cree Elder David Faries



Standard 2: HONOUR AND RESPECT

Indigenous peoples are respected as the collective authorities on their knowledge systems and are honoured through active participation in key college activities.

This standard ensures that:

1. Engagement activities and planning initiatives are respectful and inclusive of Indigenous peoples and processes
2. Resource allocation meaningfully involves Indigenous peoples
3. Indigenous peoples are represented at leadership and decision-making tables
4. Indigenous peoples are meaningfully involved in assessing quality, competencies and qualifications related to the development, delivery and management of Indigenous education
5. Indigenous peoples employed at the college experience cultural safety
6. Indigenous peoples are meaningfully involved in the development, delivery and management of Indigenous education
7. Research and development projects meaningfully involve Indigenous peoples and are respectful of Indigenous processes

Standard 2: HONOUR AND RESPECT

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SEVEN REQUIREMENTS	FOUR DIRECTIONS			
	SEE	RELATE	UNDERSTAND	ACT
1. Engagement activities and planning initiatives are respectful and inclusive of Indigenous peoples and processes	Indigenous peoples are engaged by the college on an ad hoc basis	Indigenous peoples actively participate in planning activities for Indigenous education	Indigenous peoples actively participate in planning activities at a college-wide level	Indigenous peoples actively participate using their preferred methods
2. Resource allocation meaningfully involves Indigenous peoples	Commitments to Indigenous education are factored into resource allocation	Indigenous peoples provide input into resource allocation for Indigenous education	Indigenous peoples provide input into resource allocation at a College-wide level	Indigenous peoples actively participate using their preferred methods
3. Indigenous peoples are represented at leadership and decision-making tables	Indigenous education and communities are factored into decision-making processes	Indigenous peoples occupy an advisory role at the college	Indigenous peoples occupy a decision-making role in relation to Indigenous education	Indigenous peoples occupy a decision-making role in relation to college-wide activities
4. Indigenous peoples are meaningfully involved in assessing quality, competencies and qualifications related to the development, delivery and management of Indigenous education	Indigenous-specific sources of data are available	Indigenous peoples actively participate in the development of quality, competency and qualification tools and criteria	Indigenous peoples actively participate in relevant hiring processes	Indigenous peoples actively participate in relevant assessment and evaluation processes
5. Indigenous peoples employed at the college experience cultural safety	Indigenous knowledges are recognized as a knowledge base and skill set in which employees receive recognition	Indigenous employees are provided with opportunities to maintain and enhance their connection to community and cultural knowledge	Competitive employment packages are available in Indigenous education	Indigenous employees are provided a working environment that is spiritually, socially, emotionally and physically safe
6. Indigenous peoples are meaningfully involved in the development, delivery and management of Indigenous education	Indigenous peoples are represented at tables that advise on curriculum development & enhancement	Indigenous peoples with content expertise are hired to develop and deliver Indigenous curriculum	Indigenous-based management positions are available and filled by Indigenous peoples	Indigenous peoples are represented in senior management
7. Research and development projects meaningfully involve Indigenous peoples and are respectful of Indigenous processes	Indigenous peoples vet research and development projects	Indigenous research principles (e.g. OCAP©) and practices (e.g. community-based research) are adhered to	Indigenous peoples are hired to manage and deliver research and development projects	Research and development projects are collaboratively managed and delivered with Indigenous communities and/or organizations

This story is told by Métis Elder Rick Zonadah Meilleur in the Northern Ontario Métis language of Michif. It also translated into English. The story is from the time when the fur trade was ending and was told to him by his Métis great grandfather.

Jô l'busheron dè pèyi den ô

Sèt istouèr ma été renkonté par mon Pèpèr (Métis)

Jô éta un métis. Sèt istouèr è fondé après la trèt de fourur.

Jô l' bushron dé pèyi den ô

Sèt léjend vien du vieu ten ô momen ou lè indien abita enkor la réjon dè pèyi den ô é lè shentié wèyiè l' jour. Un gas avec le nom Jô éta parmi lé premié bushron du ten. Séta unomm gran é trè fawr, fawr kom unnour. Unomm de famiye enbisieu é ben travayen. On sava kil garda un sekra présieu depuis lontan. Isembla konèt un endraw ou lé pin, érab, épinèt, serizié é chèn éta jigantik é ou la flor éta estrawdinèr. Un shèf alguonkin lui avè di à prôpô d' sèt fora samontang.

Ken lé ten onnudur Jô avè eink se sekra law den tèt. Jô avè une famiye a fèr menjé. Jô pensa ke sialè koupé sé zawbla ipoura ét lomm le plu rish é plu konu den kawmunôté. lôrawpa bezion de traveyé poul'rèsten dsé jour. Le lendmein matin ô levé du solèye iè parti a montagn. Après kelke zeur enjouawl Jô se trouv fass a fass avec lplugrô awb k'jamè vu. Jô avu kesèt fora éta spésial. Iya komensé a sié touts'wit sen pad de ten. Isérendu kont ke plus ki siaw plus kséta dur a sié. Sé kom si lè awb voula pa sfèr coupé. Après kelkesmein de siaj Jo deviein shoké é brulé ben rèd . A un mômen Jo kri trè for " Jvendra mon awm pour sèt montang " Ôsitô ki a fini d' parlé unonbraj aparè é lui di ke si idonn son awm ipoura awoèur la montagn. Louvrag s'rè ben fasil mèn ne poua pa alé ôparadi é ne woèura plu sa famiye ki ador bôkou. Jo avè eink dlarjen é dupouvouyèr den tèt énerfuzpa lonbraj deven lui sen i pensé ke toudben séta l'yawb lui mèm. Jo ben fatiké pens a r'tourné a mèzon pour un repô. Justensorten l'ven sélèv é un awb tomb sului. Jo serévèil en aprenen kun indien lava oporté a mèzon é saporsoi la famiye é le médésin ki l'rgad avec un regawr inkièt. L'doktèr lui di ke sa kawlonn vétébral éta brizé é nepensapa ke Jô mashera plupentout. Toutakou un lumier blensh aparè é parl a Jô é lui di: Jo pren souein dlafora ésé rishèss. La lumier luidi kil è unbontomm é devrapa oublié sé vrè valeur. Jô tomb endormi é se révèil lendmeinmatin é realiz ke séta justunrèv avec un bon mesaj. Jô a pri sonrèv é lami denzunn bonn istoueur pourkeparsonn abit sèt montagn. Ileur di ke le yiabl prendrè tou lè awm dè parsonn ki mètra leur pié suson téritouèr. Jô réaliz ke sé mieu d'répekté la natur ki egzis sula montang kedla détuir pour d'larjen é du pouvouèr.

Lumberjack Joe from Upper Canada

This story is about a Métis man named Jo from Upper Canada who was a lumberjack. One native told him about a mountain that had the best trees around. It was the old trees from beginning of time. The community always knew that Jo had a secret but he never discussed it. After hard times hit the community Jo kept thinking of that mountain with original trees on. He thought that if he would go there and cut all the trees he would be the richest and most powerful man in his community. Next morning bright and early he got up and travelled hours by horse to the mountain. He was stunned when he saw the biggest tree he had ever seen. He started cutting the tree without missing a beat. He realized that it was harder to cut than the trees he was used to cutting. It seemed like the trees were refusing to be cut. At one point Jo was so frustrated that he yelled out loud: I would sell my soul to have it easy with no effort and own this mountain. As soon as he was finished yelling a shadow appeared and spoke to him. If you sell your soul to me your work would be easier and you would own this mountain. Jo without hesitation agreed.

After agreeing, Jo decided to go back home for a rest and would come back in a few days. As he was walking out of the forest the wind got strong and one of the trees fell on Jo. When Jo woke up, he was told that a native person had brought him home. Jo saw his family and doctor looking over him with worry in their eyes. The doctor told him that his back was broken and wouldn't be able to walk no more. After a few moments of grief, a bright light appeared and told him to respect the trees and mountain. The light also told him that he was a good man with great values and to respect them. Jo fell asleep and woke up next morning with no pain. He realized it was just a dream. It was a dream with a powerful message. The message was to protect and respect nature and share her beauty with others. Jo took that dream and made up a story to scare the community. He told them to never go up that mountain because it was the devil's mountain and that the devil would take the soul of anyone stepping foot on his territory.

It is better to protect and respect nature than destroying it for greed and power.



Standard 3: PLACE AND PURPOSE

The college is reflective and supportive of Indigenous learners and their experiences, and helps prepare them for *mino-bimaadziwin* - to live a good life of treating oneself, other people, and the land with respect and kindness.⁶

This standard ensures that:

1. Physical spaces and events are reflective of Indigenous cultures and peoples
2. Administrative policies and procedures are supportive of Indigenous education authority processes
3. Administrative policies and procedures are supportive of Indigenous community processes
4. The college recognizes Indigenous learners' prior experience and community-based learning
5. Pathways are in place that reflect the needs of Indigenous learners and their communities
6. Indigenous learners are provided with wholistic and culturally-based support services
7. Indigenous learners are provided with opportunities to explore and foster their cultural identities, including the original teachings and creation stories of their nations

⁶ The closest translation of *mino-bimaadziwin* is the "good life." It is an Anishinaabe word that means treating yourself, other people and the land with respect and kindness. The Cree version of the word is *mino-pimatasiwinn*.

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SEVEN REQUIREMENTS	FOUR DIRECTIONS			
	SEE	RELATE	UNDERSTAND	ACT
1. Physical spaces and events are reflective of Indigenous cultures and peoples	Indigenous signs and symbols are visible throughout the college	The college holds Indigenous-centered celebrations and special events	Indoor space conducive to Indigenous ways of knowing and doing is readily available	Outdoor space conducive to Indigenous ways of knowing and doing is readily available
2. Administrative policies and procedures are supportive of Indigenous education authority processes	The college is aware of Indigenous education agency processes	Resolution processes are in place to examine incompatibilities between college administrative policies and Indigenous education agency processes	Administrative policies at the college are compatible with Indigenous education agency processes	Administrative policies at the college are informed by Indigenous education agency processes
3. Administrative policies and procedures are supportive of Indigenous community processes	The college is aware of Indigenous community/organizational processes	Resolution processes are in place to examine incompatibilities between college administrative policies and Indigenous community/organizational processes	Administrative policies at the college are compatible with Indigenous community/organizational processes	Administrative policies at the college are informed by Indigenous community/organizational processes
4. The college recognizes Indigenous learners' prior experience and community-based learning	Mechanisms are in-place to recognize learners' experiences and community-based learning	Tools to recognize and assess Indigenous knowledges and skills are designed with	Indigenous peoples are involved in the evaluation process of community-based learning	The college and Indigenous communities/organizations collaborate in the design of community-based learning experiences
5. Pathways are in place that reflect the needs of Indigenous learners and their communities	Indigenous learners are provided with opportunities to visit and explore the college prior to enrollment	Indigenous learners are provided with transition supports	Academic pathways are developed with Indigenous learners and communities to reflect need and ensure relevancy	The college supports pathways to employment for Indigenous learners
6. Indigenous learners are provided with wholistic and culturally-based support services	Employees and learners are aware of Indigenous-based services	Indigenous learners are provided with connections to culturally-based services and community programming	Culturally-based services that support the physical, mental, emotional, spiritual and financial health of learners are available at the College	Positive role models and mentors are available to Indigenous learners
7. Indigenous learners are provided with opportunities to explore and foster their cultural identities, including the original teachings and creation stories of their nations	Indigenous learners are provided with opportunities to connect to Indigenous peoples	Indigenous learners are provided space for self-reflection and discovery within academic programming	Ceremonies and practices are in place to support the development of cultural identity	Indigenous learners are provided with formal opportunities to learn the original teachings and creation stories of their nations within academic programming

⁷ The closest translation of *mino-bimaadiziwin* is the "good life." It is an Anishinaabe word that means treating yourself, other people, and the land with respect and kindness. The Cree version of the word is *mino-pimataziwin*.



Water is life. As an Anishinabe-kwe and Gookimis (Grandmother), my responsibility is caring for water, as it is for all women. As life carriers, this requires us to take care of our total being, emotional, physical, mental and spiritual self. Speaking for and taking care of the water brings that awareness to us as women as we acknowledge life - Bimaadziwin. We as women have that connection to Shkagaamikwe and Gookamis-Giizis. Not only are we responsible for our water, but also for the lifeblood of Mother Earth, Shkaagaamikwe and the medicines she brings to us.

Responsibility for fire goes to the men. Just as in Creation everything is in balance, so too, our roles and responsibilities as men and women acknowledge the work of the Gitche Manido (Great Spirit).

**Giimooki-kwe
Maang Doodem
Lorraine Whiteduck-Liberty, Elder
Nipissing First Nation**

The Ojibwe Creation Story of Turtle Island

Gzhi Mnidoo, the Great Spirit, had a vision, a dream. He made the earth, the rocks, water, fire and wind. He made the plants, animals, fishes, birds, and insects and then the Original People, Anishinaabe, last. There are beliefs and experiences that Native People hold in common. Most important are the beliefs pertaining to the Great Spirit, Gzhi Mnidoo, and the vision dream he had where he created the good red Earth, our Mother - and water, wind, and fire. He also made new life forms in the shape of plants, animals, birds, fishes, insects; whereby each possessed its own unique spirit and nature. He gave each life a gift unique in spirit and nature. There is a place and purpose for each life.

It is said the Original People were given the power to dream. Man dreams and prays to attain certain powers from other spirits (or spirit helpers) because man is weaker than other animals. Woman like Mother Earth was given the gift to give life and that is why woman is considered powerful. Gzhi Mnidoo gave Native People the power to dream. Men were given powers from spirit helpers while women received the powerful gift to give life. Gzhi Mnidoo then made The Great Laws of nature so that all living things could live in harmony and balance. The Great Laws governed the place and movement of the sun, moon, earth and stars; the powers of wind, water, fire and rock; the rhythm and continuity of life, birth, growth and decay. All things lived and worked by these laws. One of the beliefs pertaining to the Great Spirit is that everything – both seen and unseen – is connected. Non-Natives refer to this as the laws of nature where all living things exist in balance and harmony. According to Gzhi Mnidoo, the Great Laws of Nature dictate the rhythm of life, birth, growth and decay, and the movement of the moon, sun, earth and stars.

At some point the Anishinaabe began to fight and hurt one another, and their hearts were filled with anger and discord. Gzhi Mnidoo saw that there was no harmony or respect for the living. Then there was a great flood, destroying many life forms. Nanaboozhoo, a few animals and birds survived. All agreed that they needed land in order to survive.

This was followed by a great flood which destroyed the harmony and balance of the good red Earth. Great Spirit spoke to his People, reminding them that life is connected, and that we should honour, respect and protect the Earth, our Mother.

The loon (Maang), helldiver (Zhingibiss), mink (Zhongwaazh), otter (Nigig), turtle (Mishiikenh), and beaver (Amik), each had to dive into the water as far deep as they could to try grab some earth. Each came to the surface of the water barely breathing. Finally, the little muskrat (Wazhaashk), was the last to be asked and he refused at first and finally the other animals asked him again and he said, "I will try". Nanaboozhoo and the other animals laughed. "You are smaller than many of the other animals. If you think you can do it then go." Muskrat dived deep into the water. He was gone for a very long time. The other animals and Nanaboozhoo thought that for sure the muskrat must have drowned. After they were about giving up, bubbles popped through the water surface and up floated their friend muskrat who wasn't breathing, Nanaboozhoo picked up the little creature and found some earth between his paws. That earth was put on the turtle's back and from that Turtle Island was formed.

According to the storytellers who bring the lessons of the Great Spirit to the People, the loon, beaver, otter, and other animals all dived deep into the water to gain a piece of the Earth, our Mother. The muskrat, was fearless, he dived so deep, that the others thought he had drowned. After a long time below, he surfaced, barely breathing, with earth between his paws. This was how Turtle Island was created. Today Anishinaabe sing special songs/dance in a circle in memory of the event. Special honour is given to the turtle. The muskrat was given a good life. No matter that marshes have been drained due to progress, muskrats continue to multiply and they do their part in remembering the great flood by building their homes in the shape of little balls of earth.

Story told by Anishinaabe Elders Ted Recollet and Barbara Nolan



Standard 4: RELATIONSHIP TO LAND

The college community acknowledges Indigenous peoples' relationship to land, in which earth is their mother, and develops its own close connection with the land, supporting efforts of reconciliation and peace.

This standard ensures that:

1. Learners are provided opportunities to explore Indigenous understandings of land in relation to self
2. Employees are provided opportunities to explore Indigenous understandings of land in relation to self
3. The college community is knowledgeable of local Indigenous peoples, cultures and histories
4. College operations promote environmental ethics and sustainability for the next seven generations
5. The college community includes reconciliation as a factor in decision-making processes
6. Members of the college community are knowledgeable about the historical and ongoing impacts of settlers and the State on Indigenous peoples
7. Efforts are made to ensure Indigenous learners maintain their connections to their homelands and communities while attending college



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SEVEN REQUIREMENTS	FOUR DIRECTIONS			
	SEE	RELATE	UNDERSTAND	ACT
1. Learners are provided opportunities to explore Indigenous understandings of land in relation to self	Learners work to articulate and understand the importance of the four elements of life (earth, air, fire, and water), in relation to themselves, their community and their world	Learners work to articulate and understand how their actions impact the land	Learners work to articulate and understand Indigenous concepts of thanksgiving, respect, stewardship and reciprocity in relation to land	Learners work to identify how Indigenous knowledges and relationships with land support sustainability
2. Employees are provided opportunities to explore Indigenous understandings of land in relation to self	Employees work to articulate the importance of the four elements of life in relation to themselves, their community and their world	Employees work to articulate and understand how their actions impact the land	Employees work to articulate and understand Indigenous concepts of thanksgiving, respect, stewardship and reciprocity in relation to land	Employees work to identify how Indigenous knowledges and relationships with land support sustainability
3. The college community is knowledgeable of local Indigenous peoples, cultures and histories	The college community acknowledges the Indigenous Nations' traditional territory upon which the college resides	The college community is knowledgeable of local Indigenous communities and community protocols	The college community engages in learning opportunities with and in Indigenous communities	The college community works to develop strong relationships with local Indigenous communities and organizations
4. College operations promote environmental ethics and sustainability for the next seven generations	The college employs environmentally friendly practices	Infrastructure, capital projects and operating activities are reflective of local Indigenous knowledge systems	The college employs earth friendly energy and design practices with global recognition	The college supports and implements initiatives that promote sustainability for the next seven generations
5. The college community includes reconciliation as a factor in decision-making processes	Community need is factored into decision-making processes	Impact on language and cultural revitalization is factored into decision-making processes	Impact on Indigenous rights and responsibilities are factored into decision-making processes	Impact on land is factored into decision-making processes
6. Members of the college community are knowledgeable about the historical and ongoing impacts of settlers and the State on Indigenous peoples	Members of the college community work to understand the diversity of Indigenous nations	Members of the college community work to understand colonialism and its intergenerational impacts on Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples	Learners and faculty are engaged in critical reflection on cultural genocide, and how their discipline of study continues to impact Indigenous peoples and the land	The college community works to undertake activities that reflect the local histories, including the spirit and intent of relevant Treaties
7. Efforts are made to ensure Indigenous learners maintain their connections to their homelands and communities while attending college	Indigenous ceremonies and land-based practices are reflective of Indigenous learners' homelands and communities	Visiting Elders and knowledge holders are engaged with the college, representing local and learners' Indigenous communities	Program delivery methods support in-community learning	Experiential and land-based learning opportunities are available in-community

Life in Moosonee

As far back as I can remember living in Moosonee; life was a pleasure. It was a blessing. The water was clean. I could see the fish because the water was so clean. I could see the sturgeon. The water was deep. This was also our drinking water and the water we used to cook. We bathed in this clean water.

I heard stories about our Elders teaching the children spirituality. We were taught to give thanks in the morning, and again at bedtime too. I have a great granddaughter, her name is Emily. I teach her how to say her night time prayer.

My brothers and I were taught how to prepare moose hide. We were taught how to stretch beaver skin, marten, rabbit, and even wolf skin. A long time ago people took their skins to auctions. Certain animals provided food for their tables. My mother would make bannock on her woodstove. There would be two irons sitting on the stove and she would put her cast ironware frying pan on top with her bannock. Soon the place would be filled with the aroma of bannock.

We were taught how to sew at an early age. I was thirteen when I was taught how to make slippers. I preferred to make necklaces over slippers. I would take my necklaces to the Sportsman Show in Toronto.

Helping was very important in our home. My mother would say "go ask your grandmother if she needs help," or if a woman had a baby, my mom would say, "go see if she needs help." My mom was a helper like others. Mom died in 1989. She comes to me in dreams.

My older sister decided to take us to Residential School in Fort Albany. I cried many nights. I missed my family – my mom the most. Mom sent me a big bag of candies. I shared with my friends. It lasted for a while. The food at St. Ann's was no good.

Nowadays - our water is no good. Because of the dams our water is very low and polluted. The planes and other machinery have contaminated the land and waters. Up around Attawapiskat we hear of deformed fish. The waste from the mining exploration is affecting life in the water and land.

The big change for drastic measures was "Residential School." I'd seen too much violence. I'd seen what was done to my brothers. I was happy to see my brothers while we were out on walks. I waved at them; they waved back. Afterwards they were beaten up by the nun. With all the things that happened around us, we all need change to walk in balance with nature.

This story is told by Mushkegowuk Elder Rachel Chakasim



An Offering by the Indigenous Knowledge Gifters' Council

The act of giving and receiving *assemma* (tobacco) is a reciprocal relationship with responsibilities for both the giver and the one that accepts the *assemma*.

When this project began, we accepted the offer of *assemma* by the colleges to guide this work and ensure that it was done in a good way.

We have communicated the needs of the colleges with the *manitowuk* and have fulfilled these responsibilities as best we can, envisioning Indigenous Quality Assurance Standards that we believe will bring good medicine to learners, college employees, institutions and Indigenous communities.

Now, we offer these standards, this good medicine, back to you, the colleges. It is now your time to fulfill your responsibility that was enacted by the offering of tobacco.

We ask that you honour this sacred agreement through *weweni* and look after this good medicine properly.

The Spirit of the Eighth Fire

It is the right time to do the work of bringing our knowledges into our colleges. Through Indigenous Quality Assurance Standards and other continuing work, we seek to rebuild a learning system that is rooted in our teachings and that supports the emotional, physical, mental and spiritual well-being of Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in colleges and beyond.

Building a Strong Fire

Indigenous Quality
Assurance Standards
in Ontario Colleges



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