A COMMUNITY BASED APPROACH TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF A FIRST NATIONS BSW PROGRAM: COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND PROPOSED MODEL

Barbara Harris, M.S.W., R.S.W.
UBC School of Social Work and Family Studies

INTRODUCTION

Over the last 2 years, UBC’s School of Social Work and Family Studies has, in collaboration with the Squamish Nation, provided funds and resources for the development of a First Nations BSW program to be delivered off-campus. The project is both interesting and exciting because of the nature of the process. This paper constitutes a 3 stage process of research conducted over the last 2 years, and focuses on the findings of a) my initial research into Native social work education over the last 30 years, b) a community needs assessment, and c) a proposed model for curriculum and program delivery.

Critical to this project are the years of relationship building between Dr. Richard Vedan, the project manager, and Squamish Nation, in addition to his unwavering and ongoing support throughout this work. As well, the support of the Director of the UBC School of Social Work and Family Studies, Graham Riches, has also been significant in ensuring resources are available to facilitate the process.

What has made this project both interesting and exciting is that the project has been a community-based effort, and that the project also involved the use of a grounded theory approach to analysis of the information gathered in each step. The culmination of this research led to what is referred to in Creswell (1998) as “presenting a visual model or theory” (p.149). In fact, the new model for the delivery of an off-campus BSW program are delineated visually within the framework of a Medicine Wheel, as this was the only way I could make sense of all the research leading up to the final curriculum proposal.

As regards community participation, the UBC First Nations Advisory Committee and Squamish Nation have been involved
every step of the way, in terms of decision making relevant to the process. In the first stage, a literature review and interviews with key informants during site visits to relevant programs across Canada allowed for the identification and development of theme areas significant to the development of a new First Nations Bachelor of Social Work program to be delivered through UBC.

The second stage consisted of a community needs assessment involving 3 one-day focus groups, in which a clear articulation of concerns and needs were identified. In the 3rd stage, based on the results of the first 2 stages, a curriculum development workshop was held. In this stage, the needs assessment, as well as the curriculum from seven relevant programs was compiled into a curriculum package which provided the background for developing a curriculum proposal to the UBC School of Social Work and Family Studies.

Then, a one-day workshop was held with First Nations educators, as well as First Nations graduates from UBC’s Social Work program. Again, as with the previous steps, grounded theory analysis of the data allowed for the development of a curriculum proposal...a new model for the delivery of a BSW to First Nations in BC.

Ultimately, the model that was developed includes a philosophy, or cardinal values which must serve as the foundation for the program. Specifically, the program must include:

- a community vision for the program;
- elder involvement in all aspects of the program a strong community advisory board;
- protocol agreements;
- an evolving and dynamic model based on ongoing evaluation and formal mechanisms to address concerns; contextualized learning;
- a holistic approach to learning, which includes a healing component;
- and, an integrated model which ensures the ability to walk/work in either world – First Nations or mainstream.

Each stage of the research will be presented based on the form of analysis used. Thus, given the grounded theory approach used to integrate the materials, at each stage, references used in the initial stage will follow the discourse on this research, versus being found within the text.
STAGE 1: THE INITIAL RESEARCH AND INTERVIEWS WITH KEY INFORMANTS

In November, 2000, The Ministry for Children and Families, Squamish Nation and the Dean of Arts at the University of British Columbia (UBC) jointly funded research on First Nations social work education. The decision was based on three factors:

- a request from Squamish Nation to provide such a program.
- the TREK 2000 goals to increase enrolment of First Nations at UBC,
- the academic plan of the UBC School of Social Work and Family Studies, which includes the development of a satellite BSW program for First Nations.

Of concern to UBC, the School of Social Work and Family Studies, and the First Nations community, is the overall situation of Native people in Canadian society. While Native people in Canada are over-represented in the health, social service and justice systems, they are under-represented in the areas of education and employment. Frideres (1998) points out that in the ten years between 1981 and 1991, there was an increase from 2% to 3% in the percentage of Aboriginal people obtaining a university degree. During that same period, all other Canadians experienced an increase from 8% to 11%. Meanwhile, in B.C., the delegation of child welfare and health authority to First Nations agencies and communities commands that efforts to meet the needs of these communities be addressed.

As such, this project is a response to the request from Squamish Nation for social work education, and to the current needs of the community. As well, given the overall goals of TREK 2000 and the academic plan for the School of Social Work and Family Studies, this research project represents the first formal steps in the development of a First Nations BSW program.

In order to develop such a program, research into First Nations social work education, would provide insight on how the program could be designed and delivered. Universities across Canada have been involved in First Nations social work education for up to thirty years, providing a wealth of experience. Alternatively, a community needs assessment
would facilitate the ability to provide a relevant Native BSW program. Thus, consultation with the First Nations community was required to identify their needs. Furthermore, the culmination of the previous steps would provide the necessary background for the development of a curriculum proposal, and a new model for Native social work education to be delivered by UBC.

The literature review led to the development of a timeline of significant events related to First Nations social work across Canada over the last thirty years. As early as the 1970's, Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) program delivery to Native people was developing in a number of areas. Included are:

- Dalhousie University – decentralized BSW,
- Laurentian University-BSW to northern regions,
- Saskatchewan Indian Federated College-Bachelor of Indian Social Work,
- University of Calgary – BSW at Blue Quills,
- University of Victoria – decentralized programs in rural areas.

In addition to researching the history of First Nations social work education in Canada, a review of other First Nations Bachelor of Social Work (FNBSW) programs was necessary, in order to learn how such programs are being delivered to First Nations people across Canada. During the literature search, common themes regarding the delivery of such programs became evident. These themes were used as a guide to conduct semi-structured interviews with key informants from other First Nations social work programs. The interviews provided insights relevant to the development of a similar program. Included were issues related to:

- **Partnerships between Schools of Social Work and Aboriginal people** – as it relates to accountability, autonomy, commitment, academic and bureaucratic levels of partnership and overall vision of the program. Universities must have a deep commitment (at all levels) to First Nations social work education, and be willing to fuel that commitment by collaborating with the community in the delivery of a FNBSW program.

- **Advisory boards** – roles and responsibilities. The Aboriginal community should have a formal method for input into program delivery and curriculum. However, their roles needs to be clear, as do the avenues for ensuring their needs are being met.
- **Admissions** – re: requirements for entry, transfer of courses, flexibility of admissions dates. Admissions policy need to provide more flexibility for acceptance to the program, and involve community members on admissions committees.

- **Recruitment** – outreach. Efforts to recruit First Nations students must be expanded, and include recruitment of Aboriginal youth at the High School level.

- **Retention and support** – Fundamental is the need to be committed to anti-racist First Nations social work education and to improve supports to students in order to facilitate successful completion of the program.

- **Curriculum** – the program design must attend to community needs, be of relevance to First Nations people, be able to address styles of learning, be culturally sensitive and include an adult learning approach to education. Community involvement with curriculum committees is also needed.

- **Field placements** should include both mainstream and Aboriginal agencies, in addition to addressing issues related to supervision, and paid and block placements.

- **Prior learning assessment** should be implemented to foster recognition for the experience of service providers working in Aboriginal agencies and communities. Many people have a wealth of experience before entering the program.

- **First Nations faculty and staff** – Efforts for recruitment and retention, must take into account the tremendous demands placed on Aboriginal educators by Schools of Social Work, community, and family. As well, the community should be involved on hiring committees.

- **Policy** – There was general consensus regarding the desire for an accredited and portable degree, in addition to the need to address institutional racism as it relates to curriculum and policies.

These issues were discussed with identified First Nations social work educators across Canada. Field notes during interviews with educators from the various programs were later transcribed, analyzed and used to elaborate on the aforementioned themes.
Programs reviewed include:

- Carleton University’s off-campus delivery of BSW
- Laurentian University’s Honours BSW
- Winnipeg Education Centre’s Inner City Social Work Program
- University of Manitoba’s satellite or distance education BSW programs
- Saskatchewan Indian Federated Colleges Bachelor of Indian Social Work
- Nicola Valley Institute of Technology’s BSW program
- University of Victoria’s Native Child Welfare Specialization

Fundamental, and vital, to the success of FNBSW programs is the commitment of Universities to work with the community to ensure that they are providing programs that will maximize the benefits to Aboriginal people. These service providers are faced with very challenging positions, as will become evident from the focus groups, in the community. Additionally, policies that limit access to a BSW program, or to the support needed for successful completion of a BSW program, need to be addressed.

**STAGE 2: COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

Once the literature search and program reviews were completed, the process of determining the needs of the First Nations community, in terms of social work education, involved three focus groups. Two of these were conducted on the Squamish Reserve, and one was conducted in the Downtown Eastside (DES) of Vancouver. Participants from Squamish Reserve and the local community, as well as service providers — primarily Aboriginal — from all over the Lower mainland attended the all-day focus groups. Twenty-six people attended the on-reserve focus groups and 15 of 40 people invited to the DES attended.

Three general questions were asked. What are their general concerns in the community? How could the program address those concerns? How should the BSW program be delivered? Responses were recorded on flip charts, and were later transcribed and analyzed, also using a grounded theory approach.

Through the needs assessment process, it was determined that further efforts and activities need to occur before such a program could address the needs of the urban Native
community, based on the results of the focus group in the DES. Evident during the focus group in the DES, was the lack of trust felt among the participants, indicating a need for further relationship building within the urban Native community. However, the relationship building that has occurred between the University’s School of Social Work and Family Studies and Squamish Nation constitute the focus here. The on-reserve focus groups gave clear directions as to how the program could best meet their needs.

RESULTS OF SQUAMISH NATION FOCUS GROUPS

The data from the on-reserve focus groups involved seven themes: history and reconciliation, resources, social services, culture, health, and family and community issues. Clear direction regarding program delivery was also provided by participants.

1. HISTORY AND RECONCILIATION

- Pre and post contact- from a First Nations and not a John Wayne perspective
- Connecting history with the now - Recognizing historical changes to family unit and the relation to policy eg. History and impact of residential schools and multigenerational trauma. Example 2, multigenerational welfare families and dependency and impact of being in care.
- Introduction of alcohol to Native people
- History of service delivery – how fragmentation of services still impacts community
- Acknowledge the impact of religion

2. RESOURCES

A) General concerns regarding availability and barriers

- Advocacy
- Assessment
- Counselling
- Family therapy
- Art therapy
- Outreach
- Cultural workers

B) Child and Family Services

- Family meetings, facilitation and intervention
• Daycares, after school programs, breakfast and lunch programs
• Child welfare, child care workers, access supervision and the court systems
• Crisis intervention and emergency response teams.
• Part of resource team in schools and agencies – teaching awareness in schools
• Family respite
• Women’s shelters and transition houses
• Youth programs
• Elder’s programs – transportation to appointments
• Women, babies, youth and men’s clinics
• CMHC and social housing and renovations of homes

C) Education and Support for Family and Community

• Parenting, pre/post natal, infant development, healthy babies and childhood development, and speech and language
• Education re: mental illness
• Sex education – Gay and lesbian sexuality/ STDs, AIDS awareness, family planning and teen pregnancy
• Nutrition
• Victimization - Identifying stages of abuses/ kinds of abuse e.g. spousal/overt/covert/physical/systems/spiritual and intergenerational physical, emotional and sexual abuse

D) Developing Healthy Lifestyles

• Experience mastery – a sense of belonging and a sense of pride
• Self care- finding balance, being able to prioritize
• Healing - regaining integrity, overcoming the effects of residential school shame, developing self-esteem, help with anger management and addictions
• Communication and relationship building

3. SOCIAL SERVICES

General Concerns, Skills, Characteristics and Knowledge, and Social Workers as Educators

A) Concerns for First Nations social service workers

• Organizational structure and knowing where one fits in
• Dealing with burn out, stress, criticism
• Adequate supervision and support - emotional non-judgementalism, EAP, mentorship and role models
• Physical safety
• Personal development – ongoing and follow-up
• Dealing with inter – agency and multi disciplinary agencies
• Knowing protocol

B) General skill set

• Time management
• Conflict resolution, mediation, negotiation
• Counselling, advocacy, family therapy
• Assessment
• Practical intervention strategies
• Able to connect knowledge and skills, and can address history
• Ability to critique and understand underlying ideologies and values
• Able to conduct needs assessment, group facilitation and workshops
• Able to find resources – funding, space and time
• Organizational skills – being well-prepared

C) Personal qualities

• Respect for other cultures
• Being non-judgemental
• Self care – walk your talk
• Reliability
• Flexibility
• Healthy boundaries
• Role modeling
• Establishing trust
• Empathy
• Leadership
• Being committed
• Cooperative, team player

D) General knowledge

• Knowing the history impact of policies/ politics; Indian Act, MCF, MHR, DIA, Income assistance and Federal, provincial and municipal governments.
• Knowledge of resources
• Addictions training
• Knowledge of philosophy and theories eg. developmental psychology, family dynamics
• Residential schools affect
• Knowledge of legal system and jurisdiction
• Knowledge of cultural ways

E) Policy issues

• Knowledge and understanding of policies – implementation, development, flexibility, benefits of policy, inter-ministerial policy (eg. different levels of policy making in Bands, Governments and Agencies)
• How to be pro-active (advocate) re: policy – may mean going against policy or working within legislation while still meeting the needs of the community
• Dealing with repercussion of policy implementation
• Challenges of working in two systems – foreign government system
• re: policies
• Accessibility of policy for all – with attention to language use

F) Social workers as educators

• Balance between First Nation’s material and mainstream material
• Acknowledging skills, experience and wisdom in community. Eg. Elder involvement
• Reciprocal learning, information sharing - cross cultural and other aboriginal groups

G) Organizational and Management Skills

i) Human resources

• Supervision, coordination, and giving good direction
• Staff recruitment - suitability – qualifications – criminal records checks
• staff retention – support and training
• Staff grievances and labour standards
• Team work – team building – development

ii) Programming - Standards and expectations

• Program development from a First Nations perspective; implementation; evaluation

iii) Administration

• Management structures and organizational charts
• Infrastructure
• Governance
• Knowledge of legalities
• Funding management - developing and implementing budgets, proposal writing
• Computer technology, communications and data management

iv) Politics as they relate to Native people

• Band politics and control - code of silence and secrecy, nepotism, role of Band council, influencing Band council
• Conflict of interest
• Power struggles - political interference
• Land claims, treaties and self-government
• Repatriation

v) Quality of Service Delivery

• Accessibility, continuity
• Accountability – ensuring mandate carried out, appraisal/evaluation of staff and programs, having qualified staff
• Overlap of programs
• Ethics and code of conduct re: confidentiality, due process
• Understanding liability
• Geographic boundaries and barriers

4. CULTURE

A) Issues

• Cultural healing
• Knowledge of cultural history and importance of cultural identity
• Cultural and language teachers - culture is changing, derive strength from culture, language – hub of culture, fundamental to culture, need for mentors
• Respect for various roles Roles and responsibilities re: cooks, story tellers, dancers and singers Respect for and inclusion of Elders as advisors and educators
• Environmental concerns - energy use (determining priorities), land use (diversity), use of water and land in traditional ways re: healing
• Spirituality and religion
B) Objectives

- Developing association to culture, respect and non-judgmental attitude
- How to keep culture in the urban environment
- Protocol and culture at all levels- remaining firm in the promotion of tradition values and observing cultural ways and activities
- Pride in cultural identity -taking ownership and responsibility of language and culture
- Vision of own culture
- Information sharing
- Education – understanding role of ceremonies, family songs and long house
- Culturally aware teachers and trainers - Knowledge of the medicine wheel

C) Activities to meet objectives

- Sweats
- Drumming
- Singing
- Smudge
- Traditional teachings
- Long house
- Story telling
- Oral tradition
- Protocol
- Honouring babies 2000
- Teaching in a circle
- Healing circles

5. HEALTH

A) Accessibility and knowledge

- Medical services knowledge re: uninsured health, hospitalization and other treatment
- Understanding diagnosis
- Wheel chair accessibility
- Alternative traditional medicine
- Home and community care and follow up
- Discharge planning – early discharge and community care
- Palliative care
- Rehabilitation – physical and A&D
B) General health concerns

- Substance abuse
- AID/HIV
- Diabetes
- Eating disorders
- Obesity
- Developmentally disadvantaged
- Suicide
- Pre/post natal health
- FAS/FAE/NAE
- Youth and Elder healing and dealing with the alienation of youth

C) Health- intervention/ prevention/ promotion/

- STD, HIV and tobacco reduction
- Family intervention
- Education
- Housing
- Recovery beyond sobriety

D) Mental health

- Addictions – substance, solvent, and gambling
- Depression
- ADHD
- PDST
- Stress management
- Loss and grief
- Impotent toxic rage

6. FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ISSUES

- Training/employment/housing
- Victimization and safety, bullying, drug dealing, gangs and youth violence, sex trade recruitment, elder and child abuse
- Children’ education re: impact of history and language
- Racism and discrimination and discrimination in family groups
- Addictions
- Importance of families/ family history – need to deal with family violence, breakdown, separation anxiety, blended families, latch key families, foster parents
- Community development from an aboriginal perspective
- Relationship building on all levels
• Multicultural recognition and importance
• Impact of community resources – schools, transition houses, safe houses, and professionals (medical)

7. RACISM AND PREJUDICE

A) Beliefs and attitudes

• Church ignorant of traditional ways
• Acceptance lacking
• Being non-judgemental lacking
• Prejudice against cultural activities
• Labelling categories eg. Status and non-status
• Lack of tolerance and acceptance eg. You are Bill C-31

B) Concerns

• ASSIMILATION
• Alienation
• Internalized oppression
• Internalized racism
• Laws and traditions are missing
• Shame associated with cultural ways
• Lack of trust and respect

C) Need for anti racist education and more inclusive environment/activities

• How to deal with discrimination
• How to deal with overt, covert, systemic institutionalized racism
• How to deal with criticisms, barriers, stereotypes and superstition
• Protocol and culture at all levels

PROGRAM DELIVERY

In summary, the focus groups at Squamish Nation Recreation Center felt that the program should be equal to any accredited BSW program, that there should be a balance between First Nations and mainstream literature, that mentoring is important and that

a) the program should be available
• through distance education, correspondence, internet, or a satellite program
• on Squamish Reserve or on the North Shore
• full-time, part-time, and have classes each week, bi-weekly, or one week per month (block training) or on weeknights, and weekends
• in a format that includes cultural activities such as smudges, classes taught in a circle, having opening and closing prayer
  b) admission should be based on
• accountability
• motivation
• experience and training
• cultural practices
• criminal records check – offenders may be considered depending on how they have reconciled the offense
  c) practicums options should include both mainstream and Aboriginal agencies/services and paid practicums
  d) faculty should be First Nations
  e) prior learning assessment (challenging courses for credit) should be a part of the program
  f) concerns and possible barriers regarding attending the program include childcare; accommodation; financial support and support from employers, band council, community.

STAGE 3: PROPOSED MODEL FOR THE FIRST NATIONS BSW – CURRICULUM WORKSHOP RECOMMENDATIONS

The curriculum workshop was preceded by the development of a curriculum package that was issued to the participants in advance, and included the results of the community needs assessment, as well as a documentation of the curriculum from seven relevant university programs. Participants at the curriculum workshop felt that there were issues that needed to be discussed prior to making any recommendations specific to the curriculum itself. Thus, what will be presented is the initial discussion, the culmination of which led to identification of the philosophical and cardinal values that should underscore the development of the program. Additionally, the specific curriculum recommendations are presented, through the charting of key components, as delineated through the use of a terms of reference.

In trying to prepare this aspect of the research, I decided to try and present the material in a way that would be indicative of
the essence of the discussion during the workshop. Inherent in the discussion was the interconnectedness of all of the issues. Further, I am often challenged to think outside the box, and as such, I have taken the liberty, here, to use the Medicine Wheel to frame the discourse regarding the philosophy and cardinal values discussed in the curriculum workshop. The use of a holistic conceptualization of the discourse is certainly appropriate to any Aboriginal culture, a fact that lends added weight to the application of this approach.

Although not all cultures use the Medicine Wheel, it is common among Native people from the Plains, of which I am one. While there are many ways in which the Medicine Wheel can be used, this representation of the Medicine Wheel is my own interpretation, but is based on teachings passed on to me from many different sources.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

These comments are the result of the preliminary round table discussion that occurred at the workshop. The discussion initially focused on the need to consider the intent of the program...within the context of other programs that are becoming more accessible to the community, as well as the long range perspective of this program.

The issue of the philosophical approach was also discussed in terms of the university’s willingness to partner in the journey towards self-determination, versus just doing training. Highlighted in the discussion were the guiding social work values regarding social change, empowerment and self-determination. Of concern is that with shrinking resources, the government may not want to support self determination, and that alternatively, how can self-determination be developed without recolonizing or traumatizing the community? Further, the pressures to mirror mainstream bureaucracy/programs are a manifestation of federal/provincial interests, which do not allow First Nations to meet their own unique needs. Ultimately, the philosophy of the School, versus the philosophy for the FNBSW, need reconciliation. As well, there needs to be autonomy in terms of meeting educational objectives without interference.

Having a strong connection to community and culture are viewed as critical. Pertinent is the loss of culture through assimilation and policy implementation, urbanization, suicide
and early deaths. Another issue is the high turnover of workers who come to community, develop their skills to work in community and either burn out or move on. This high turnover reflects specific challenges in bringing the community and the child protection system together. The connection to community is also relevant in terms of content and context. Policy, theory, local history and the struggles of working with band administration, and 3 levels of government policy and bureaucracy need to be addressed. Also important is the capacity of community to ensure their needs are being met.

As well, child welfare needs to be framed within a family and community context, as well as within a cultural context that reflects an Aboriginal philosophy or world view. Rather than just designing a curriculum that narrowly fits with the current child welfare system, developing the skills to become community problem solvers is relevant to child welfare as a vehicle in the move towards self-determination. The issue of delegation needs to be seriously considered, given the possible ramifications. Thus the program would incorporate the integration of skill development and education for self-determination.

In terms of skills, however, the participants felt that fundamental features of the program should include a focus on community development. Additionally relationships between individuals, families, and the community, as well with municipal, provincial and federal governments were identified as relevant to skill development. While the community voiced their desire for all the advantages of the mainstream program, it was also mentioned that skill development within a Native context is required. Specific highlights included a focus on crisis intervention, ethics of working with one's own family, assessment from clinical, community and professional perspectives, racism and prejudice, conflict resolution, and approaches to practice. Ultimately, graduates must develop skills that will allow them to work comfortably and competently in both worlds.

In terms of content, the need for a balance between mainstream and First Nations content, for knowledge of "real history," - an appropriate historical context, and for relevant knowledge of culture, social policy, jurisdiction, legal issues and band management/politics were mentioned. Essentially, it is important to have a First Nations perspective and relevant reading lists, as well as an integration with community context.
PHILOSOPHY/CARDINAL VALUES

In the east is a time of new beginnings, of the dawn, and of spring time. It is the physical realm, but is also the place of the eagle. The program will be physically located in the community, and must have the physical presence of the community, through the elders. The eagle has powerful vision, and, from great heights, can see fish beneath the ice in a stream. The program must have a vision that is created by the community; a long range vision indicative of the eventual direction of the community: empowerment, self-government and self-determination.

Another important recommendation is that an advisory board of community members be established to assist in ensuring that the program is/will meet the community’s needs. Concrete mechanisms for addressing concerns must also be in place, through the development of a protocol agreement or contract. This will allow the program to be dynamic and to evolve, and will include both formative and substantive/summative evaluation mechanisms.

As we head towards the south, we move into the realm of summer, and of learning. The south is the place of the mouse, a very inquisitive creature. We must think about context. We are required to think about the past, the present and the future as these relate to history, culture and traditions. As well, the appropriate knowledge and skills required to fulfill the community’s own vision must be taught. There must be a balance between the big picture and the practical attainment of knowledge and skills.

We also need to think about learning as healing, about process and content. The distinction between process and content relate to the fact that process learning provides context. Significantly, cultural disconnection and historical trauma are triggered by new knowledge.

In fact, the program must be integrated, and “be an exemplar of contextualized learning...[in which] skills [taught are] appropriate to Squamish Nation community, clients, culture, class and background,” without invalidating or ignoring process.

Thus we are lead to the west, to the fall and the evening time; the place of the bear. This is the place of emotions and of the
need for care. Here we are faced with the need to nurture the elders, the students and the faculty. Students need mentoring, and a supportive and cooperative (versus competitive) environment. Importantly, very strong culturally based student support services are required, with instructors actively involved. Relationships between students and faculty need to be genuine and non-adversarial, with faculty being willing to participate in community activities. Faculty must have curriculum and instructional support, and have mechanisms for facilitating the integration of curriculum. Commitment and advocacy provide a supportive milieu within which the program can thrive. Thus, a strong commitment from UBC is critical.

As we move to the north, we find the raven, the darkness of night and the place of spirituality. This is also the time of winter. The winter snow reflects the light of gleaming stars as culture begins to shine among the original peoples of Turtle Island. Thus, a strong connection to First Nations agencies and associations is desirable, as is the goal of attaining First Nations faculty. Practicums in the First Nations community will be important. Additionally, the program must be holistic, and rooted in Squamish Nation culture and activities.

Central to these recommendations is the place of elders, in the centre of the Medicine Wheel. The elders will play a critical role in many aspects of this program, be it as advisors, teachers, mentors, or support people. The elders represent the community, and can provide context, as well as providing support and a cultural foundation. Importantly, the elders, too, will require support as they provide that foundation. Certainly, their involvement must be real and meaningful.
Terms of Reference re: course-specific recommendations

1. Elders and Community: Squamish Nation Elders and Community members provide support to students and instructors, and to curriculum and instructional development and delivery in terms of Squamish culture and community needs.

2. History and Reconciliation: Squamish specific, "real history," important to address the intergenerational trauma associated with the history. Reconciliation of historical and contemporary First Nations and non-First Nations social, economic and political differences.

3. Values: Squamish traditional values: rights and responsibilities of individuals and larger collectives. Squamish worldview, including individual, family, clan, community and nation.


5. Traditional Healing and Theory: inclusive of Squamish traditional healing, health and helping, and Squamish
traditional belief/theory on human and group development, behaviour, and change.

7. Band Politics: dynamics of Band politics and the intersection with social work.

8. Self-Governance: Empowerment through self-government and self-determination – the skills and knowledge needed to address the various issues related to decision-making, preparation, implications, and developing self-governance structures (politically, administratively, etc.).

9. Professional Skills/Knowledge: Legislation and policy and the impacts on dependency and fragmentation of services and resources; professional and administrative skills and knowledge (personnel policy). Must include social work skills appropriate to the Squamish Nation (crisis intervention, capacity building, conflict resolution, community development, and child and family practice, self-care and health promotion – developing healthy lifestyles in family, community, agency).

10. Family and Community Development: program fundamentally based on family and community practice.


12. Decolonizing methods/approach to research, theory and practice.

These terms of reference constitutes the culmination of the curriculum specific recommendations flowing from the initial discussion which occurred during the workshop. Each of these features are to be integrated into the curriculum based on the recommendations of the curriculum workshop participants, and are delineated in the following chart, as a guide. Ideally, the terms of reference indicates how each program component can better reflect existing educational needs. Community input on how these recommendations are to be implemented will be an ongoing developmental process, which is viewed as critical to the development of a contextually and culturally appropriate program.
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