

**Aboriginal Leadership and Governance Training Needs  
Post-Secondary Institutions working with  
Northern Alberta Aboriginal Community Members  
Report on January 2011 Gathering**

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Circulated to all participants for input

## **INTRODUCTION**

The best way to introduce and define this endeavour is to share the invitation that was sent by post-secondary institutions to people with whom they have relationships in the Aboriginal community.

“As colleges and other post-secondary institutions, we have been giving some thought to your request for training in leadership and governance. Talking with others, we’ve learned that there are similar needs throughout Northern Alberta. In response, the post-secondary institutions would like to listen and learn about the needs and priorities for leadership and governance training in Northern Alberta. We are asking you (or your organization) to provide your time and knowledge of your community needs. *We see this get together as a chance to dialogue and look for partnership opportunities in the area of Aboriginal leadership and governance training.*”

**Purpose:**

- To share information about current Aboriginal leadership and governance training opportunities
- To identify unmet needs and gaps in existing opportunities (i.e. location, format, timing, cost, marketing, etc.)
- To work towards solutions (both content and process)

**Outcome:** The deliverable from this gathering would be a vision for Aboriginal leadership and governance training in northern Alberta. A small working group of people (from this gathering) would be formed to bring this vision forward. Next steps would be identified including finding appropriate resources: financial, location of expertise (elders, experienced leaders, curriculum that already exists, etc.), method of input in ongoing development from relevant partners (those present and any other identified partners), etc. *Outcomes of this meeting will be first circulated and then shared with interested parties (generally government representatives) to get their support towards the vision.* The longer term outcome (timeline determined by the working group) would be new and/or better Aboriginal leadership and governance training in Northern Alberta.”

## **BACKGROUND**

Post-secondary institutions already have many forms of collaboration amongst themselves. At two of these collaborative meetings (the Alberta North Research Group and the AACTI - Alberta Association of Colleges and Technical Institutes - Innovation and Applied Research Group) several northern college representatives informally conversed and found that each of their institutions is struggling to respond to Aboriginal community needs in leadership and governance training. Within the context of the new college roles and mandates as comprehensive community institutions it was felt that these expressed needs required a response. A new awareness of the Alberta Rural Development Network role in helping all the post-secondary institutions engage with rural communities added to the mix.



The first step was getting a post-secondary working group together. In some cases the representatives to the above mentioned meetings were the right people, in others the representatives suggested people within their organizations that would be the appropriate contact. A general call was made through the Alberta Rural Development Network for interested members. The initial working group included the following people:

Patsy Steinhauer, Director, Centre of Excellence in Aboriginal Learning, Norquest College  
 Leo Jacobs, Associate Vice President, Keyano College  
 Trent Keough, Vice President Academic, Portage College  
 Morine Metzler, Dean of Business, Industry and Human Service Careers, Northern Lakes College  
 Brian Calliou, Director of Aboriginal Leadership and Management, Banff Centre  
 Fay Fletcher, Professor, Faculty of Extension, University of Alberta  
 Darlene Bouvier, Professor, School of Native Studies, University of Alberta  
 Kelly Benning, Aboriginal Student Services, Grande Prairie Regional College  
 Priscilla Campeau, Centre for Indigenous Studies, Athabasca University

Monica Kreiner, the Alberta Rural Development Network Key Contact from Northern Lakes College took on a key organizing role.

There were e-mail discussions and teleconferences in the spring of 2010 that led to funding applications to hold a networking event. The working group agreed to:

- Focus on Northern Alberta because of the good working relationship the post secondary institutions (PSIs) have with Alberta North, the treaty 6 and 8 lines, the Metis settlements in the north, and funder interest in initiatives north of highway 16. This was seen as a manageable undertaking in terms of scope and expressed need
- Do an environmental scan of existing programs in leadership and governance training opportunities and models
- Work with people with whom the PSIs already had relationships rather than aiming at political leadership in relevant organizations
- Schedule an information sharing session after the gathering for government and other interested parties. The purpose of the session would be to present the initiative and its outcomes and to garner support for next steps.

- Invite representatives who had support from their PSIs and who had expressed a desire to work together based on their individual areas of expertise and knowledge and to respond to expressed community need
- Secure financial support from their PSIs (where applicable) including in kind contribution of the participants' time and travel expenses to an event.
- Apply to Community Development Program of Agriculture Canada and the Alberta Rural Development Network to hold a networking event
- Respond to both oral and visual preferences, taking a unique approach to sharing information among people with a variety of formal educational levels. The program development needed to be culturally sensitive. .

Although the gathering was initially planned for September 2010, delays in funding approval from the Community Development Program through Agriculture Canada pushed that date off so January 18 and 19 was scheduled.

After many changes at PSIs, the following delegates were named:

Keyano College: Janis Lawrence-Harper and Gino Restivo

Norquest : Pamela Young

The Centre of Indigenous Studies at Athabasca University recognized early on that they were stretched thin and although interested did not have the capacity beyond wanting to stay informed. A former graduate student of one of the U of A professors also joined the group because of a passionate interest in the topic.

Portage College: Robert Rayko and Sandra Merchant on behalf of Stuart Lietch

A program planning subcommittee of three people made program decisions including the engagement of the Positive Culture Company to facilitate the event. Their expertise is in visual thinking that quickly gets people thinking and working together creatively and successfully.

Post-secondary partners invited participants with whom they had relationships. All together 40 people were expected to attend the event. Unfortunately the weather did not cooperate with a winter storm on the expected arrival date.

The following 30 people did attend:

First Name	Last name	Organization
Billy	McDonald	Aseniwuche Winewak Nation
Brian	Calliou	Banff Centre
Brian	Panasiuk	Northern Lakes College
Candice	Willier	Sucker Creek Youth
Darlene	Bouvier	University of Alberta
Darwin	Eckstrom	Grande Prairie Regional College
Dennis	Whitford	Region 8 Child and Family Services
Earl H.	Laboucan	CEC Atikameg
Fay	Fletcher	University of Alberta
George	Calliou	formerly with Treaty 8

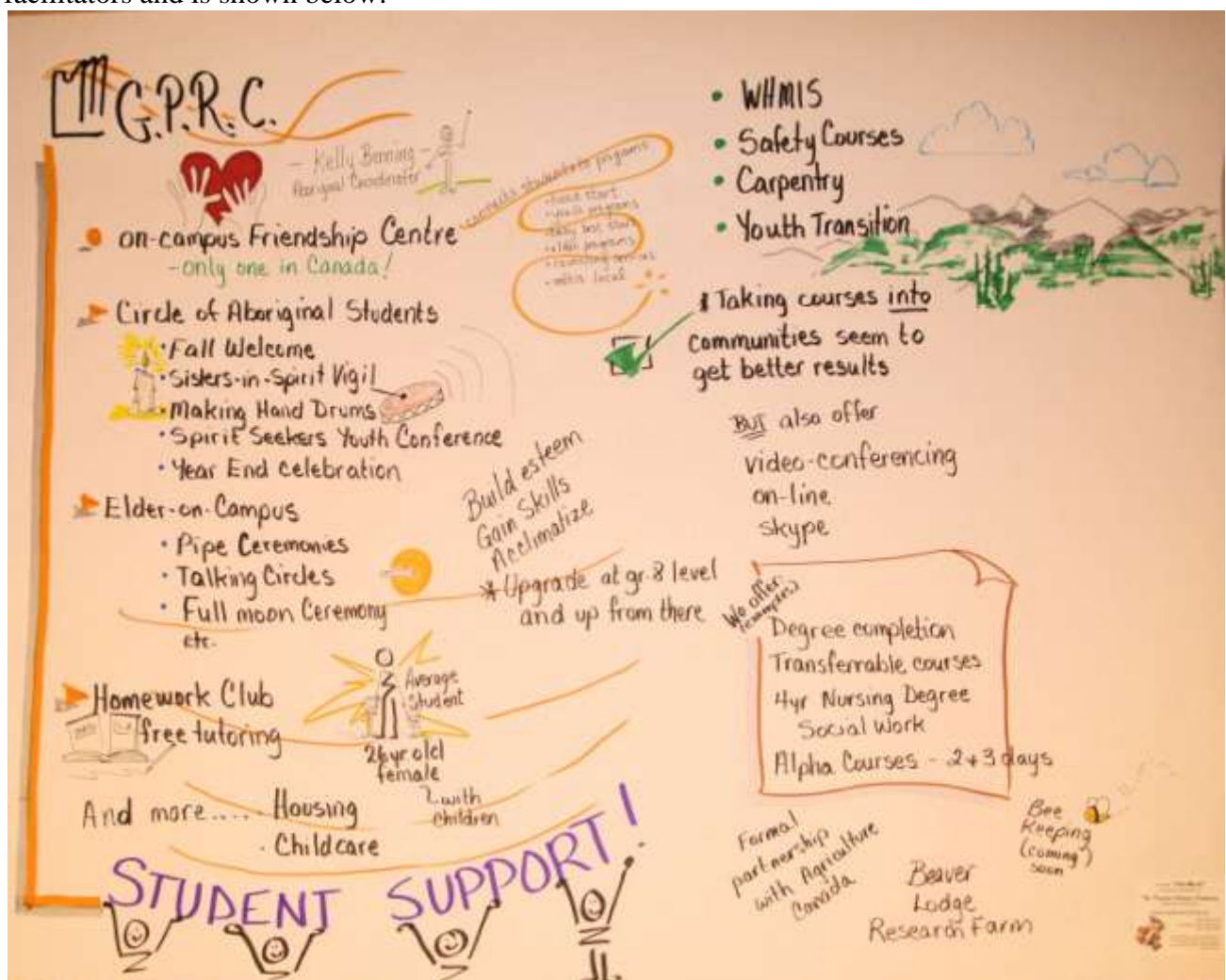
George	Addai	Geosanda Consulting
Gino	Restivo	Keyano College
Gloria	Anderson	Treaty 8 Oteenow Employment and Training Society
James	Wanyiandie	Aseniwuche Winewak Nation
Janis	Lawrence-Harper	Keyano (by phone for part)
June	Cardinal-House	Buffalo Lake Metis Settlement
Kathleen	Laboucan	Woodland Cree First Nation
Kelly	Benning	Grande Prairie Regional College (by phone for part)
Ken	Moberly	Aseniwuche Winewak Nation
Monica	Kreiner	Northern Lakes College
Morine	Metzler	Northern Lakes College
Pamela	Young	Norquest College
Robert	Rayko	Portage College
Roderick	Alexis	Alexis Nakota Sioux First Nation
Sandra	Merchant	Portage College
Scott	Ferguson	University of Alberta grad student
Sherri	Chisan	Blue Quills First Nations College
Susan	Cardinal	Metis Settlements General Council
Terrie	Quinney	Tribal Chiefs Employment Training
Willard	Roe	Region VI Metis Nation of Alberta

## REPORT ON THE GATHERING

The two day workshop began with a prayer.

The purpose of the two day gathering was introduced by the post-secondary program sub-committee members. It was summed up with the phrase “Increasing capacity of northern Aboriginal communities through training in leadership and governance.”

Next was the presentation of existing programs by post-secondary institutions that are relevant to Aboriginal leadership and governance as well as other related initiatives elsewhere. This was presented in a variety of ways including presentations by people in the room, distribution of brochures, teleconferencing in key people for all to hear and ask questions of, and visiting websites together on an overhead screen. All of this information was captured graphically by the facilitators and is shown below:





# Keyano

-Gino Festivo-



Programs Examples:

- Aboriginal Child + Family
- Addiction
- Community Wellness
- Entrepreneurship Program (on-line)

➤ Partnerships

many protocols



Developing ....

➤ 2yr. Community Development, Wellness + Addiction Program

➤ 2yr. Social Work Program



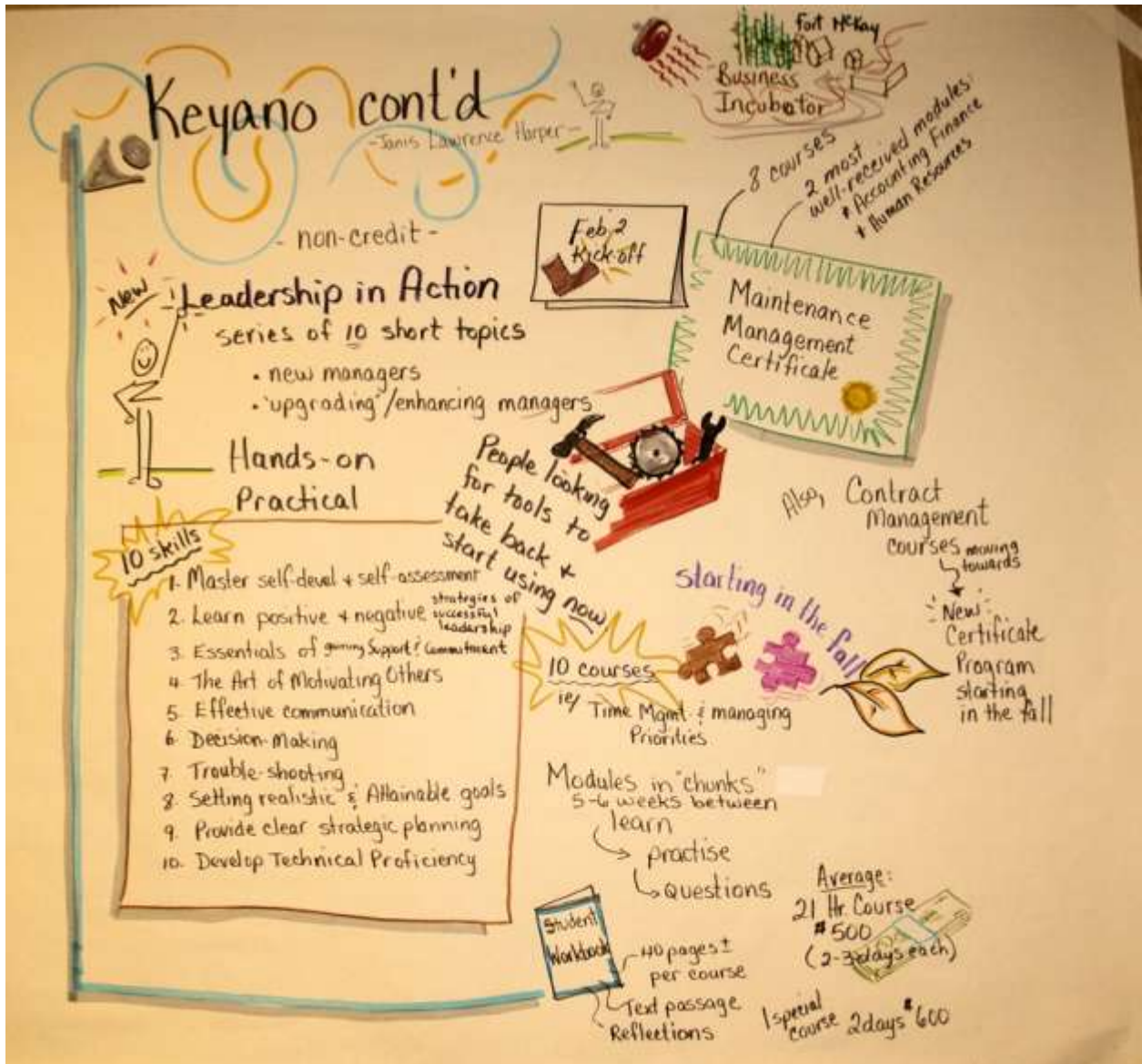
## MOODLE



on-line classroom extension

allows lots of interaction

- blogs
- networking
- weblinks
- grades access
- discussions





# Portage College

- ✓ No specialized Abor. Programs
- ✓ Some courses transferrable
- ✓ ATEP - Aboriginal Teacher Education Program



- ✓ We will gear programs to Reserves + Bands needs/requests
  - ie Accounting Programs
  - Small Craft Industry

- ✓ Satellite Camps
  - ie in Frog Lake

- ✓ Bus. Admin. available on-line

+ New Administration, so lots of changes and re-vamped programs





# AFOA

- Alberta Branch -  
- Robert Andrews -

- Gov't. Management Assessment Tool  
used for individuals & groups

ie Language + Tradition } example factors  
Operational Practices }

- Diagnostic tool for people to use to help them plan

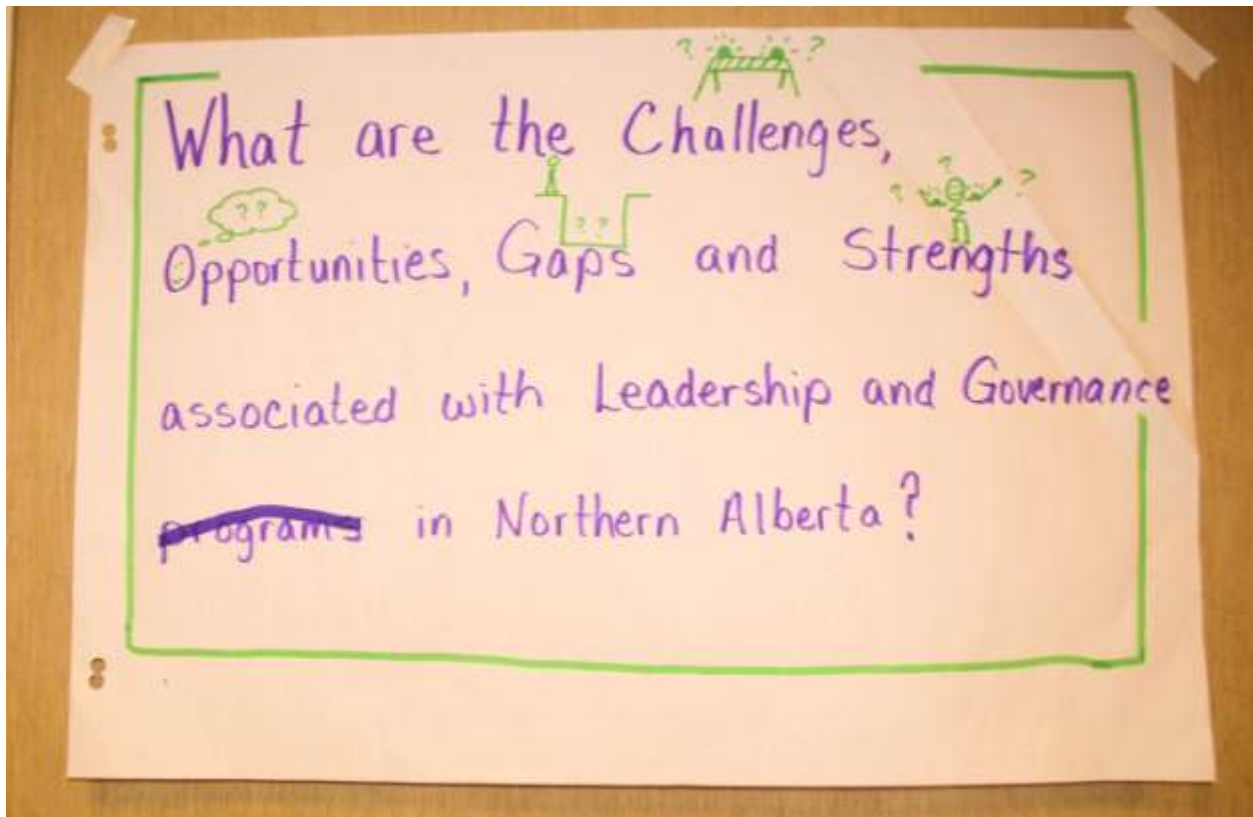
BEST PRACTICES

- Strengths & weaknesses
- examine results
- determine what they want to do



After this overwhelming amount of information sharing during the day, the group was motivated by Don Burnstick who shared his story with humour that evening.

The second day started with the task of identifying needs that the existing post-secondary programs are not meeting. The facilitators led the group through an exercise that identified challenges, opportunities, gaps and strengths (COGS). This is graphically represented below. The question was edited by the group to remove the word programs.

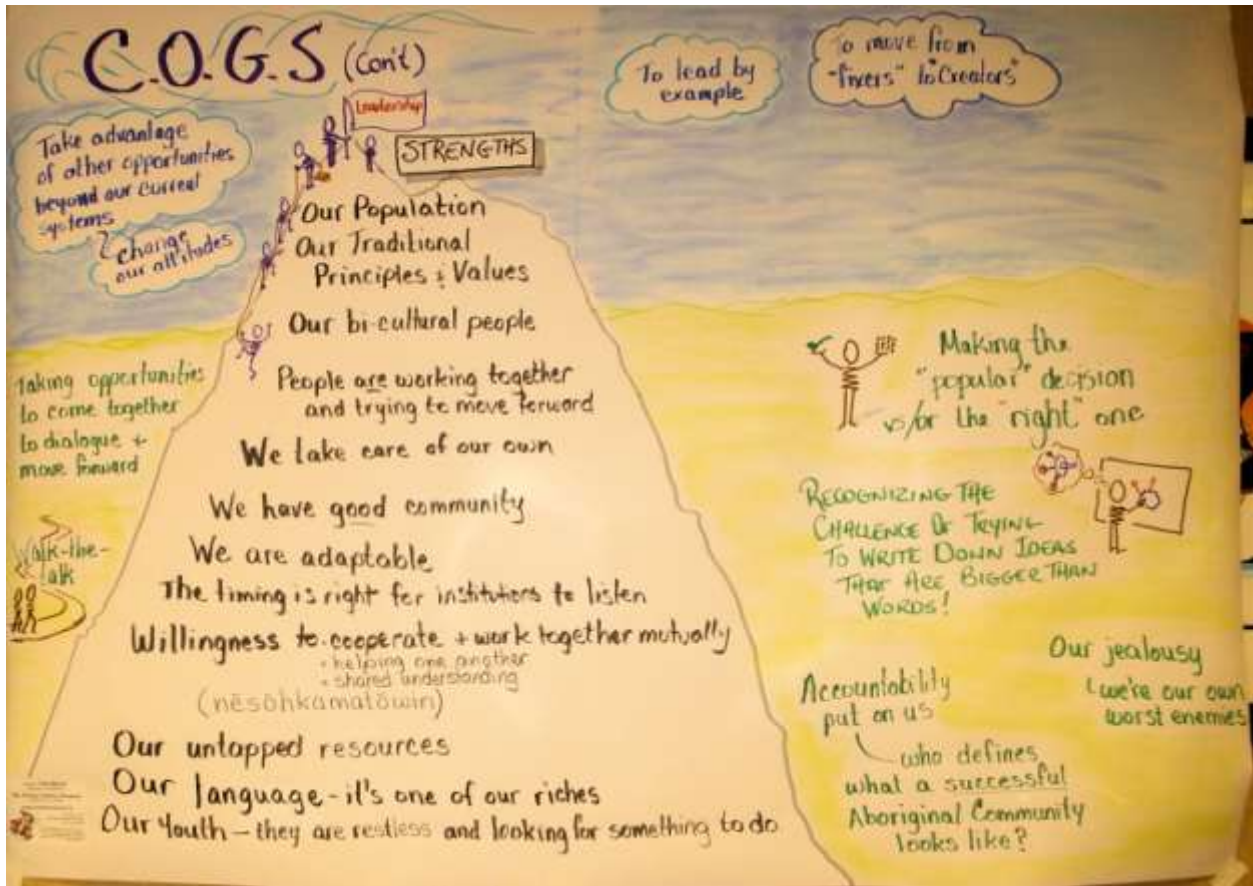


This is the overview chart which shows the landscape with detail to follow.

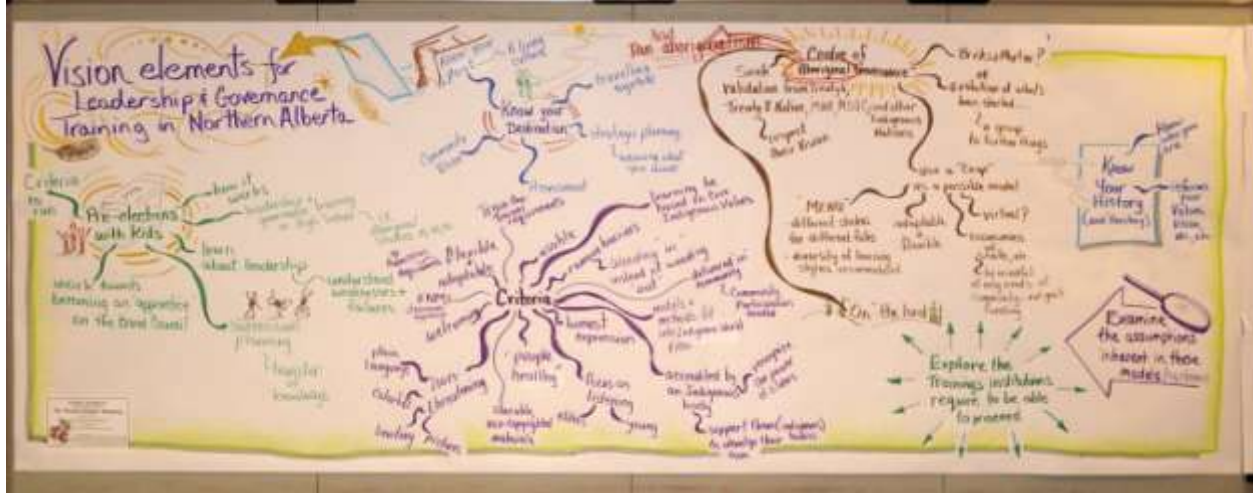








Lastly, solutions were sought. The question for this interactive session was involved looking at the vision elements for leadership and governance training. The energy in finding solutions was tangible in the room. The results are shown graphically below.



As can be seen in the bottom right corner of this graphic, things stopped mid-session and was left incomplete. Yet much important work was done, excitement built, and a commitment expressed.

Community members mentioned that they felt rushed to complete the task. Respectful relationship building is time consuming work. By the end of the second day it was clear that we wanted to get together again to finish this important work and possibly start moving things forward beyond the visioning.

The group tasked the post-secondary partners to return to their funder with the hope of getting together again soon so as not to lose the momentum created.

## EVALUATION

The planned evaluation was not conducted due to time pressures. However the participants were invited afterwards to evaluate the gathering on the four quadrants of the circle: spiritual, physical, mental and emotional.

It was an incredible gathering in terms of both the information sharing and willingness to work together. The respectful atmosphere of collaboration was best summed up in a participant evaluation who “felt that we were there for a common good – that we were a real “team” and felt a calm and relaxed (although exciting to be part of this!) atmosphere.”

I need to add my own voice at this stage of the report. I have rarely felt as honoured as I did in this gathering because of the genuine respect, sharing, open communication, and willingness to listen for understanding. The desire to work with cross-cultural respect for a common purpose was tangible in the room. It felt like the “right” people were there. The desire to address this issue was tangible.

The gathering ended respectfully with prayer.

## NEXT STEPS

The next gathering will take place on March 16-17 at the Buffalo Bay Retreat Centre in Grouard Alberta.

