

**Aboriginal Leadership and Governance Training Needs  
Report on Second Gathering  
March 16-18, 2011, Grouard Alberta**

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With notes from Scott Ferguson

A committed group of 15 individuals met for two days in Grouard to continue the exercise of visioning ways to meet the training needs in Aboriginal leadership and governance in Northern Alberta. Their purpose is best described in the original invitation

- Share information on leadership and governance training opportunities
- Identify unmet needs and gaps in existing opportunities
- Work towards solutions

The invitation further read that “The deliverable from this gathering would be a vision for Aboriginal leadership and governance training in northern Alberta.”



The major accomplishment of this second gathering is a draft vision statement (it requires some word smithing).

A First Nation/Métis leader who is healthy, grounded in traditional, spiritual, and contemporary leadership skills and values in a culturally appropriate governance foundation.

There is a story behind every vision statement. Some of the story and discussion is summarized here to help bring clarity to the vision. A vision is a destination or a view of an ideal future outcome. This vision talks about a single leader to keep the focus on training one person at a time. Individuals will take on learning to lead in this way. Healthy is about being full of life, vibrant and giving of life. A healthy leader will rely on the skills of others and lift people up.



Health is not just physical but balanced. Part of that balance includes spirituality. This group has worked together in a prayerful way that is respectful of one another’s spiritual rootedness. Leadership is like a rock, not hard and cold but solid. If it has one soft spot it will crumble. The need for both contemporary and traditional skills and values is self-evident. Aboriginal leaders are required to be bi-cultural. The last statement recognizes that governance models may vary from group to group based on individual circumstances however it should always be culturally grounded.

The first evening was spent group building through the activity of hand games. This was hosted by a local hand games advocate, Herman Sutherland, along with three generations of his family.

The morning activities began with a prayer. To arrive at this vision the group reviewed work that had been done to date. The next exercise involved looking at values and principles in Aboriginal communities and post-secondary institutions to look for some shared values (the details of this exercise are available for those interested). There was some time spent dreaming or envisioning the route ahead. The list below is the results of a brainstorm of what still needs to be accomplished to move this vision forward. The focus was on who, what, when, how.

- Who to word smith vision and by when.
- Identify target group
- Identify course/training/program content
- Reaffirm partners
- Development proposal
- Identify presentation group
- Template
- Who takes lead
- Timelines
- Credit versus non-credit decision
- Who decides on credits?
- Delivery model
- Cost of delivery
- Entrance requirements
- Pre-requisites
- Transferability
- Communities to delivery in
- Design of some and redesign of other existing programs
- Short terms and long term goals
- Validating curriculum
- What is in curriculum
- Offering to youth councils
- Who delivers
- Modesl fo cooperation in delivery
- Funding for: curriculum development, model development and students
- Governance structure
- Pilot on youth councils
- Industry partnerships
- Scholarships, bursaries and grants
- Communications strategy
- Marketing and promotion
- Buy in for vision
- Advertise in powwows
- Tshirts with vision "I want to be a ....
- Steering committess and subcommittees
- Who will teach and how to decides who should teach
- Timelines
- Planning
- Where and how delivered



- Experience of learning pedagogy
- Keep this group going –
- Sustainability
- Cooperative model
- Coordinating resources
- This committee as catalyst
- Consider principles and values
- Barter system, sliding scale
- Code of ethics on leaders
- Understand stakeholders
- Citizen engagement process
- Ceremony
- Grounded in tradition and spiritual values
- Ethical grounding
- Road less travelled
- Celebrate
- Understand history
- Research
- Historical teachers
- Self-identity awareness
- Lots of targets – newly elected, youth, others, etc.
- Develop mission, objectives and goals
- How do we want to work together – structure



The immediate action items to which people committed are:

- Brian C. to ask a company that he knows for funds to keep this group meeting to work on this further
- Monica to word smith vision and send it out within a week for feedback
- Scott to bring information on various governance models including cooperatives to next gathering
- Monica to coordinate next get together with Darlene, Candice and Phil helping
- Monica and Brian C to look at curriculum that is out there (already have some from environmental scan)



The group ended with an evaluation circle and closing prayer. This is a strong commitment to continue working together to bring the vision forward.