

Aboriginal Post Secondary Education Forum

Jurisdiction: British Columbia

Contact: Janice Nakamura

Level: Post-Secondary

Theme: Government or board policies

Description of Practice:

The BC Ministry of Advanced Education hosts an annual **Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education Forum** to discuss how to improve Aboriginal participation in British Columbia post-secondary education. Over one hundred stakeholders in the field of Aboriginal post-secondary education participate in the one-day event.

Background:

In February of 2004, the Ministry hosted an Open Space Forum, with over 140 key stakeholders in the field of Aboriginal post-secondary education in attendance. Many issues were raised and recommendations were put forward regarding the improvement of the post-secondary education system for Aboriginal people.

AVED held its second forum in March of 2005. The theme of this forum was “Enhancing Communication & Partnerships – How Do We Work Together?” The agenda for the 2005 forum comprised of four key topics:

1. Achievement Levels for Aboriginal Learners in K-12 and Transitions to the Post Secondary Education System
2. Accountability Measures
3. Culturally Appropriate Programming and Services for Aboriginal Learners
4. Funding Issues

In March of 2006, the Ministry held its third annual forum, entitled “Moving Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education Forward – Developing a Strategy”. The forum included speeches by the BC Minister of Advanced Education, Honourable Murray Coell, and Deputy Minister Moura Quayle. The focus of the forum was the Ministry’s proposed “Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education Strategy.”

Development:

In the past three years, the Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education Forums have been developed to fit the needs of the BC Ministry of Advanced Education (AVED) in relation to Aboriginal Post-Secondary issues. The inaugural forum in 2004 focussed largely on the Ministry’s revised draft Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Policy Framework. That forum also focused on general issues and opportunities for the future of Aboriginal post-secondary education and training in British Columbia. The second forum, in 2005, focused on a number of specific issues, such as the difference between urban and rural education, and culturally-relevant Aboriginal programming and services. The third forum produced valuable feedback on the Ministry’s proposed Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education Strategy.

Feedback from the three forums provided valuable input to AVED and helped inform its Proposed Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education Strategy.

Evidence:

The forums have provided for invaluable consultation on key issues pertaining to Aboriginal post-secondary education and they have been well received by the various Aboriginal post-secondary stakeholders.

Adaptability:

This consultation-style of forum can be easily adapted by other jurisdictions.

Further information:

Janice Nakamura Director, Learning Programs Branch
Students and Learning Division
British Columbia Ministry of Advanced Education
Janice.Nakamura@gov.bc.ca (250) 387-5839