RESEARCH REPORT

ROLE OF HOUSING IN ABORIGINAL STUDENT SUCCESS- POST SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS IN VANCOUVER

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ABORIGINAL
HOUSING RESEARCH PROJECT

HOUSING- Understanding Its Wholistic Relationship to Aboriginal Post-Secondary Student Success

FINAL REPORT

October 8, 2004

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PURPOSE

This research study was carried out in response to a research initiative of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation – the Aboriginal Scholars Housing Research and Mentoring project (ASHRAM).

ASHRAM is a pilot initiative that used the platform of the Aboriginal Scholars Project (ASP), a group set up by the Policy Research Initiative to develop new approaches to Aboriginal policy research. ASHRAM's objective was not only to conduct research that combined scholarship and an Aboriginal perspective but also to introduce Aboriginal students to housing as a research topic.

Two other organizations helped to fund and manage the ASHRAM initiative, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada and the Aboriginal Healing Foundation. Together the four organizations requested, evaluated and monitored proposals for research on housing issues pertaining to Aboriginal people in Canada.

Aboriginal scholars who were members of the ASP were asked to submit research proposals based on their priorities for Aboriginal policy research, and where housing was a cross-cutting theme. This study was one of the proposals received.

ABSTRACT

The research asked the question: What role does housing play in the recruitment and retention of post-secondary Aboriginal students? The research was conducted from July 2003 to March 2004 at six post-secondary institutions in the area of Vancouver, British Columbia.

A methodology, based on Indigenous values, incorporated both quantitative and qualitative methods and was conducted according with principles of respect, responsibility, relevance, and reciprocity. A survey with a mix of closed and open-ended questions was administered to students. Qualitative data was gathered through student sharing circles/discussion groups, and individual interviews with staff members from student services and Native housing organizations. The scope of the research questions and the analytic framework were based on a "wholistic" theoretical approach. The term "wholistic" was used to portray relationships among oneself, family, community, nation and environment; as they interact with the four human development realms of the spiritual, emotional, physical and intellectual.

Four factors of *access, family matters, cultural relationships, and community relationships* were found to be critical to Aboriginal student recruitment and retention. Regarding recruitment, students were not deterred from attending their post-secondary institution even if they had not confirmed housing prior to starting their studies. However, 60% of students indicated that they had problems accessing adequate housing. Affordability, location, condition and safety were the four most important characteristics of what students considered "adequate." Hindering factors were lack of finances, racist landlords, lack of preparedness and knowledge in knowing where and how to look for housing, and lack of family housing for students.

Regarding retention, housing was the second most important factor for influencing the completion of students' studies. Unlike the majority of non-Aboriginal Canadian students, just over one-half of the Aboriginal student respondents had a family. The students' extended family also impacted upon students' housing situations. Native Housing and on-campus family housing were very important helping factors for student retention. Post-secondary institutions and Native Housing that provided culturally friendly and relevant physical/social space – where students could practice ceremony and develop a sense of cultural community contributed significantly to retention.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The research report, *Housing: Understanding its wholistic relationship to post-secondary Aboriginal student success* addressed this major research question: What role does housing play in the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal students attending college and university in the urban area of Vancouver, British Columbia? Additional questions related to the central question included: what are the problems and successes that Aboriginal students face with housing in contexts of on campus single residence, on campus family residence, off campus rentals, off campus in Native Housing or other settings?; are there particular housing or student support services that appear to increase retention of Aboriginal students?; what would an ideal housing complex be like for Aboriginal students attending college and university in a large city?; and what similarities and differences are there among Aboriginal students attending institutions that provide different levels of post-secondary education? Six post-secondary institutions participated in the study that included the University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University, Institute of Indigenous Government, Native Education Centre, Langara Community College, and British Columbia Institute of Technology. The research was conducted from July 2003 – March 2004.

An Indigenous methodology, based on the values/principles of respect, responsibility, relevance, and reciprocity incorporated both quantitative and qualitative methods. A closed and open-ended survey was administered to students. Qualitative data was gathered through student group sharing circles/discussion groups, and individual interviews with post-secondary student service and Native housing staff. The scope of the research questions and the analytic framework was based on Indigenous values and a wholistic theoretical approach. The term "wholistic" was used to portray relationships among oneself, family, community, nation and environment; and the relationships among four human development realms of the spiritual, emotional, physical and intellectual.

The major findings included identifying and understanding the helping and hindering housing factors that impacted Aboriginal post-secondary success. More than 95% of the students surveyed indicated that housing was of varying degrees of importance to their decision to enroll in a particular institution, ranging from some importance, very important, to extremely important, giving consideration to rental costs, location, condition of the accommodation, and safety as priorities in their search for housing. Housing was the second most important factor for influencing the completion of students' studies. The four wholistic factors of *access, family matters, cultural relationships, and community relationships* were critical to Aboriginal student recruitment and retention.

With regard to recruitment, the survey data showed that students were not deterred from attending their post-secondary institution even if they had not confirmed housing prior to starting their studies and even if they experienced problems securing housing. However, more than half the students (60%) indicated that they had problems finding adequate housing. Rent prices, location, condition and safety were the four most important factors in selecting what students considered, "adequate housing." The order of priority from most important to least important, of these factors had affordability as first, location second, condition third, and security fourth. Female students were more likely to choose safer locations than male students,

which was one of the few gender related findings in this study. Not surprising, parents with children considered number of bedrooms, children allowed, and unfurnished more important considerations than those who did not have children. The qualitative data showed that the helping role of post-secondary student service staff and Native Housing staff in assisting students included providing housing information, being a student advocate, and assisting with emotional and financial problems. If students were admitted into Native Housing, then they were very satisfied. Native Housing was affordable, which was a critical access factor.

With regard to retention, as previously stated, housing was the second most important factor in completing students' studies. The three most significant problems in finding adequate housing were affordability, location, and condition, which were consistent with selection factors mentioned above. Other common hindering factors identified by the participants included children were not permitted, long wait lists for Native Housing and on-campus family housing, and racism. Students spent much time and effort finding housing that they considered adequate for their needs/affordability and they changed (moved) their housing until they found suitable accommodations. When students finally secured adequate housing they said that their anxiety and stress levels were reduced and they could then concentrate more on their studies. Students reported experiencing much stress finding adequate housing. Their stress was caused by hindering factors such as lack of finances, racist landlords, lack of preparedness and knowledge in knowing where and how to look for housing, and lack of family housing.

Students experienced many forms of discrimination, ranging from racist remarks, being turned away at the landlord's door even though they were told before arriving that accommodation was available, being denied accommodation because of their gender, or because they had children. Those students who were younger had both positive and negative experiences securing housing. Some students dressed well for their housing interviews and prepared housing resumes to overcome negative images and stereotypes that landlords might have had of Aboriginal people. One other gender related finding was that being male, young and Aboriginal seemed to attract discrimination. As one person said, "Aboriginal males are not on anyone's priority list."

Generally, Native Housing and on-campus family housing were very important helping factors for student retention. Unlike the majority of non-Aboriginal Canadian students, just over one-half of the Aboriginal student respondents had a family. The students' extended family also impacted both positively and negatively upon students' housing situations. A number of students mentioned that they had extended family visit, sometimes to help with childcare, other times they took on responsibility for family members. The number of family members fluctuated during the year. At times, they were afraid to tell on-campus housing authorities about their change in family circumstances for fear of being asked to leave because they weren't abiding by housing rules that stipulated the numbers of people allowed to stay in their accommodation. The research participants often stressed that family matters immensely to Aboriginal post-secondary students. They felt that because of the shortage of affordable, safe, and "decent" family housing, post-secondary institutions and Native Housing Societies needed to have flexible policies regarding allocation of housing spaces to Aboriginal post-secondary students with families and ways to accommodate extended family circumstances.

Post-secondary institutions and Native Housing that provided culturally friendly and relevant physical/social space – where students practiced ceremony and developed a sense of cultural community contributed significantly to retention. Single students appreciated the ability to start their studies by living in campus residences. However, differences in worldview between some Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students created tensions and difficulties. This resulted in Aboriginal students relocating to an off campus accommodation. Aboriginal cultural and ceremonial practices were and are important to students. Student respondents indicated that post-secondary institutions needed to consider ways to accommodate the cultural, social, emotional and intellectual needs of students through housing.

Community relationships were important for retention. Some students chose to live near or on a reserve in order to have their children attend on-reserve childcare and to feel close to a First Nations community. The Native Housing complexes also established a sense of community caring for its tenants. One housing society saw its role to help students complete their studies and was somewhat flexible in its administration of policies.

In conclusion, post-secondary Aboriginal student success might be improved by increasing access to various forms of housing, especially family housing, with flexible occupancy policies. Increasing post-secondary institutions and governments' understanding of how much family matters to Aboriginal students is also a critical success factor. Ensuring that housing complexes and their governing structures are culturally friendly, oriented to establishing a sense of community, and understand the importance of Aboriginal cultural and community relationships are additional factors to take into account in reviewing policies and programs dealing with Aboriginal post-secondary student housing.

Résumé

Le rapport intitulé *Housing: Understanding its wholistic relationship to post-secondary Aboriginal student success* porte sur cette importante question de recherche : quel rôle le logement joue-t-il dans le recrutement et le maintien aux études d'étudiants autochtones des niveaux collégial et universitaire dans la région urbaine de Vancouver, en Colombie-Britannique? L'étude s'est penchée sur d'autres questions connexes. Par exemple, quels sont les problèmes et réussites que connaissent les étudiants autochtones dans différents milieux résidentiels, comme les résidences pour personnes seules sur le campus, les résidences pour les familles sur le campus, les logements locatifs hors campus, les logements autochtones hors campus et d'autres milieux? Est-ce qu'il y a des types de logements ou des services particuliers de soutien aux étudiants qui semblent améliorer le maintien aux études des Autochtones? À quoi ressemblerait un ensemble idéal de logements pour les étudiants autochtones des niveaux collégial et universitaire dans une grande ville? Et quelles ressemblances et différences y a-t-il entre les étudiants autochtones qui fréquentent des établissements offrant différents niveaux d'études postsecondaires? Six établissements postsecondaires ont participé à l'étude, soit l'University of British Columbia, la Simon Fraser University, l'Institute of Indigenous Government, le Native Education Centre, le Langara Community College et le British Columbia Institute of Technology. La recherche s'est déroulée entre juillet 2003 et mars 2004.

Une méthodologie indigène, se fondant sur les valeurs et(ou) principes du respect, de la responsabilité, de la pertinence et de la réciprocité, réunissait des méthodes tant quantitatives que qualitatives. On a mené une enquête à questions fermées et à réponses libres auprès des étudiants. Les données qualitatives ont été recueillies au moyen de cercles de partage et(ou) de groupes de discussion d'étudiants ainsi que d'entrevues individuelles avec des membres du personnel des services aux étudiants postsecondaires et du logement des Autochtones. La portée des questions de recherche et le cadre d'analyse se fondaient sur les valeurs indigènes et une approche théorique holistique. On a utilisé le terme « holistique » pour illustrer les relations entre l'individu, la famille, la communauté, la nation et l'environnement, ainsi que les rapports entre les quatre domaines du développement humain, c'est-à-dire les aspects spirituel, émotionnel, physique et intellectuel.

La détermination et la compréhension des facteurs liés à l'habitation qui favorisent la réussite des étudiants autochtones du niveau postsecondaire, ainsi que de ceux qui y nuisent, figurent parmi les principaux résultats de l'étude. Plus de 95 % des étudiants interrogés ont indiqué que le logement avait, dans une mesure plus ou moins grande, influé sur leur décision de s'inscrire à un établissement particulier (le degré d'influence allait d'une certaine importance à une grande importance et à une très grande importance) et qu'ils avaient tenu compte en priorité des frais de location, de l'emplacement, de l'état des lieux et de la sécurité dans leur recherche d'un logement. Le logement était le deuxième facteur en importance ayant un effet sur l'achèvement des études. Les quatre facteurs holistiques que sont *l'accès, les questions familiales, les relations culturelles et les relations communautaires* étaient essentiels au recrutement et au maintien aux études des jeunes autochtones.

En ce qui concerne le recrutement, les données de l'enquête ont révélé que les étudiants ne renonçaient pas à fréquenter leur établissement postsecondaire même s'ils n'avaient pas de logement confirmé avant de commencer leurs études et même s'ils connaissaient des difficultés

à se trouver un logement. Toutefois, plus de la moitié des étudiants (60 %) ont indiqué qu'ils avaient de la difficulté à trouver un logement convenable. Le niveau des loyers, l'emplacement, l'état des lieux et la sécurité étaient les quatre facteurs les plus importants dans le choix de ce que les étudiants considéraient comme un « logement convenable ». Par ordre de priorité, c'est-à-dire du plus important au moins important, l'abordabilité venait au premier rang parmi ces facteurs, suivie de l'emplacement, de l'état des lieux, et enfin, de la sécurité. Les étudiantes étaient plus susceptibles de choisir des endroits sûrs que les étudiants, ce qui a été une des rares constatations de cette étude qui était liée au genre. Comme il fallait s'y attendre, le nombre de chambres à coucher, l'acceptation de locataires ayant des enfants et le fait que les logements soient meublés ou non étaient des facteurs plus importants pour les étudiants ayant des enfants que pour ceux qui n'en avaient pas. Les données qualitatives ont montré que les membres du personnel des services aux étudiants postsecondaires et du logement des Autochtones aidaient les étudiants en leur fournissant de l'information sur le logement, en défendant leurs droits et en les soutenant lorsqu'ils avaient des problèmes affectifs et financiers. Si les étudiants obtenaient un logement pour Autochtones, ils étaient très satisfaits. Ces logements sont abordables, ce qui est un facteur d'accès critique.

En ce qui concerne le maintien aux études, tel qu'indiqué précédemment, le logement était le deuxième facteur en importance qui influait sur l'achèvement des études. Les trois problèmes les plus importants pour trouver un logement convenable étaient l'abordabilité, l'emplacement et l'état, ce qui correspond aux facteurs de sélection mentionnés ci-dessus. Les participants ont indiqué d'autres facteurs qui nuisaient couramment à l'obtention d'un logement, soit le refus des propriétaires de louer un logement à des personnes ayant des enfants, les longues listes d'attente pour les logements autochtones et les logements familiaux sur le campus, et le racisme. Les étudiants consacraient beaucoup de temps et d'effort à la recherche d'un logement qu'ils jugeaient adapté à leurs besoins et à leurs moyens financiers et ils changeaient de logement (déménageaient) jusqu'à ce qu'ils en trouvent un convenable. Lorsque les étudiants finissaient par obtenir un logement convenable, leur niveau d'anxiété et de stress diminuait et ils pouvaient mieux se concentrer sur leurs études. Les étudiants ont dit que la recherche d'un logement convenable était une importante source de stress, attribuable à plusieurs facteurs restrictifs, comme le manque de moyens financiers, le racisme des propriétaires, le fait d'être mal préparés et de ne pas savoir où et comment chercher un logement, et l'absence de logements familiaux.

Les étudiants ont fait face à de nombreuses formes de discrimination, comme les remarques racistes; les propriétaires qui les envoyaient promener alors qu'ils leur avaient dit, avant de les voir, qu'il y avait des logements libres; et les propriétaires qui refusaient de leur louer un logement en raison de leur sexe ou parce qu'ils avaient des enfants. Les expériences vécues par les étudiants plus jeunes à la recherche d'un logement étaient à la fois positives et négatives. Certains étudiants s'habillaient bien pour leurs entrevues avec les propriétaires-bailleurs et préparaient des résumés de leur expérience de la location afin de surmonter les images négatives et les stéréotypes que les propriétaires pourraient entretenir concernant les Autochtones. En ce qui a trait au genre, l'étude a aussi révélé que le fait d'être un jeune homme autochtone semblait attirer la discrimination. Comme l'a dit un répondant, « les hommes autochtones ne sont sur la liste des priorités de personne. »

Généralement, les logements autochtones et les logements familiaux sur le campus étaient très importants pour favoriser le maintien aux études. Contrairement à la majorité des

étudiants canadiens non autochtones, un peu plus de la moitié des étudiants autochtones interrogés avaient une famille. La famille étendue des étudiants avait aussi des effets positifs et négatifs sur leur situation en matière de logement. Un certain nombre d'étudiants ont mentionné que des membres de leur famille étendue venaient les voir, parfois pour les aider à s'occuper des enfants, alors qu'à d'autres occasions, ce sont les étudiants qui prenaient à charge certains membres de la famille. Le nombre de membres de la famille fluctuait pendant l'année. À certains moments, les étudiants craignaient de révéler le changement de leurs circonstances familiales aux responsables du logement sur le campus, de peur qu'on leur demande de partir parce qu'ils ne respectaient pas les règles précisant le nombre de personnes pouvant habiter dans leur logement. Beaucoup de participants à la recherche ont insisté sur la très grande importance que revêtent les questions familiales pour les étudiants autochtones du niveau postsecondaire. Selon eux, à cause de la pénurie de logements familiaux abordables, sûrs et « décents », les établissements postsecondaires et les sociétés d'habitation autochtones doivent avoir des lignes de conduite flexibles concernant l'affectation des locaux résidentiels aux étudiants autochtones du niveau postsecondaire ayant une famille, et trouver des moyens de tenir compte des besoins des étudiants en ce qui concerne leur famille étendue.

Les établissements postsecondaires et les ensembles d'habitation pour les Autochtones qui fournissent des espaces matériels et sociaux conviviaux et pertinents sur le plan culturel, où les étudiants peuvent pratiquer des cérémonies et développer un sentiment de communauté culturelle, contribuaient considérablement au maintien aux études. Les étudiants célibataires étaient heureux de pouvoir commencer leurs études en vivant dans des résidences sur le campus. Toutefois, les différences de la vision du monde entre certains étudiants autochtones et non autochtones créaient des tensions et des difficultés. Cela amenait certains étudiants autochtones à se trouver un logement hors campus. Les cultures et pratiques cérémoniales autochtones étaient et sont importantes pour les étudiants. Les étudiants interrogés ont indiqué que les établissements postsecondaires doivent examiner des moyens possibles de tenir compte des besoins culturels, sociaux, affectifs et intellectuels des étudiants par l'entremise du logement.

Les relations communautaires étaient importantes pour le maintien aux études. Certains étudiants choisissaient de vivre près ou à l'intérieur d'une réserve pour que leurs enfants puissent bénéficier d'un service de garderie dans la réserve et pour se sentir près d'une communauté des Premières nations. Les ensembles de logements autochtones créaient aussi un sentiment de communauté pour leurs locataires. Une société d'habitation était consciente d'avoir un rôle à jouer pour aider les étudiants à terminer leurs études et se montrait plutôt flexible dans sa façon d'administrer ses lignes de conduite.

En conclusion, la réussite des étudiants autochtones du niveau postsecondaire pourrait être améliorée si l'on augmentait leur accès à diverses formes de logements, notamment les logements familiaux, et si l'on assouplissait les lignes de conduite sur l'occupation. Il est également essentiel de mieux faire comprendre aux établissements postsecondaires et aux gouvernements à quel point la famille est importante pour les étudiants autochtones. L'examen des lignes de conduite et programmes relatifs au logement des étudiants autochtones du niveau postsecondaire doit aussi tenir compte d'autres facteurs, dont le besoin de s'assurer que les ensembles d'habitation et leurs structures de régie sont adaptés à la culture et axés sur la création d'un sentiment de communauté, et de comprendre l'importance des relations culturelles et communautaires des Autochtones.

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INTRODUCTION

Aboriginal[1] post-secondary students face many challenges seeking safe, affordable, adequate, and culturally supportive housing while they undertake their studies. In a report by the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton-Wentworth (2000), issues related to homelessness for women and children, visible minorities, new comers to Canada, Aboriginal peoples, and youth in Hamilton were identified and recommendations developed. Interviews with representative Aboriginal agencies, Aboriginal service providers, and individuals using shelters and food banks in the Hamilton area noted a conclusion that reinforced the need to conduct research about the relationship among Aboriginal post-secondary students, housing, and their education.

> *Another group facing homelessness on a continuing basis are Aboriginal students attending post-secondary institutions. [Aboriginal] students face many barriers from culture shock, financial difficulties, isolation, and racism, when leaving home to attend school. The lack of safe supportive housing is a major reason many [Aboriginal] students leave school prematurely. The many supports that do exist seem all for naught because of this large gap in [Aboriginal] student housing needs. An [Aboriginal] student house or residence would provide a culturally supportive environment that would go a long way to helping [Hamilton] area students to succeed at the post-secondary level (p. 70).*

In reviewing the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation research reports about Aboriginal peoples, the literature about the homeless appears to have some application to Aboriginal students attending urban post secondary institutions. Beavis, Klos, Carter, & Douchant (1997) prepared a research report, *Literature review: Aboriginal peoples and homelessness*. Factors such as racism and discrimination and rural-urban migration in search of jobs and education put Aboriginal people at risk of being homeless (p. iv). Aboriginal families, young people, women and Elders were identified as "at-risk populations" for homelessness (p. v). Often Aboriginal post-secondary students need to relocate to large urban cities such as Vancouver to attend their programs. During their relocation process they encounter many problems noted in the quote above. Beavis et al noted some special needs of Aboriginal homeless peoples that may apply to Aboriginal students attending urban post-secondary institutions, such as the need for culturally appropriate facilities, self government/management, and wholistic support.

> *Aboriginal homelessness has many features in common with homelessness in the general population, but it also has several distinctive features (e.g., rural-urban migration, racism and discrimination, 'Third World' on-reserve housing). Similarly, many of the same strategies are recommended to address both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal homelessness. However, the literature indicates that the Aboriginal homeless have special needs (e.g., cultural appropriateness, self determination, traditional healing techniques) (p. vi).*

[1] The terms Aboriginal, Indigenous, and First Nations will be used interchangeably in this report. At the University of British Columbia, we use the term First Nations to mean any person of Aboriginal ancestry. Since the principal researchers are based at UBC, we follow this convention. However, when statistics are discussed the definition or term used in the cited study will be noted.

Research Questions

This study addressed this major research question:

1. What role does housing play in the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal students attending college and university in a large city?

Additional questions related to the central question included:

2. What are the problems and successes that Aboriginal students face with housing in these contexts:
    a. on campus, single residence;
    b. on campus, family residence;
    c. off campus rentals;
    d. off campus in Native Housing;
    e. other.
3. Are there particular housing or student support services that appear to increase retention of Aboriginal students?
4. What would an ideal housing complex be like for Aboriginal students attending college and university in a large city? What physical and cultural features would be ideal? How would such a complex be managed? How would such a complex promote sense of community? How would such a complex address particular needs of women and children, single students, and families?
5. What similarities and differences are there among Aboriginal students attending institutions that provide different levels of post-secondary education (i.e., upgrading to college, college and technical diploma, university degree) regarding their housing needs.

Research Process

An Indigenous methodology, based on the values/principles of respect, responsibility, relevance, and reciprocity incorporated both quantitative and qualitative methods. A closed and open-ended survey was administered to students. Qualitative data was gathered through student group sharing circles/discussion groups, and individual interviews with post-secondary student service and Native housing staff. The scope of the questions and the analytic framework were based on Indigenous values, and we use the term "wholistic"[2] to portray relationships among oneself, family, community, nation and environment; and the inter-relationship among four human development realms of the spiritual, emotional, physical and intellectual. Six post-secondary institutions participated in the study: University of British Columbia (UBC), Simon Fraser University (SFU), Institute of Indigenous Government (IIG), Native Education Centre

[2] The word wholistic uses a 'w' purposefully in this document. Its spelling is applicable for Indigenous educational usage.

(NEC), Langara Community College (Langara), and British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT) (see section three on methodology). The research was undertaken from July 2003 – March 2004.

Researchers

The research team included two Aboriginal principal researchers from the University of British Columbia (UBC), Drs. Jo-ann Archibald, Faculty of Education, and Jan Hare, Faculty of Arts and four Aboriginal graduate students, Michele Pidgeon, Kim van der Woerd, Cecilia Sam, and Shelley Janvier. Jo-ann Archibald proposed this research project to Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation as a result of her participation in a national Aboriginal Scholars' group, who were interested in carrying out research from Indigenous knowledge perspectives and frameworks. Jo-ann's prior experience as the Director of the First Nations House of Learning at UBC for eight years allowed her to recognize the lack of attention paid to housing matters for Aboriginal students. Jan Hare had conducted an exploratory study with UBC students about retention concerns. Housing was an important one. Jo-ann and Jan agreed to collaborate as principal researchers, which resulted in the Aboriginal Housing Research Project (AHRP).

An important part of Indigenous knowledge is sharing and mentoring. This research project provided research training and experience to Aboriginal graduate students (three from UBC and one from SFU). The Aboriginal graduate students are enrolled in PhD programs in education (Michelle Pidgeon and Cecila Sam), M.Ed in education (Shelley Janvier), and PhD in psychology (Kim van der Woerd). Following the wholistic nature of learning, as research assistants, the students were involved in every aspect of the project from piloting the instruments, administering the surveys, assisting with interviews, taking notes during the discussion sessions, transcribing the interviews and sharing circles, analyzing survey data and qualitative data, and report writing.

This report *Housing:Understanding Its Wholistic Relationship to Aboriginal Post-Secondary Student Success* is comprised of the following five sections:

1. Introduction
2. Literature Review
3. Towards an Indigenous Methodology
4. Wholistic Analysis and Findings
5. Conclusion: Discussion of Research Questions

LITERATURE REVIEW

> *Family life, health and healing, housing, education and cultural policy- core jurisdiction of Aboriginal self-government. These core matters have a direct impact on the life, welfare, culture and identity of Aboriginal peoples. Aboriginal leaders recognize that adequate housing and living conditions are vital to solving many other social and political problems (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP), 1996, p.372)*

The literature review presents a synthesis of available research, reports, and statistical data pertaining to student housing, specifically retention, and in particular Aboriginal student retention. Due to the limited research in this area, the literature review examines separately relevant topics and maps connections in the literature to the role housing plays in the access, retention, and completion of post-secondary education for Aboriginal students. The literature reviewed addressed the topics of 1) urban Aboriginal housing; 2) student housing; and 3) Aboriginal student retention in post-secondary education.

To establish a context in which Aboriginal students find themselves within the urban Aboriginal housing experience and market, the literature related to urban housing is presented first. It reveals the challenges faced by Aboriginal people seeking safe, adequate, and affordable housing with implications for students moving to urban centers for the purposes of education. The second context in which to situate Aboriginal post-secondary students is the student housing literature, which emphasizes the experiences of students living on-campus and the impact on social and educational opportunities. While this is an area that has received much attention in the research literature, attention to Aboriginal students living on-campus has been minimal. Drawing on the sparse literature available, the housing experiences of Aboriginal students living on- and off-campus is highlighted. The third component of the literature review analyses the post-secondary retention literature, identifying factors that contribute to Aboriginal students' retention and completion of post-secondary education. The literature demonstrates the relationship of housing to the myriad of issues that impact Aboriginal student success.

The goal of our research project was to provide insight into the role housing played in the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal post-secondary students located in the Vancouver area of British Columbia (B.C.). Therefore, the literature review is focused on research that explores the impact of housing on student adjustment, retention and/or success. As this report will demonstrate, current literature does not address the specific needs of urban Aboriginal post-secondary students, nor does it pay attention to the role of housing in the retention and recruitment of Aboriginal students to urban areas. It was the intent of the *Aboriginal Housing Research Project (AHRP)* to address these gaps in the literature. In their book, *Keeping Students in Higher Education: Successful Practices and Strategies for Retention*, Moxley, Najor-Durack, Dumbrigue (2001) indicated that the purpose of retention is "to assist students who require a support system to achieve their aims and achieve success in their roles as students" (p.39).

Urban Aboriginal People and Housing

Over the last 50 years, urban centers across Canada have seen a dramatic increase in their Aboriginal population. In 2001, 49% of the population who identified themselves as Aboriginal lived in urban areas; up from 1951 where Canadian census revealed only seven percent of

Aboriginal people lived in cities (Statistics Canada, 2003b). The 2001 census further revealed that 245,000 of the 976,305 Aboriginal people who reported Aboriginal identity lived in 10 of Canada's census metropolitan areas (CMA with a population over 100,000), with Winnipeg reporting the greatest number, followed by Edmonton, Vancouver, Calgary, and Toronto. Patterns of urbanization varied among Aboriginal groups, with 73% of non-Status Indians residing in urban areas, followed by 66% of Métis, 40% of registered-status Indians, and less than 30% Inuit (Graham & Peters, 2002).

While the growth of the Aboriginal population in urban areas is thought to be largely due to the migration of people from reserve communities to urban areas, the literature suggests that the changes to the Indian Act, census counts that now allow for self-identification, patterns of intermarriage, and increasing fertility are among the contributing factors (Graham & Peters, 2002; Norris, Cooke, & Clatworthy, 2003). Aboriginal peoples moved more than other Canadians, with increasing rates of migration more readily seen in Aboriginal peoples moving from urban center to urban center and in the circulatory movement between reserve/rural areas and urban areas (Canada Mortgage & Housing Corporation, July 2001; Graham & Peters, 2002; Norris, Cooke, & Clatworthy, 2003; Peters, 2002; Statistics Canada, 2003b). They also have been observed to be more mobile than their non-Aboriginal counter-parts, moving within the city they reside. Canada Mortgage & Housing Corporation (CMHC) (July, 2001), distinguishing between migration and mobility, concluded that housing was a bigger factor for those in-city moves, while work and education were more important reasons for individuals to migrate across city boundaries.

The overrepresentation of Aboriginal women and youth in urban locations is of great concern, requiring specific programs to meet their needs (Beavis, Klos, Carter & Douchant, 1997; Native Women's Association of Canada, 1997; RCAP, 1996). The high level of migration and mobility within the Aboriginal population creates challenges for planning and implementing programs in education, social services, health care, and housing in urban areas. However, there was little research on the specific financial problems of day care, housing, and relocation (Malatest & Associates, January 2004).

Aboriginal youth and young families, especially lone-parent families headed by women, represented the majority of those making transitions to urban centers (CMHC, 1997; Distasio & Carter, 2003; Peters, 2001; RCAP, 1996; Statistics Canada, 2003b). Canada Mortgage & Housing Corporation (2001) found that on average, respondents moved three times within a five-year period. 23% of respondents had not moved within the last 5 years; 23% indicated that they had moved once; 17% had moved two times; 12% had moved three times; 10% had moved four times; and 15% had moved more than five times. Of those who had moved, 26% had moved within the last 6 months, 42% in the last year and 58% had moved within the last 48 months (CMHC, 2001).

The literature suggested that individuals left their reserve communities for a variety of reasons, seeking healthier living conditions, employment, educational opportunities, relationship prospects, and housing. It was also apparent from the literature that reasons for migration differed, but it was also the case that once in the city, the experience of Aboriginal people making a life for themselves also varied. Migration to urban areas, residential mobility within those areas, and homelessness were important issues for Aboriginal people in Canada. Therefore, for Aboriginal people moving to or residing in urban areas, housing was a significant issue. In

another CMHC report, large proportions of Aboriginal lone-parent households were in need of housing in urban areas. In Vancouver, for example, while families had higher incomes compared to those living in other urban centers, Vancouver's very high housing costs offset their income (CMHC, 1997). Overall, CMHC (1997) found that low income and housing needs were the norm in Aboriginal lone parent households and that core need households tended to be overcrowded and experienced affordability issues.

The ability to find and maintain affordable, safe, and quality housing often posed significant challenges. The *Aboriginal Peoples Survey 2001* (Statistics Canada, 2003a) found that many Aboriginal people in urban areas lived in homes requiring major repairs. The situation was most serious in Regina and Vancouver, where 17% of Aboriginal people lived in homes of this kind. Major repairs were identified as defective plumbing or electrical wiring, structural repairs to walls, floors, and ceilings. In the Prairie provinces, living in crowded conditions was found to be an issue in Winnipeg, Regina, Saskatoon, and Edmonton. For example, 2001 Census information shows that "18% of Aboriginal people of all ages living in Saskatoon lived in crowded households, more than three times the proportion of 5% for the total population" (Statistics Canada, 2003b, p.24).

While Aboriginal people were less likely to be homeowners, they faced greater difficulty securing housing (Barsh, 1997; Distasio & Carter, 2003). One study in Lethbridge, Alberta explored the response of the urban market to Aboriginal migration by interviewing realtors, builders, lenders, and landlords. Additionally, a survey of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal tenants revealed that landlords were less likely to rent to prospective Aboriginal tenants due to stereotypes and perceived risk-factors associated with Aboriginal people. Landlords identified the following risk factors: the larger family size observed among Aboriginal families, family structures where Aboriginal families of the study were more likely to be headed by a single parent, and concerns for transiency. One landlord in the study commented, "I like to see people in their previous residence for more than a year. People who are on welfare are not stable; if they don't have a job then they are too much of a risk to rent to. I do not look at Native people as potential tenants; they don't have a good reputation. You can never tell how many people are going to be living there. They don't take care of things…" (p. 211). As a result, Aboriginal people searching for rental accommodations in urban areas were likely to face longer searches than non-Native people for comparably-priced housing (Barsh, 1997; Fallis, 1990; Luma Native Housing (LNH) & National Aboriginal Housing Committee (NAHC), et al., 1993; Mason, K.G., 1996).

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) (1996) identified discrimination and poverty as major impediments to creating affordable and adequate housing in non-reserve settings. A study of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit mobility in Winnipeg found that the majority of 525 Aboriginal people surveyed came into the city without a formal housing arrangement, resulting in over half of the respondents living with family or friends until accommodation was found. There was a high level of dissatisfaction with housing circumstances and neighborhoods attributed to affordability and safety issues (Distasio & Carter, 2003). Given that Aboriginal people live disproportionately in the poorest of urban neighborhoods, issues related to safety, adequate housing conditions, and affordability impact on housing for urban Aboriginal people (Richards, 2001).

Urban American Indians have also been found to live in low-rent districts (Fixco, 2000). According to Fixco, this residence location pattern in urban areas often created "ghettoized" areas that paralleled the "rural rez": poor living conditions, run-down housing and inadequate access to basic amenities (e.g., running water, electricity). These conditions were further perpetuated in urban areas by discriminatory practices of landlords (a similar finding in Ryan, 1995). Those not wishing to rent to American Indians often imposed credit checks, unreasonable security deposits with advance rent, conditions that many American Indians could not meet. Those that rented to American Indians often neglected housing and then blamed the tenants for the destruction to the property (Fixco, 2000).

In Canada, LNHS, NAHC, Clark & Price, & RCAP (1993) and the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) (1996) argued that discrimination occurred because groups responsible for non-Aboriginal housing saw housing for Aboriginal people as a federal responsibility and not their own. This forced more Aboriginal people to rely on Native Housing programs that were already stretched to meet the demands or needs of Aboriginal people. LNHS, NAHC et al. (1993) surveyed the number of available rental units in one district, noting that 54% were vacant. However, when the landlord was told the prospective tenant was Native, there were landlords who reacted by saying the unit was already rented and of those units available, the rent was higher than what most First Nations could afford.

In urban areas where Aboriginal housing corporations operated, affordable accommodations had an impact on family stability. Access to affordable accommodations and basic amenities created a sense of permanence, providing roots in the city while maintaining ties with reserve or rural community along with access to education (e.g., the opportunity for children to get a good education in a stable environment and not having to change schools frequently) (RCAP, 1996). "The lack of available and affordable housing is playing a pivotal role in the suffering and anxiety of off-reserve children" (LNHS, NAHC, et al., 1993, p. 49-50). These reports emphasized the critical role safe and quality housing played on the emotional, mental, spiritual and cultural well-being of Aboriginal people. In a more recent study conducted by CMHC (July, 2001) it was found that homelessness affects children's self-esteem and sense of well-being. Other problems identified included behavioural issues, reduced aspirations for school achievement, and lower levels of social skills (CMHC, July 2001). It should be noted that while Aboriginal people are eligible for general housing programs, many of these programs have been reduced or eliminated over the years, creating intense competition and longer wait lists for new and existing housing units. LNHS, NAHC, et al., (1993) discussed the impact of wait lists and low-vacancies on families. Living in sub-standard housing, frequent moves from hotels to shelters, or worse-homelessness, placed First Nations families in jeopardy. Such living conditions negatively impacted the health and wellness of the family, especially the children not to mention the drastic effect it had on cultural relationships (reinforced by Mason, K.G., 1996; RCAP, 1996). The following quote illustrates the important relationship among housing, family, culture, and community that form the philosophical basis of Native Housing Societies.

> *Aboriginal housing is not social housing for Aboriginal people. It is not the objective of this program to be a program that provides housing to people who happen to be Aboriginal. . . This is about the preservation and promotion of our languages and culture and our proper social relations (LNHS, NAHC, et al., 1993, p.7).*

In addition to discrimination, another potential problem that Aboriginal post-secondary students face when moving to a city is the housing shortage created by the influx of all (non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal) post-secondary students to residential areas. Student impact on the local community can be positive in terms of the economic revenue but this also had negative spin-offs, such as decreased housing availability (e.g., groups of students living in family-designated housing), increased traffic, and off-campus student behavior (e.g., noise, drinking) (Clavelle, 2001). Off-campus student households were often perceived to be negative, even destructive, to the local community (Kenyon, 1997). The impact of students migrating back to school was captured in newspaper headlines such as: "Housing market tight for arriving students" – *Halifax Sunday Herald*, "Students battle rental crisis" – *Globe & Mail Metro Edition*, "Students scrambling for accommodation: housing crunch blamed on high rents, 1% vacancy rate"- *Toronto Star* "Students can't find place to live in Toronto" - *Globe & Mail Metro Edition*, and "Students desperately seeking homes" – *Halifax Chronicle Herald.*

To address student housing need, the University of British Columbia (UBC) plans to add 7,000 housing units on-campus within the next 20 years. However, Vancouver's city council has concerns regarding where these units will be built and the impact an increased UBC population will have on the surrounding community of Point Grey, an affluent area on the west side of Vancouver (Krangle & Fong, 2000).

In summary, the aforementioned literature pertaining to urban people and housing identified significant challenges to finding safe, adequate and affordable housing for Aboriginal people in urban areas. Students migrating to urban centers, such as Vancouver, find themselves in the midst of the same issues that undermine Aboriginal peoples' successful transitions to and within cities. Yet, the issues of temporary student migration to urban areas as Aboriginal students relocate for education, and the subsequent impact on their capacity to apply themselves to their studies has received little attention in the literature (Ryan, 1995). Searching for suitable housing as indicated in the literature was difficult in cities with low vacancy rates and high rental costs. These shortages were further complicated by discriminating landlords (Ryan, 1995). The next section focuses on literature related to on campus residences for students.

Post-secondary Student Housing

The advantages of living on campus were reported in a number of studies (e.g., Curley 2003; Dorm Sweet Dorm, 2003; Galicki & McEwen, 1989; Luzzo & McDonald, 1996; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). The convenience of location, opportunities to meet new people and the ability to be part of the 'whole college experience was most influential to students' decisions to live on campus (Cleave, 1996; Dorm Sweet Dorm, 2003; Luzzo & McDonald, 1996). Students' freedom from home was another attraction to living on-campus (Dorm Sweet Dorm, 2003). However, for many Aboriginal students, their motivation for attending college was not to move away from family or to get away from home (Kelpe Kern, 2000). The importance of family and community to Aboriginal students is discussed later in this report.

While some students were attracted to residence life in anticipation of a high quality social life, others were no doubt equally, if not more concerned with the convenience of residence living and the expectation that living on campus would allow them to take full advantage of university offerings. In general, students living in residence were involved in more

out-of-class activities than those living at home. The literature identified many of the "problems" experienced by students living in residence. Some of these included discipline issues, reported use of alcohol and drugs by peers, and concern for health and wellness (Davis, Kocet, & Zozone, 2002; Enochs, 2002; Fier, 2002; Glisksman, Newton-Taylor, Adlaf, & Giesbrecht, 1998; Hartford & Muthen, 2001; Harford, Wechsler, & Muthen, 2002; Hausenblas & Carron, 1998; Hower, 1997; Larimer, Anderson, Baer, & Marlett, 2001; Nicklaus, 1992; O'Hare & Sherrer, 2000; Palmer, 1996; Trockel, Barnes, & Egget, 2000; Walker, 2001; Wechsler, Lee, Nelson, & Lee, 2001; Wechsler, Less, & Rigotti, 2001; Whitcomb, 1999). Despite problems associated with choosing residence life, Pascarella & Terenizini (1991) in their analysis and summary of the relevant literature entitled, *How College Affects Students*, concluded that living on campus provided particular advantages to students and exerted a net positive input on persistence and degree of attainment.

Residence living assisted students in their transition to post-secondary education by helping establish first, personal support and then, group cohesiveness (Barthelemy & Fine, 1996; Pascarella & Terezini, 1991). Residential life departments at colleges and universities across the country responded to the need to focus undergraduate students on their education by increasing residence programming that focused on student learning. These programs were generally referred to as residence learning communities (RLCs) or living learning centers (LLCs). The purpose of LLCs was to bridge the gap between curricular and extra-curricular education. Residences became more proactive in recognizing that students' success was dependent on their in and out of class experiences by enriching their dorm life with supports such as study lounges, social areas, kitchens, fitness rooms, club rooms, worship spaces, evening and weekend social and academic programming along with social and health services (Curley, 2003).

A successful component of a LLC was fostering and supporting learning by providing academic support services (e.g., tutoring, study space). Edwards & McKelfresh (2002) found living in a LLC had a positive impact on academic performance of the students participating in this study, indicated in their Grade Point Average (GPA). Another interesting finding was the relationship between educational persistence, ethnicity and participation in the LLC. For example, non-White students living in the LLC had a probability of school persistence of 89%, which was 13% higher than the normal probability of school persistence of non-White students and 7% higher than the probability of school persistence for White students (Edwards & McKelfresh, 2002). Pike, Schroeder, & Berry (1997) concluded that the educational interventions within RLCs had a dramatic effect on the quantity and quality of students' interactions with peers and faculty thus enhancing achievement and persistence by facilitating student incorporation into college. In a later study, Pike (1999) found that students living in RLCs had significantly higher levels of involvement, interaction, integration, and gains in learning and intellectual development than did students living in traditional residence halls. RLCs also directly enhanced students' involvement and interaction and indirectly promoted integration and academic gains; the nature of these indirect effects varied by outcome (Pike, 1999). Native Americans participating in the research were less then 1% of the sample in both studies so they were not separated in the analysis (Pike, 1999; Pike, Schroeder, & Barry, 1997).

While the question of the value of LLCs is still debated amongst the researchers, the actual organizational structure of residences did not necessarily allow for the integration of academic goals into residence administration (Carson, Duplessis, & Mighty, 1995). Short-term and fragmented academic programming along with the absence of faculty presence hindered the

integration of academic learning and residence life (Carson, Duplesis, & Mighty, 1995). A recommendation arising from their study was the further involvement and integration of faculty within residence life as a way of promoting and linking academics to all aspects of students' lives. Others found that social interactions, student-student or faculty-student interaction aided student persistence and intellectual development (Astin, 1993; Butlin, 1999; Kelpe Kern, 2000; Pike, Schroeder, & Barry, 1997; Tinto, 1993).

Living on-campus allowed for more interaction with peers and faculty members which increased student retention (Astin, 1993). Conversely, students who lived off-campus had less opportunity to interact with peer groups, therefore decreasing retention (Astin, 1975). While there were contradictory findings, in general, living on or near campus was found to have a positive impact on the desired outcomes of the university experience (Grayson, 1997; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). There appeared to be greater opportunities for social interactions that supported academic pursuits.

A growing body of research indicated that students' interpersonal interactions with peers and faculty members shaped a number of dimensions of cognitive growth. The overall summary of the literature specified that residence hall interventions were designed in ways that shaped students' academic, intellectual, and cognitive growth (Astin, 1993; Terenzini, Pascarella, & Bliming, 1999). However, there was little evidence to suggest (aside from a limited number of studies), that when academic ability or prior achievement was held constant, different naturally occurring residence groups (dorms, fraternities, sororities or off-campus) had consistent influence on academic achievement (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, p.389).

The style of building had some influence on the sense of community held among residents (Covello, 2000). It was found that residence students were more concerned with the social relationships (i.e., friendships with fellow students) than the physical residence hall environment, supporting the work of Pascella & Terenzini (1991) and Astin (1993). However, Covello (2000) also discovered that the style of building (suite-style versus corridor-style) influenced the sense of community, hence the quality of social interaction amongst students. In comparing residences and co-ops, Hirsch (2000) found that co-operatives were more likely to provide social support (i.e., enhancing the quality of residence experience).

Some of the housing literature explored the nature and/or impact of cross-cultural residence relationships on students. Other researchers explored minority student experience in residence and implications for retention and completion of post-secondary. For example, May (1996) sought to understand the experiences of students who were members of the Church of Jesus Christ Latter Day Saints since these students' background could have been different from students normally enrolled in college residence hall norms. Using in-depth interviews, the following themes emerged: i) peer group experiences, which included the importance of friends, the formation of peer groups, the pressure students felt from peers and their experiences with those things that they identified as challenges of residence hall living. ii) personal value systems had to be adjusted and examined within the context of the residence hall, as well as the larger college setting. Some students set aside some of their religious beliefs to varying degrees as they attempted to fit in to the norms of residence life and their peers. African American residents perceived the residence hall environment, governance, and staff and peers differently than their Euro- American peers (Johnson-Durgan, 1995). These findings resonated with Thomas' (2000) study on student persistence, and Huffman's (2001) description of the transcultured American

Indian student as one who held onto strong traditional cultural values while successfully adjusting to college life.

Saidla & Grant (1994) compared the experience of American-American paired students to those of American-International paired students living in traditional and international residence wings respectively. A positive relationship was found between roommate understanding and roommate rapport in the American-International setting. These roommates indicated a stronger rapport and cross-cultural understanding than American-American paired roommates, supporting the need for further development of cross-cultural residences. Although American students associated personality-relationship issues (e.g., support, closeness, socialization) and International students associated lifestyle issues (e.g., privacy, respect of space) to what made a 'good roommate'; they were able to work across these differences .

Only a few studies addressed the role of housing on retention and completion of post-secondary education for minority students. Galicki & McEwen (1989) conducted a study to examine the relationship of residence in the retention of Black and White students. They concluded that the benefits of residence hall living on retention seemed to be as applicable to Black students as they were to White students, however the costs of on-campus living limited Black students from participating and may have hindered their retention (Galicki & McEwen, 1989).

Responding to the need to create a more welcoming and supportive campus for Native American students, the University of Arizona-O'odham ki designed an Indigenous residence, where Native Americans lived together in a residential wing (Mason, J., 1996). The environment was designed to be a supportive community. For example, academic support was provided through one-on-one tutoring. There were also mentoring programs and cultural activities. An Aboriginal staff was also an important aspect of this residence program. This living arrangement was designed to increase retention and persistence by bridging the social and cultural gaps experienced by Native Americans attending a dominant university (Mason, J., 1996).

Living on-campus had a strong positive effect on persistence and completion of the undergraduate degree (Pascarella & Terenzinni, 1991). Other identified advantages of residence were: greater degrees of active and collaborative learning, more interaction with faculty members, potential for increased interaction with students of diverse backgrounds and beliefs, and easier access to campus programs that directly supported the educational and social goals of the institution (Curley, 2003). Compared to their student counterparts who lived at home and commuted, students who lived in residence had significantly more social interaction with peers and faculty and were significantly more likely to be involved in extracurricular activities and use campus facilities (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991).

In a survey of 1,200 students at York University, Ontario, Grayson (1997) found that students' place of residence affected student involvement and grades achieved in the first year. After controlling for standardized test scores and faculty department, freshman grades of off-campus students were higher than those of on-campus students. Despite off-campus residence and low involvement in some activities, students living with parents had better classroom involvement. Therefore, living off-campus with parents did not represent a disadvantage in terms of first-year marks. This particular study raises another question: what are the experiences of off-campus students who do not reside with family?

Terenzini, Pascarella, & Bliming (1999) conducted a literature review examining the effects of students' out-of-class experiences on academic intellectual or cognitive learning outcomes. One particular section discussed the influences of living in a residence hall as opposed to somewhere else (e.g., at home, in a fraternity or sorority house, or in private, off-campus quarters) on students' academic outcomes. Blimling's (1999) meta-analysis of studies from 1967-1987 concluded that students who lived in residence halls had an advantage in grade performance over commuting students, but these findings were in studies without controls for pre-college academic performance differences. In studies that did have pre-college academic performance controlled for, Blimling (1999) found that living in residence did not provide any more advantages or disadvantages than living at home. He suggested that students' in-class experiences were so similar, regardless of where the students lived.

Hughes & Davis (2002) discussed the devolution of housing responsibility from the provincial government's Tenancy Act to the university in a Canadian city. The university became responsible for monitoring off-campus student housing. This change in governance resulted in a substandard student housing market that was unregulated since the institutions were not equipped to monitor and more importantly enforce housing regulations/standards. In Nova Scotia, St. Francis Xavier University and Acadia University were taking steps to protect their off-campus students from such conditions. To list off-campus rentals with the university, landlords had to be willing to have the rental inspected by the institution's housing approval officer, who examined and passed the rental based on meeting fire, health and safety standards (Slumlords Beware, 2000).

In summary, much of the literature related to post-secondary student housing paid attention to students who lived on-campus, focusing on topics such as why they lived on campus, discipline issues, architectural design of residences, and the relationship between academic success and residence life (e.g., Babaoye, 2000; Canovan & Davies, 2001; Chen & Sonmez, 2002; Davis, Kocet, & Zozone, 2002; Inman & Pascarella, 1998; Kerr, 1998; Lovejoy, Perkins, & Collins, 1996; Reyes & Rich, 2003). It was evident from the literature that there were many positive outcomes for students residing on-campus, including a greater involvement in campus life, increased social supports and interaction, and a strong effect on persistence or completion of post-secondary studies. While most of this literature was drawn from the United States, cross cultural comparisons were drawn in some instances with only a few studies related to Aboriginal students. The next section focuses on literature related to retention, housing and Aboriginal students.

Retention, Housing & Aboriginal Students

Although educational attainment is increasing for Aboriginal people, the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students who graduate from university remains wide. The 2001 census reported only 8% of people claiming an Aboriginal identity aged 25-64 had a university education compared to 20% of Canadians of the same age group (Statistics Canada, 2003). For those who received a college education, the Canadian national percentage was 12% while 15% of Aboriginal peoples held a college certification. The disparity in the trades had also disappeared with 16% of Aboriginal peoples completing trade certification compared to the Canadian national average of 12%.

It is important to think of educational attainment rates as more than just credentials. Retention is more than just finishing a degree; it involves fulfilling educational aims that reflect educational aspirations (Moxley et al, 2001). Considering the broader goals of Aboriginal peoples for self-determination, Aboriginal peoples trained at all levels will greatly enhance their capacity to develop structures and services within their own communities and organizations regardless if it is law, education, health, administrative, business or trades related.

Retention can not be viewed by mainstream institutions as a means of assimilation. Kirkness & Barnhardt (1991) argued that it is the institution that needs to change instead of thinking that low retention is a student problem. The call for post-secondary institutions to create space that respects Aboriginal cultural values and knowledges, builds reciprocal relationships between the institution and community, respects different world views and more importantly, assists Aboriginal people to exercise responsibility over their own lives is fundamental to the persistence of Aboriginal students in mainstream institutions (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991; Sonn, Bishop, & Humphries, 2000). Retention was also facilitated by institutional-community-student partnerships (Moxley, et al., 2001).

Retention is also a matter of considering emotional, informational, instrumental, material and/or identity supports (Moxley et al., 2001). Problems associated with housing, family, finances and racism caused considerable stress for Aboriginal students. This stress hindered their academic success (Ryan, 1995). Acknowledging that student success was influenced by factors outside the institution was important in understanding persistence in educational matters. The time spent dealing with external factors, such as housing, finances, and family issues used scarce time that students could have spent on their school work (Ryan, 1995).

Foster (1995) examined the relationship of selected student background variables and traits with academic persistence of first-time, full-time, Native American students enrolled at a major Southwestern university from the 1988 to 1990 school years. The findings indicated that there was no significant correlation between Native American students' high school grade point average, American College Testing (ACT) scores, parental income, parental education, residency, or financial aid and their academic persistence. The analyses suggested a significant correlation between remaining at a university for four or more semesters and leadership, attitude, values, and future goals. These four factors appeared to be the best predictors of academic persistence for Native American students.

The importance of personal relations on and off-campus in helping students with their higher education was discussed earlier and is further supported by the retention literature (Moxley et al., 2001; Thomas, 2000) and Aboriginal education literature (Archibald, Selkirk Bowman, Pepper, Urion, Mirehouse & Shortt 1995; Ryan, 1995). For example, in Ryan's (1995) study about the experiences of Aboriginal students enrolled in a nursing program, the students tended to spend a lot of their time dealing with family issues before studies because family was their priority. However, it was also important to be cognizant of the positive impact factors such as, family, exercise, and cultural events had on students' overall needs. Archibald et al. (1995) identified several factors associated with attrition including low expectations of First Nations students, unresponsive curricula, lack of counseling, racism, and limited financial support. Helping factors included institutional commitment, family and peer support, and the presence of First Nations staff/faculty at the institution. In his study of successful Aboriginal students completing post-secondary schooling in northwestern Ontario, DeGagne (2002) observed for some of the eight

participants, time in residence helped in forming friendships and establishing their place on campus. Friendships served to reconnect the students with a sense of family and community they knew prior to post-secondary education. The need to consider retention from a wholistic perspective is critical if one is to gain insight into the multi-dimensional nature of the Aboriginal post-secondary student (e.g., student, family member, community member). Each of these roles has obligations and responsibilities and the relationship of each is critical. For this particular report, understanding that housing (or lack of it) has a substantial impact on students' studies (Ryan, 1995) is critical to proactively dealing with Aboriginal student retention and persistence in post-secondary education.

One of the primary issues confronting higher education is student persistence. Godin (1999) examined how student characteristics obtained at entrance served as predictors for identifying an at-risk population of students who became leavers. Results suggested that certain variables obtained at entrance may be utilized as predictors which assist in identifying an at-risk group of students (Godin, 1999). Thomas (2000) stated that while the number of student acquaintances was important to persistence, he found that the residential location also had important impacts on vital outcomes, such as satisfaction, grade performance, and persistence. Activities and residential situations designed to encourage the development of student relationships should be designed to enhance cross-clique diversity and foster opportunities for nurturing and connecting emerging student social leaders (Thomas, 2000). These initiatives helped students develop a portfolio of relations that provided key resources (academic as well as social) over the freshman year (Thomas, 2000). This was particularly important since adjustment to city living played a significant role in students' academic lives (Ryan, 1995).

Hampton & Roy (2002) discussed the importance of family, cultural and spiritual activities to the persistence of Aboriginal students. They also recommended enhancing the professor-student relationship. However, there was no discussion about the relationship of housing to Aboriginal student persistence. Understanding the relationship between poverty and barriers to Aboriginal education was important for understanding the life of Aboriginal post-secondary students (Hampton & Roy, 2003).

Aboriginal students have to deal with many issues when embarking on post-secondary education, such as independent life in an urban setting, fear of losing their identity, learning how to budget, dealing with academic pressures, experiencing racism and the cultural biases present in their classes (Hampton & Roy, 2003; Kimble, 2001; Stienhauer, 1998). For example, issues of identity tended to revolve around students' fears of anxiety and alienation from their cultural group. These feelings were resolved when students understood that their values, beliefs, and world view were inherent. The family-life support systems available on-campus helped alleviate students' anxiety in their transitions and throughout their academic programs (Steinhauer, 1998). However, Kimble (2001) or Steinhauer (1998) did not discuss the relationship of secure housing to the persistence of Aboriginal students.

Moxley et al. (2001) provided an important context for understanding the role of housing in the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal students in post-secondary education. They reported that "the purpose of retention was to assist students who required a support system to achieve their aims and achieve success in their roles as students" (p. 39). As Hirsh (2000) found, one's environment (e.g. housing) had a significant impact on one's psychological well-being.

In summary, the literature about retention, housing and Aboriginal students reinforced the importance of considering the multi-dimensional hindering and helping aspects of post-secondary retention. Hindering aspects included assimilationist approaches of post-secondary institutions, too much time spent locating housing, limited finances, and racism. Helping factors included cultural supports, Aboriginal staff and faculty, institutional commitment to Aboriginal enhancement, and student leadership. The literature examined in this chapter has reinforced the need to examine the role that housing plays in post-secondary Aboriginal student retention in a wholistic manner.

TOWARDS AN INDIGENOUS METHODOLOGY

An Indigenous methodology framework formed the approach to the design, data gathering, analysis, and the dissemination of findings for this study. This research was guided by principles/values that reflected Indigenous ways of living and relating to the world and people. They included respect, responsibility, relevance, and reciprocity (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991). Each principle was honored throughout the research study. Developing relationships with post-secondary institutions and Aboriginal students, the kinds of knowledge shared and the way that knowledge was organized, all demonstrated the respect principle. The clearly defined roles of the researchers, and those involved in the research through various capacities, ensured responsibility to and for the research. This particular research project was both timely and relevant as the increasing numbers of Aboriginal students attending post-secondary education coincided with the limited and high cost rental market in Vancouver. Based on conversations with Aboriginal student service workers and students, it was clear that there were many difficulties in finding affordable and suitable housing. These conversations led to this research and objectives to understand Aboriginal students' housing issues. In the spirit of reciprocity, there was a mutual and dynamic exchange of findings with those who invested in this research throughout the study.

An Indigenous approach to research is also inclusive of frameworks that organize knowledge in a way that reflects Indigenous ways of thinking about the world. We used wholistic frameworks that drew on the symbol of the circle as a form of wholism. Some Aboriginal cultures use the Medicine Wheel, most familiar to the Plains Nations in Canada, while others refer to it as the Sacred Circle. Since we are based at the University of British Columbia (UBC), we drew upon the wholistic circle that has guided programs such as the Native Indian Teacher Education Program (NITEP) and the First Nations House of Learning. The first approach situated the four aspects of self-development: spiritual, social/emotional, physical, and intellectual on four dimensions of the circle and allowed us to map connections among the four dimensions, demonstrating interconnectedness. The second approach drew on the formation of concentric circles, whereby the self is situated in the broader contexts of family, community, Nation, and environment. Again, the emphasis is on wholism and relationships, whereby each context is connected and informed by one another. (See Figure 1.)

The first phase of this research process involved developing relationships and partnerships with identified post-secondary institutions in the lower mainland of Vancouver, British Columbia (B.C). Initial contact was made through a formal letter sent to post-secondary institutions in the Vancouver area requesting their permission and support to conduct this research [see Appendix 1]. Some student groups were also asked for their permission and support of the project. The Aboriginal Coordinators at each institution guided us on the proper research protocols. This ensured that each institution had input into how and when the research process was carried out in their place of learning. Each institution also identified a specific contact person for us. A UBC ethics approval was also secured. The following post-secondary institutions participated in the research: University of British Columbia (UBC), Simon Fraser University (SFU), Institute of Indigenous Government (IIG), Langara College, the Native Education Centre (NEC), and the British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT). The universities were comprehensive and offered a wide range of programs. The IIG was a publicly funded First Nations institute that offered first and second year university arts and transfer courses and First Nations courses. Langara offered a wide range of college programs. The NEC was a First Nations controlled private post-secondary institute that offered programs ranging

from basic literacy to second year college programs. BCIT was publicly funded and offered many different technology and one-two year diploma programs.

A website was established that described the research project, invited post-secondary students to complete the survey, provided a range of housing and housing-related resources, and shared the findings of this study. The web site contained transportation, shopping, tenancy act, social services, food bank, and Aboriginal organization information. In the future, this web site will be available to students entering and continuing their post-secondary education. It is a way to give students access to support and information that will help them in their housing search. (See web site at http://www.educ.ubc.ca/research/ahrp). The web site is also an example of reciprocity – a way of giving back.

Data Collection

Three forms of data gathering were used in this study. They included the administration of a questionnaire, individual interviews, and group sharing circles. We followed Maori scholar Linda Smith's (1999) notion of Indigenous methodology that incorporates various methods. The important consideration is that the framework is comprised of Indigenous values and the analysis is wholistic.

The sampling strategy used in this project was based on the convenience sample – Aboriginal post-secondary students attending university/colleges in the Lower mainland. A snowball technique was used to recruit student participants using advertising with the aid of the Aboriginal staff at each institution. Participating institutions were also asked to identify appropriate staff persons who were approached to participate in the staff interviews.

Questionnaires

The questionnaire was designed by members of the research team to focus on housing needs and priorities for Aboriginal post-secondary students, experiences finding accommodations in the Vancouver area, relevance of housing to academic studies, recommendations for institutions to support housing, and demographic information of post-secondary students. Questions were closed- and open-ended. The questionnaire was pre-tested with a group of Aboriginal post-secondary students at one of the institutions participating in the study. Following the pre-test, the questionnaire was revised, resulting in 24 questions. The questionnaire was subsequently presented to a graduate survey research class for their feedback and minor revisions were made [see Appendix 2].

Survey Administration Procedure

The questionnaire was administered to students at sessions held at each participating post-secondary institution from September 2003 – February 2004. Sessions were either an informal gathering of students or were part of on-going programming and events held at the institution such as orientations. Aboriginal student service staff assisted in the research process by helping to organize the aforementioned sessions and by distributing the questionnaires to students. The researchers also presented information about the research project before the questionnaires were distributed to students. At these sessions, food was served and if appropriate, door prizes were awarded. The questionnaires were collected and returned by mail and personal

pick-up by the researchers. This allowed for the greatest range of participation by students attending the institutions. There were 175 questionnaires completed for this study.

Despite keen interest from student groups and staff regarding the research project, we estimate that our return rate ranged between 12 to 25% of the Aboriginal students attending those institutions. We extended the deadline date for survey completion a number of times in order to obtain more responses. Student service staff also sent out email reminders, posted information on bulletin boards, and personally reminded students about the surveys. The survey completion time was extended to also accommodate the various institutions' schedules. One institution had planned to have a large intake of students in January, but then had to cancel these programs because of insufficient numbers of students, hence a very low return rate. The response rate is only an estimate because most of the institutions, such as the universities and colleges, did not know the actual total number of Aboriginal students enrolled. Students at these institutions voluntarily self-identify themselves as Aboriginal.

Interviews

Aboriginal student service coordinators and Native housing administrators at the six post-secondary institutions were contacted through written correspondence. This letter introduced the researchers and described the nature of the study and invited them to participate in interviews. The interviews probed for more detail on Aboriginal student experiences with regard to housing and its impact on access, retention, and completion. Five of the six post-secondary institutions participated in individual interviews that aimed to address the challenges and successes related to housing for students at their institution, institutional support services related to housing and student studies, and recommendations to stakeholders of student housing. Interviews took place at each of the participating post-secondary institutions, with a total of eight staff participating in interviews [see Appendix 4].

Sample interview questions included: Generally, what are the Aboriginal students' experiences with finding housing while they undertake their studies? How important is housing to recruitment and retention of Aboriginal students at your institution? Based on your experience, which students experience the most difficulty with housing and what are their challenges? What important cultural considerations need to be taken into account regarding how your institution deals with housing matters for Aboriginal students? What recommendations might you put forward to First Nation communities, Aboriginal organizations, government groups to help Aboriginal post-secondary students with their housing needs?

Some students reported living in subsidized housing provided by Aboriginal housing authorities in Vancouver. Vancouver Native Housing Society and Luma Native Housing Society, both Aboriginal housing authorities providing subsidized accommodation to urban Aboriginal people in Vancouver, were contacted for their participation in the study to contribute their reflections on post-secondary student services available through their organizations and experiences of student tenants with housing. A staff member at the Vancouver Native Housing participated in an interview and a small focus group (N=3) was conducted with Luma Native Housing Society staff [see Appendix 5].

Sample interview questions included: How does your Native housing organization provide housing to Aboriginal students attending colleges and universities in the Vancouver

area? What are the most significant challenges faced by students seeking adequate housing in order to undertake their studies? What are important cultural considerations that need to be taken into account regarding how your housing organization deals with housing matters for students? What support services does your organization provide to Aboriginal students who reside in your complex? Do you have any specific policies or procedures in place that deal with student tenants? How are First Nation communities, Aboriginal organizations, government groups supporting Aboriginal post-secondary students with their housing needs? What recommendations might you make to improve housing for Aboriginal post-secondary students?

Individual interviews were based on semi-structured questions that took approximately 1 to 1.5 hours to complete. All interviews were recorded and transcribed for analysis and returned to all participants for verification, accuracy, and additional input. As well, where possible a graduate student took notes. This practice provided a back-up copy of the session in the event the tape recorder or tape malfunctioned.

Sharing Circles

Following the administering of questionnaires, Aboriginal students at each institution were invited to participate in a sharing circle/discussion group, which involved a guided discussion moderated by the researchers. This form of discussion was selected because Talking Circles are commonly used in Aboriginal settings. However, we did not call these sessions Talking Circles because they sometimes take on more of a counselling function, which was not our intent. We felt that individuals would feel comfortable sharing their perspectives with other Aboriginal students. The session included guided discussion on some questions, while individuals could also put their responses on post-it notes that were later attached to large chart paper that had the discussion questions listed. The individual post-it notes provided those who did not want to share their views in front of others to actively participate and have their concerns known to the researchers. The sessions opened with a prayer. Food was provided along with door prizes. Eight questions comprised the guided discussions that focused on assistance provided to students to find housing, housing supports at post-secondary institutions, and recommendations to support the residence needs of Aboriginal post-secondary students. There were six sharing circles, with the number of participants in each sharing circle ranging from 4-20 participants. Participants included single students, single parents (more female than male), married parents, and those with a partner and no children. There was a range in age from those in their early 20s to those in their 40s. An Elder also attended one of the sessions. Discussions from sharing circles were also recorded and transcribed for analysis. The project team members also took notes during the sharing circles [see Appendix 3].

Sample focus group questions included: What do you recall about your experiences with learning about housing availability when you were making decisions about which post-secondary program and institution to attend? What role did housing play in your decision to attend the college/university you are enrolled in now? Once in the Vancouver area, what can you recall about your housing search? What were problems or successes you experienced? What role has housing played in helping you continue or complete your program of studies? What are the cultural considerations that are important to you in finding or keeping housing? What would the ideal housing situation be like for post-secondary students in the city of Vancouver?

Analytic Strategies

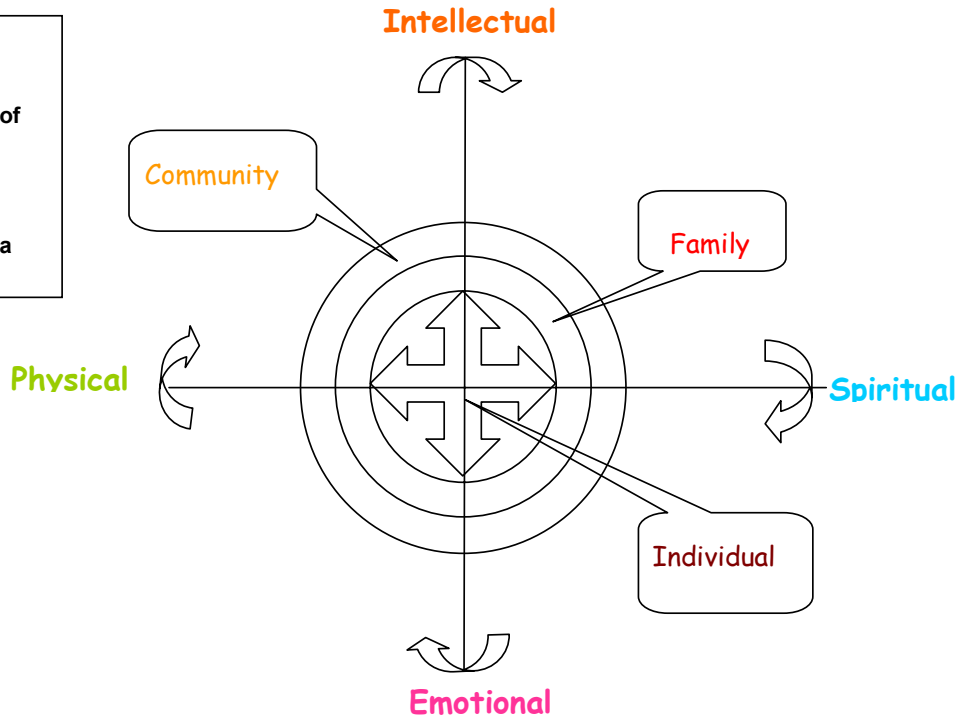
The various types of data collected for this project were analyzed using several strategies. Once the surveys were collected, SPSS 12.0 was used to analyze the quantitative data. Data analysis included basic frequency analyses of all the survey questions, followed by exploratory analysis comparing sub-samples of the data to determine whether there were significant differences between groups on various variables. These comparisons included gender, do they have children or not have children, institution type (university versus college), and age. As per convention, significant differences were determined by obtaining a p value < .05. Analysis of the qualitative data from the surveys was guided by the wholistic Indigenous framework. The qualitative data was first reviewed, and then coded for major themes.

The interviews and the sharing circles were analyzed using several different techniques. Data from interviews and focus groups involved thematic analysis. Themes were identified by search for central topics that were most often repeated across the interviews and focus groups. The primary coding was done by either one of the principal investigators and the coordinating research assistant. The aim of this process was to increase inter-rater reliability. The first round of coding was done by hand, each rater read through the transcripts and coded the relevant themes and quotes she viewed as significant to the study.

The Indigenous research methodology model (See Figure 1 below) was used to assist in organizing responses from data.

Figure 1.

A visual representation of Indigenous Research Methodology Framework for Analysis of Data



After the initial coding was completed, the project team met as a group to go over prevalent themes and the process of coding. Those who were not involved in the coding process but were part of the data collection helped verify if the themes were consistent with their experiences with the data.

The secondary coding was done using Atlas.ti, a qualitative software program. This process provided another measure of reliability to the rater's coding scheme. Using Atlas.ti to identify and code themes, we were able to compare the frequency of themes. From the group meeting after the initial coding, four major themes were identified:

1. Access
2. Family matters
3. Cultural relationships
4. Community relationships

A third level of coding was done to reflect the major themes outlined above. We re-analyzed the qualitative data and coded text that related to one or more of the four themes above to ensure that we didn't miss any significant themes.

WHOLISTIC ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

This chapter presents a wholistic analysis and findings of the survey data, student sharing circles, post-secondary staff and Native Housing staff interviews. The wholistic analysis framework was discussed in the methodology chapter. A total of 175 surveys were returned from six participating post-secondary institutions (see Table 1). There were approximately 56 participants in the sharing circles (averaging 10 a session) and approximately 8 staff participated in the interviews.

Table 1 Participants by Institution

Institution	# of participants	% of total sample
Native Education Centre	55	31
University of British Columbia	50	29
Institute of Indigenous Government	31	18
Simon Fraser University	20	11
Langara College	16	9
British Columbia Institute of Technology	3	2

Part One of this chapter begins with a descriptive analysis of the demographic and educational survey data from the post-secondary Aboriginal students who participated in this project, then highlights housing factors that were found to influence recruitment and retention of Aboriginal students in post-secondary education. Part Two of this chapter focuses on a qualitative wholistic analysis of the student sharing circles and interviews with post-secondary student service and Native Housing staff. The four main themes of access, family matters, cultural relationships, and community relationships emerged through the wholistic analysis of the survey data, and were found to influence Aboriginal student recruitment and retention in post-secondary education.

Part One: Survey Data

Table 2 provides a general overview of the students who completed the Aboriginal Housing Research Project (AHRP) Survey. In total, 63% of the participants were female and 37% were male. The majority of student participants were single (including those divorced, widowed or separated) (~62%) while 38% were either married or in-partnership. In total, 52% of the participants had dependents, while 48% of the participants indicated that they did not have dependents. Of those who had children (N=86), 48% of participants had 1 child, 21% had 2, and 31% indicated that they had 3 or more children.

Table 2 Demographic profile of AHRP student participants (N=175)

Gender	**%**
Female	63
Male	37
Marital Status	
Single	56
Married/In-partnership	38
Divorced	5
Widowed/Separated	1
Dependents	
Yes	52
No	48

The average age of participants was 32 years (*SD* = 10.8). The youngest participant was 17 and the oldest was 64 years of age. The ages of participants varied by institutions (see Table 3). For example, the average age at the BCIT was 26 years of age (*SD* = 2.0), indicating that the age range was between 24-28. In contrast, the average age of participants at UBC was 35 (*SD* = 12.14), indicating a wider diversity in age ranges. A larger dispersion of ages could be related to the fact that some students were enrolled in undergraduate and graduate programs of study, therefore being enrolled in the institution longer than they would be had they been enrolled in a college with a two year program. It was also found that students who reported that they had dependents were more likely to be older, as were the respondents who reported that they were married. It is also important to note that college and university students were equally likely to have children or dependents.

Table 3 Age distribution of student participants by institution.

	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)
BCIT	26.0	2.0
IIG	29.96	9.29
SFU	33.05	8.26
Langara	33.33	9.08
NEC	32.37	11.54
UBC	35.18	12.14

The student participants shared a very diverse Aboriginal ancestry. There was a wide representation of First Nations groups from within B.C. Other groups represented were Cree, Métis, and other groups from outside the B.C. area.

Approximately 59% of survey respondents indicated that they had moved to Vancouver to attend post-secondary education (see Table 4). Of those who reported that they had moved, 47% of the students moved from within B.C. and 14% moved from outside B.C. In total, 38% of the respondents did not provide an answer to this question. This question is not mutually exclusive (i.e., the responses do not add to 100%) since participants may have moved to the lower mainland of BC, but did not consider this a move within B.C.

Table 4 Where students relocated from in their move to the lower mainland.

Where did you from	%
Within BC	48
Outside of BC	14
No Response	38

In response to the question, "How long have you lived in Vancouver?" the average duration of time was 6.9 years. However, there was quite a range in duration from 0 months to 624 months (~52 years), which implies that one person has lived in Vancouver most of his/her life.

The majority of the respondents (61%) indicated that they were enrolled in Arts programs, another 14% were enrolled in Technical programs, 6% were science students and 2% were business students. In total, 17% of respondents did not indicate their program (Figure 1).

Exploratory analysis was conducted to determine whether significant differences existed when comparing University (UBC, SFU) and College (NEC, IIG, Langara, BCIT) student responses. It was found that university students (71.4%) were more likely than college students (51.9%) to move to attend school $\chi^2 = 6.62$, $p = .01$.

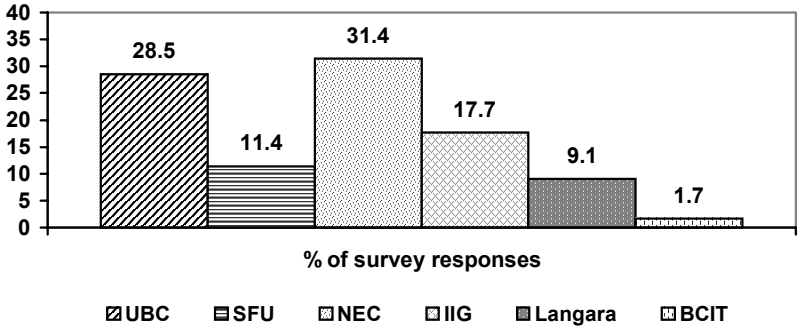


Figure 1 Percentage distribution of student participants by post-secondary institution.

Tables 5 through 7 share information about the respondents' current living situations. The following tables describe students' type of accommodation, the number of people they live with and the number of times they have moved since coming to the B.C. Lower Mainland.

Table 5 Percentage distribution of respondents' current housing situation

Current Housing Situation	%
Rent off-campus	63
College/University housing	9
Own personal home/condo	6
Live with family	6
Native housing (family)	5
Native housing (single)	3
Other	8

As Table 5 shows, 63% of respondents rent their current accommodations off-campus, with 9% who reported that they lived in either college or university housing. Comparisons between males and females, and comparisons between college or university students were not significant when considering current housing situations.

Table 6 Percentage distribution of respondents living with other people

Number of others living in accommodations	%
0 people	16
1 person	27
2 people	20
3 people	18
4 or more people	15
No response	4

In total, 16% of the participants lived on their own, with many students living with one other person (27%). Not surprisingly, participants who indicated that they had dependents (M = 2.58, SD = 1.70) reported a higher average number of people that they lived with, than those who indicated that they did not have dependents (M = 1.43, SD = 1.49), t = -4.64, $p < .01$. It should be noted that this analysis only included those participants who reported less than 10 other people that they lived with, excluding one participant who reported the number of people who lived in the dormitory (40). No significant differences were found between male and female participants with respect to the number of people they lived with.

Table 7 Number of times students have moved since coming to lower mainland for their program.

Number of times moved	%
Have not moved	36
Once	29
Twice	15
Three times	10
Four or more times	8
No response	2

Table 7 shows that just over one-third of the respondents have not moved, suggesting that their lives could be relatively stable with respect to living situations. These students may be urban dwellers. In total, 29% of the respondents indicated that they had only moved once. This

particular group may have just recently relocated from their home town for the specific purpose of attending post-secondary school that year. Almost 1/4 of the respondents had moved two or more times, which is consistent with the high rate of mobility noted in the literature review. There were no significant differences between males and females, or between those participants with dependents or no dependents, with respect to the number of times they had moved.

The respondents were asked to share how much rent they paid, the response ranged from 0 to $1750 a month. In total, 55% of the respondents considered their rent reasonable, 30% did not consider their rent reasonable, and 14% did not respond to this question. When asked to explain why they believed their rent was reasonable, 21% indicated it was a good price. Conversely, 19% said that they believed their rent was unreasonable because it was expensive, while one individual said he/she did not live in a good location. In total, five participants said that size was a factor and another five participants indicated that their housing conditions were run down. It is important to know that 44% of respondents did not provide any commentary. To determine whether geographic location (determined by Institution) was related to how much students paid in rent, a cross tabulation was conducted in SPSS (see Table 8).

Table 8 Cross-tabulation of rent range and institution attended.

Institution		**Rent Range (%)**					
	N	**< $100**	**$100-299**	**$300-499**	**$500-699**	**$700-999**	**$≥ 1000**
UBC	43	2	7	**31**	25	28	7
SFU	15	-	20	**33**	13	27	7
NEC	45	-	9	**36**	29	20	7
IIG	27	4	-	**37**	18	30	11
Langara	14	-	-	22	**36**	21	21
BCIT	2	-	-	-	**50**	**50**	-

For single males and females, the range in rent paid for accommodations was relatively the same. When considering frequency data, male participants tended to report paying rent within the range of 300-499 a month, while single female participants tended to report paying rent in the 700-999 range. Those participants with dependents and those who indicated that they were married or in partnerships seemed to pay higher rent than single students. It was also found that participants who attended university (78.3%) were more likely to consider their rent reasonable than participants who attended college (51.9%), $\chi^2 = 6.62$, $p = .01$. However, students without dependents (55.1%) were more likely to consider their rent reasonable than those who had children, (75%), $\chi^2 = 6.471$, $p = .011$.

Table 9 reports the modes of transportation students indicated they used on a weekly basis. For the sake of simplicity, the most frequent number of times they used each mode of transportation was reported. For the most part, participants reported taking the bus (86%) and walking (75%). Students were more likely to use the bus, car or sky train 3-5 days a week. Those who walked, did so 6-7 times a week. Biking and using a taxi were the least reported modes of transportation and the frequency of usage (1-2 times/week) substantiated this.

Table 9 Modes of transportation used by respondents

	% Yes responses	How many times (most frequent response by %)?
Bus	86	3-5 times (47)
Walk	75	6-7 times (43)
Car	67	3-5 times (56)
Sky train	59	3-5 times (46)
Bike	20	1-2 times (50)
Taxi	16	1-2 times (56)

*note: not mutually exclusive

When students were asked to rate the importance of housing in their decision to enroll in their current institution, 13% indicated housing was not important. However, 12% felt it had some importance, 18% felt it was fairly important, 26% rated housing availability as very important and 30% felt housing availability was extremely important in their decision to enroll in their particular institution. When asked if they considered looking elsewhere (i.e., outside of the lower mainland) 34% indicated they had considered while 64% did not. Therefore, housing was a very important factor, but housing was not found to be something that prevented the majority of students from applying to a post-secondary institution in Vancouver. Table 10 identifies housing considerations that are important to students.

In total, 94% of the respondents indicated that rent and location were their top considerations when looking for accommodations. The condition of the apartment was the third most frequently considered factor (85%) for participants when searching for accommodations. A safe location was considered by 79% of respondents, while 76% considering laundry facilities. University and college students were equally likely to have selected the above factors when looking for accommodations with the exception of the following: laundry hookup, laundry facilities, and children allowed. College students were more likely to consider these three items when searching for accommodations than university students.

Table 10 Considerations for searching for accommodations.

Item(s) considered	"Yes, considered"
Rent	94
Location	94
Condition of apartment	85
Safe location	79
Laundry facilities	76
Number of bedrooms	69
Laundry hookup	49
Children allowed	47
Unfurnished	41
Pets allowed	35
Inside parking	25
Outside parking	21
Furnished	17

Other items were considered less frequently (e.g., < 50% of respondents considered items) (see Table 10) were: laundry hook-up, children allowed, unfurnished, pets allowed, inside parking, outside parking, and furnished. When asked to select from the above items, which item was the most important factor in considering housing: affordability was ranked first by 49% of the respondents, location ranked second (32%), while condition ranked third (28%) paralleling the responses in Table 10. Security and size of apartment ranked fourth and fifth respectively, 34% and 23%. It was found that female participants (85.3%) were more likely to look for safe locations than male participants (69.2%), $\chi^2 = 6.42$, $p = .01$. When comparing responses by male and female participants with respect to factors considered when looking for accommodations, there were no significant differences.

Participants with children were less likely to consider rent and location, and more likely to consider number of bedrooms, unfurnished and children allowed, than participants who did not have children.

Table 11 depicts responses to the question on the participants' satisfaction with four housing factors: size, condition, location and security. For the most part, participants reported that they found these four items to be good.

Table 11 Satisfaction with various housing factors.

	Poor	So/So	Good
Size	18	36	46
Condition	7	35	58
Location	12	23	65
Security	15	27	58

The following quotes by participants were selected as comments related to satisfaction levels with housing factors. The themes of size and security were most frequently referred to.

- *Clean 2 bedrooms for me and my 2 kids.*
- *Due to traffic on main street, there is need for better security services 24/7.*
- *I am fortunate to live on reserve but I know in the city, many Aboriginals are from elsewhere.*
- *I am very fortunate that Luma Native housing helps me, without their help I would live in a crappy place.*
- *I feel unsafe because other tenants who hang around the building (street people) and I think it's unsafe for my two children.*
- *Location is too far from college.*
- *Our family (2 adults and 1 child – 10 years old) live in a 1 bedroom as opposed to two bedroom, due to limited budget.*

Over 60% of the respondents indicated that they had encountered problems finding suitable accommodations. The three most significant problems identified were affordability (45%), location (19%), and condition (10%). Other problems encountered included that children were not permitted, long waitlists, and racism.

Successful strategies for finding accommodations were friends, family and/or personal connections, newspapers, personal perseverance in searching, and local agencies. Only a few participants (n = 8) indicated they had used the internet in their search. When considering the above mentioned housing factors, affordability, location and other major themes emerge for consideration when recruiting students. It is also important to consider how these housing factors come into play when considering retaining students for the duration of their educational program.

Retention: Relationship between housing and educational completion

While less than 3% of respondents indicated that housing was not important in completing their program, more than 95% indicated that housing was of varying degrees of importance, ranging from some importance, very important, to extremely important. Comments related to why respondents felt housing was an important factor in retention were captured in the following themes and quotes:

- Need a place to study, good for studies/concentration, and success in school: N= 43 (24%)
    - *If I cannot find a clean, comfortable, and safe place for me and my child, I may have to move back home before my studies are complete.*
    - *In order to be settled and secure in my studies, I needed to be secure in my housing arrangements.*
- Affordable: N=19 (11%)
    - *If I can't afford to pay rent it means I must quit university and work.*
- Need a safe, healthy environment: N=14 (8%)
    - *Housing – if we don't have a safe, secure, clean and healthy place to live, nothing else will fall into place.*
- Commute/location: N=6 (3%)
    - *Before I had on campus housing, I had a 5 hour commute.*
    - *A good location close to NEC, sky train, buses and shopping. Travel time is important.*
- Family: N=7 (4%)
    - *I feel that my children's school location and where we live is important. I have made sure they have gone to the same school so they will be able to keep some life continuity.*

When asked to rank factors that were most important for completing their studies, 48% of respondents felt finances were the most important factor. **Housing was ranked second (38%)** and the quality of the academic program ranked third (29%). Family support was ranked fourth (25%) and Aboriginal student services was fifth (20%).

When asked about allocating housing exclusively for Aboriginal post-secondary students, over 70% of respondents felt there should be designated housing space for Aboriginal students while 9% felt there should be no special allocation. Those opposed to the idea were concerned that segregation would result in further marginalization or discrimination and they felt all students should be treated the same. Those in favor of an Aboriginal student residence or pre-allocated spaces felt that having a sense of community, a connection to culture and peers would

foster better grades. This report concludes with a scenario of an ideal Aboriginal student housing complex based on the students' suggestions.

These surveys included rich descriptive analyses with respect to housing issues for Aboriginal students attending post-secondary institutions in the B.C. lower mainland. While these surveys included many quantitative or closed ended questions, participants were also invited to respond to open ended questions. These responses required qualitative analysis and will be provided in Part Two of this chapter, along with analysis of other data gathering activities included in this project.

Part Two: Qualitative analysis

A qualitative analysis of the open ended survey questions, student sharing circles, and interviews with post-secondary staff and Native Housing staff is presented in this section. The types of questions asked of each participant group were described in the methodology section.

The wholistic circle was the theoretical framework for the analysis and it was used to identify the major spiritual, emotional, physical, and intellectual factors related to helping or hindering housing experiences of students and staff. Themes were also identified in the relationship circles of the individual, family, and community. The transcripts and field notes of the sharing circles and individual/group interviews comprised the data. Two of the research team members completed an initial analysis of each post-secondary institute using the wholistic circle and brought this analysis to a team meeting for feedback. The two, separately worked on frameworks shared many similarities. The other team members who did not engage in the initial analysis had also been at either the sharing circles and/or interviews, so their perspectives were helpful in validating the conceptual analysis presented by the two team members. The team members recommended a merging of the two analyses and added or clarified factors. After this team meeting, members either completed the Native Housing staff analysis or reviewed the transcripts of the post-secondary institutes to ensure that no pertinent themes were omitted [See Appendix 6- for Institutional analysis].

Returning to the major research question, "What is the role of housing in the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal post-secondary students in the urban city of Vancouver" helped us determine four major themes from the survey and qualitative data analysis: Access, Family Matters, Cultural Relationships, and Community Relationships. These four themes helped us understand the meaning of housing to post-secondary Aboriginal students with respect to recruitment and retentions outcomes. Access to suitable housing was very important for student recruitment and early retention purposes. If one cannot locate affordable and adequate housing then one cannot attend or complete one's studies, or it could become increasingly difficult to attend and complete the program. Housing matters that focused on family, that were culture-friendly and appropriate, and that facilitated a sense of community were important retention factors. Each theme will be discussed below.

A. Access

Access refers to finding and securing housing, which at first influenced recruitment but certainly relates to retention – especially in the early stages of one's post-secondary program. More specifically, access to housing could be considered an important factor throughout one's post-secondary studies as students tend to move frequently, as noted in the data analysis from the

survey. Matters such as personal finances, funding (personal, Band, student loan), affordability, location, and types/adequacy of housing were central to housing access and were either helping or hindering factors. Hindering access issues included racism because students were Aboriginal, had limited funding, were not able to afford safe, secure, family-friendly accommodation, and felt isolated because they missed their extended family and their community. Hindering factors will be discussed first, followed by helpful factors.

Access to housing, viewed from a wholistic framework, may be exemplified by the following successful scenario: a student looks for housing information through web site search, newspapers, and contacts post-secondary student service staff or Native Housing staff (intellectual realm) well before relocating to the city; and is then helped by having sufficient funding to give necessary deposits, (physical realm); and may secure adequate, safe, secure housing that is affordable (physical realm), close to children's school and post-secondary location, which results in ease of anxiety (emotional realm); and if housing allows or facilitates cultural practices or is close to cultural community, spiritual needs (spiritual realm) are soothed. This scenario is ideal and does happen eventually; however, for many it took repeated efforts to find suitable housing that met family, culture, and community needs. The benefit of using a wholistic perspective was to gain a deeper understanding of the complex interrelationships between many factors on many levels. For example, we obtained a better understanding of the importance of particular factors such as funding and then tried to understand the relationship of this factor to others in order to better appreciate the housing/education complexities that post-secondary Aboriginal students encountered. A limitation included definitional or coding issues, such as determining whether an observed factor fits one conceptual realm or another, or more than one, thereby possibly not achieving the greatest appreciation of the complexities of that factor. For example, the aforementioned success scenario placed culture-friendly housing in the spiritual realm but it could have been placed in the physical and emotional realms because it can affect these realms.

Hindering Factors: Limited funding, high rent, lack of family-friendly housing and racism

Factors hindering access for housing included limited funding, high cost of rent, lack of family-friendly housing, and racism. Single women and single female parents gave examples of using most of their band funding for rentals that were safe and adequate for their children. For example, one woman received $1050 per month from band funding and was paying $950 for a two bedroom apartment to be close to her place of study and the children's school. Another woman received $750 per month and was paying $700 for rent in a safe location. Both women supplemented their finances with work, student loan, or used a charge card for expenses. Young single Aboriginal males also experienced racism and ageism. They mentioned not being on anyone's priority list.

Student initiative and networks, Native Housing Societies, post-secondary student service staff, and on-campus housing for the most part, contributed substantially to housing access. Each of these helpful factors will be discussed in more detail because research participants discussed these matters in depth.

Helpful Factor: 1. Student Initiative and Networks

It was found that networks of family and friends helped with housing referrals and basic information for the participants in this study. Some students prepared housing resumes with

personal financial information, former residence reference letters or contact information. There was a discomfort that many felt as indicated in the following quote:

> *Whenever I've gone to look for an apartment to rent, I always feel extra judged and as an Aboriginal person I feel like I have to dress a certain way to look appropriate to fit in. And I feel like I have to prove myself, you know, and that I'm trustworthy and that I'm a good tenant and that I have good references, it feels very humbling.*

Other participants openly displayed confidence in order to portray a positive image: "*Being single makes it easier to rent – we definitely had an easier time renting our suite because we are in our early 20s, single and dressed very nicely – it's image driven*."

Helpful Factor: 2. Role of Native Housing Societies

Native Housing Societies such as Luma Native Housing Society and Vancouver Native Housing Society were identified by students in both surveys and discussion groups as extremely helpful, if students got into them. They often talked about the long wait list, up to two years in some cases and various difficulties of getting into Native housing as hindering factors. Luma Native Housing listed post-secondary students as one of its housing priorities and noted that 30% of their tenants were post-secondary students. Both Native Housing Societies said that they couldn't designate spaces for only post-secondary students because their funding agreements stipulate that those in highest need must be accommodated. However, the staff of these housing societies helped students with housing matters such as completing their applications, liaising with post-secondary institutions, and providing various types of counselling once students became tenants. Both housing societies voiced concern over the lack of housing available for post-secondary students. Vancouver Native Housing had two buildings for single tenants, of which many were post-secondary students. These buildings had a very low turnover rate. Both societies noted that they tried to work with post-secondary students on non-payment of fees due to limited finances or difficulties with band funding. Rather than evict people for non-payment immediately, they worked with the students to find agreeable solutions. They also had "cultural-use" space and programs such as children's' after-school programs. The philosophy and practice of caring for the students are exemplified in the following staff statement:

> *Our first and foremost goal is not the rent; it is their success and their program. We deal with the rental and arrears issues later. We see ourselves as caregivers in that sense. We don't see ourselves as landlords. It is a conflicting view there. It is a conflicting obligation. The government expects us to act as high-handed landlords when people don't pay rent. We on the other hand have a social conscience when people don't pay rent. We are running a social program here. [We are not] that private housing market where people are treated with the 'big stick' when they don't pay rent. So we will carry individuals and have carried them and that led to their successes. We make every effort to accommodate their needs. We make every effort to make them succeed. If it means we say don't worry about it this month you can catch up; the least of your worries right now are your rent. Your biggest stress right now is your exams. Focus on that right now and we will deal with the others. That basically goes to the management style from tenant officers who are promoting the personal development attempts of these*

individuals who are trying to improve their lives. Our Board of Directors has that as a philosophy. I share that as a management style and the staff they are right there. They have an obligation to ensure the success of the individuals.

The Native Housing Societies became an Aboriginal community for post-secondary students. The staff understood the historical, social, economic, political, and cultural matters that impacted students. This same knowledge was shared by participating institutional Aboriginal student service staff.

Helpful Factor: 3. Role of Post-Secondary Student Service Staff

The participating post-secondary institutions had staff designated to help students with housing along with many other student service responsibilities. The staff was Student Service Coordinators (UBC), Aboriginal Coordinators (SFU, BCIT, Langara), Counsellors (NEC), and Registrar (IIG and NEC). These individuals played a key role in advocacy for students with housing on campus and provided information on how and where to look for housing. One of these staff noted the top issues for students when she talked to them during recruitment fairs: "I was a recruiter for a year, the top issue for students living outside Vancouver is housing." Others emphasized the relationship between not having adequate housing and the subsequent stress/anxiety. These staff also believed that their institution could do more to help students.

Housing plays a vital role in education PERIOD! They need a place they can call home. A place they can be at to study. The less anxiety we can put on them, the more successful they will be. Students won't come if there isn't housing. So it is very vital.

What is Maslow's [Hierarchy of Need]? Maybe as an institution [we] really need to look at the importance of housing. And realistically if the students don't have shelter, and hot water and heat, how are they going to be expected to come into classes every day and be rested, be clean and alert to learn.

The student service staff all said that if their post-secondary institute had single and family housing (or more of it), that more students would apply and enroll.

Helpful Factor: 4. Role of on-campus housing

Four of the participating post-secondary institutions offered some form of student housing on or connected to their campus: UBC, SFU, BCIT and Langara. Allocations of housing to Aboriginal students were offered by UBC, which designated 50 single student spaces for Aboriginal students and SFU, with 10 designated family housing units. Aboriginal students also applied for single and family residences that were not part of the allocated housing, at both universities. Langara and BICT had single student housing, but they did not have designated housing for Aboriginal students. BCIT residence was on campus while Langara student housing was located off-campus. Generally, the students valued the housing accommodation. One student service staff noted that younger Aboriginal students voiced concern that they would experience isolation and might not make new friends while attending a huge university campus and were relieved to know that spaces were set aside for single students. They viewed student residences as an opportunity to make friends. Once in residence some students left because they were not comfortable with the "drinking and partying" that occurred. They also talked about the issues resulting from different worldviews between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students. There was

no easy way to practice "smudging" without others thinking that "pot" was being smoked. Some of the residences were very affordable and were important for retention as exemplified in this quote:

> *I just got into the [post-secondary institute]. And it is subsidized housing for students. We have to share with a whole bunch of people but I can focus on my studies now because my rent is like $300 a month. And I don't have to freak out every month and [wonder] how am I going to cover my rent? How am I going to cover my utilities? I know that as long as I am a student, I am ok there. And that totally takes a huge amount of stress off.*

The lack of family housing was a concern for all the institutions. At UBC in particular, students had a one to two year waiting list for on-campus family housing; therefore they had to do much advance planning if they wanted to live in such accommodations.

B. Family Matters

Family is the most important factor for single parents, two-parent families and extended family. We found that individuals who had spouses and children/dependents put the needs of their family above their own individual needs. One father said that he decided to live in Vancouver rather than live further outside the city, even though it was more expensive, because his children had made friends and he didn't want to relocate them and have them experience the stress of moving and finding new friends.

Hindering Factors: Lack of support for single mothers and extended family

Single mothers and families with children were the group most often identified as having more problems with finding suitable housing. The following experiences illustrate their difficulties with having limited finances:

> *We have single moms [who face] big problems: just finding housing that they can afford. And when they can afford it, most often they are in areas that cause difficulties - high crime areas. I have had students say they have to keep their kids inside all the time. They don't want them to play outside. Or they have to set up special things with neighbours because they are afraid for their kids to be outside or on their own. Not being able to afford housing and going into areas they really don't want to be. I find a lot of single moms I have talked to have more then two kids. There may be three or four kids and they are living in a one bedroom, or a two bedroom, and that is very difficult (Student service staff).*

> *When I moved to Vancouver from [a northern community], a landlord turned me away because he did not want to rent to my teenage daughter. So we had to find…I mean we kept looking and we were successful, but we ended up moving every year for the five years that I was in undergrad. So it was quite a horrendous experience. Really, really, difficult finding suitable, affordable housing, housing for family (Single mother).*

Due to no housing available, I was forced to stay in a hostel, then a hotel, and as a result I had to send my daughter back to live with my parents. I had no support and ended up failing (Single mother).

Parents also discussed the many issues that arose with their children, such as not being allowed to rent on second or higher floors because of the noise children make. Students experienced problems related to their changing family dynamics that occurred during an academic year. For example, grandparents came to help look after the grandchildren or a niece came to stay for a few months, marriages collapsed or new partnerships formed. The extended family is an important part of Aboriginal cultures. Some students voiced concern about the possibility of being "kicked out" because their family members were staying with them. They also felt that housing policies and regulations were often not flexible enough to accommodate this important cultural dynamic of the extended family. Students who experienced difficulties with housing personnel wished that they had a mechanism such as an advocate or appeal committee where their cultural and social concerns could be considered.

Helpful factors: On campus family residence

Family residence was provided on campus at UBC and SFU. For the most part, participants found this housing helpful. Some parents indicated that being on campus eased their anxiety about having safe and adequate conditions and that they could easily use the campus library and study facilities on evenings and weekends. Living on campus also reduced transportation costs. While UBC does have reserved spaces in single-student housing for Aboriginal students, there was no such practice in its family units. Research participants felt that this was one area that needed more priority because the majority of Aboriginal students who attend university are older and have family. At SFU there were 10 family spaces designated for Aboriginal students but they were not fully utilized. Issues of affordability, housing not being close to schools for children, or lack of communication to eligible students were some reasons given for not full utilization of these services.

C. Cultural Relationships

The term, 'culture' is used to indicate a complete way of living that is based on traditional cultural values and worldview. In this study students identified cultural considerations and relationships to culture, as a basic need. The most difficult hindering factor in meeting cultural needs was racism. Conversely, the most helpful factor was having a physical space in their accommodation or nearby, to practice cultural ceremony and participate in cultural activities, which had a positive impact upon their feelings of connectedness to Aboriginal culture, and ultimately positively impacted their learning.

Hindering factor of racism

Students at all participating post-secondary institutions mentioned experiences of racism because of their Aboriginal-ness. Being turned away once landlords saw the student, even though he/she had said there was a vacancy was the most cited example. Here is an example of an overt form of racism: "I have a roommate who thinks all Indians are drunks and get free rides." Even though the discussion about racism is short; its impact is cogent, hurtful, and lingers. Students who dressed up for interviews and who exuded a positive image when interviewed for housing

mentioned that they felt that they might not get accepted because they were Aboriginal. There is also that underlying feeling.

Helpful factors: Physical space for culture and ceremony

Many students practiced various forms of ceremony and they needed to have a physical space that accommodated smudging (and other ceremonies), singing, and drumming. At UBC, the students had the First Nations Longhouse that provided many cultural activities and ceremonies. Parents also appreciated having organizations such as the Surrey Aboriginal Culture Society that provided after school cultural programs where their children were picked up and brought to sporting and cultural activities: "I think that is really good because it instills part of their cultural identity. And [the programs] build some support for them in the community too. And that is really important for the children to have that connection to the community and their family" (Student service staff).

Diversity among Aboriginal peoples can create conflicts in housing complexes. However, Native Housing Societies and Aboriginal staff helped solve these differences. The next quote also illustrates the difficulty Aboriginal people have practicing cultural ceremony in predominantly non-Aboriginal units.

> *Yes, Aboriginal people have different ways of life, they don't need to explain the smell of sweet grass to other Aboriginal neighbours. We make every effort to accommodate one another. That is one where we argue against shared accommodations with non-Aboriginal social housing providers. It is those incidents that cause bad conflict with culture. Even in our own community we find that not everybody practices the same tradition and custom. Burning sweet grass and the same with sage, it can be very offensive for some people. Burning cedar for some people is offensive. We try to make every effort to accommodate specific needs. We do a lot of counselling and education for people, making them understand that these are specific rights for individuals that they will take with them wherever they go. They have the right to practice them. And we make every effort to accommodate that. In non-Native projects there is no tolerance for those kinds of things. It is looked at in a pretty negative way (Native housing staff).*

D. Community Relationships

The concept of 'community' stems from the importance of family and culture. Students discussed the importance of belongingness, connectedness, networking, and relationships to and with other Aboriginal people who shared similar worldviews and experiences of completing post-secondary studies. Community connectedness was critical for retention. Students who moved from rural areas especially needed and wanted to feel a part of a community as indicated in this statement: "For a lot of Aboriginal people coming to a university is so much about doing something for their community, and if you can create something of their community while they're here, then we're going to keep them" (Student service staff).

Another student service staff illustrates the difficulties that students moving to an urban area experience trying to develop belongingness to a community:

> *Coming from a small community and being more community oriented in terms of the community forming the activities that you do everyday…and how you interact with*

people…then coming into the big city where none of those connections and interconnections exists [is significant]. Having to build that from scratch when you never had to do that before…when that has been in existence since the day you were born. Whether or not those connections were good or not, they existed, and that web and environment was built for you. That does not exist here. So when they come that sense of community and communal knowledge about who is in the community, about what is going on, about where things are safe and where things aren't: it just does not exist. So they have to build that for themselves. Generally, with the students at this school, I don't necessarily see that happening in terms of where they are being housed. I see a lot of students moving a lot of times while they are in school.

Hindering Factors: high rental costs and lack of affordable housing

Students with families, who come from rural communities, found the high cost and smaller size (of what they could afford) of accommodation contributed to making the transition to Vancouver and their post-secondary program even more challenging. One student who moved into the city from a rural area had a family but they stayed in their home community for a year before joining their family member. The high cost of rent and lack of affordable accommodation resulted in this experience:

In my first semester…I don't mind talking about this: where I'd lived in a common room, and I showered in the gym, and I was here five days a week and I slept on a couch….We've had three students do that so far. And all of them came into the situation where either their Band funding or their student loan money ran out. They can't find a job, and they have a month left of classes, and there's no option. And if you want to stay in then you end up sleeping on a couch. For me that was difficult because it was my first semester and I wasn't sure at that time if I was able to get a degree. You have self doubt. It was a hard period for me. Probably four or five students I've known…actually dropped out because of housing issues, and that's in my two years here.

Student service staff played a critical role in helping students by giving them pertinent information and guiding them to safe and culturally relevant communities:

Not knowing the city. Not knowing where to start. Not knowing where to go. A lot of [students] will say to me "Is this a safe area?" And then they will describe an area to me or what they have heard. So we talk through [these matters]. How close you want to be to the school. What safe areas are, and what kind of communities are around. You know in East Vancouver and West Vancouver: so giving them an idea of the lay of the land. Not so much physically, but in the sense of community. And that is really important because when they come to the city often I find that the students are, if they have never been to the city before, or if they have been here once or twice on visits but never stayed here for any amount of time, and if they are younger, they really don't have a sense of what is ok, and what's not. So housing is key to them being stable and safe, and making it through school. Absolutely! I can't think of anything that is more key for them finishing then to have stable housing. I have seen students flip from place to place to place. Inevitably what happens is they stop coming to school, or stop coming regularly. So housing again, it is pretty key. To feel that housing is connected to some kind

of community in some way [is important]. That it is not just about here at the school.

These last two quotes sum up succinctly the importance of stable, affordable housing and the importance of belonging to a cultural community for retention purposes.

I can't think of anything really that is more important than decent, stable, affordable housing. In my experience, successful Aboriginal students have a lot of troubles as it is. In terms of funding. In terms of making it through school. In terms of other challenges that come up. And if they have housing that is stable and affordable, then they are going to have a better chance of making it through all these other things that come up. And of course there is that connection to other things going on in the community that keep them going. Family night at the Friendship Centre. You know ceremonies that happen in the community or maybe going to a sweat on the North Shore or other cultural activities that help people to feel connected and rounded. And that is really key (Student service staff).

We find that individuals are quite happy living in our projects, away from the institutions. It is a break for them. They don't feel like they are there 24 hours at school. They get a break, they come into a community. We create a community environment for them. They are with their own community. They are with people who support them, and make every effort to accommodate their goals and desires (Native Housing staff).

Helpful Factors: Caring landlords and being near and with Aboriginal people

Helpful community factors included landlords of colour, living close to a reserve, participating in Aboriginal community activities like "West coast Night" at the Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre, and living in a housing complex with other Aboriginal peoples such as in Native Housing, or on campus in family residence. Students gave examples of Asian and Indian landlords who helped students by giving them some home furnishings and who demonstrated empathy toward students as this quote shows: "The [Indian] landlords were really helpful when we moved [to Surrey]. We had nothing. We just had the coat on our back and they gave us a TV, a microwave, and stuff. They were helpful in that way because they know how it is to be poor, right. Just start off from scratch." Some students chose to live either on or close to an urban reserve, to feel close or connected to a First Nations community. One parent moved her child from a predominantly non-Native childcare to a childcare on the reserve because her child wasn't happy. At the reserve childcare this child felt comfortable and the parent valued the sense of community and family support. The Vancouver Friendship Centre was an important gathering place that offered various community oriented services and programs. Each Wednesday evening, one of the First Nations West coast groups hosted an evening of dinner, singing, and dancing. Anyone interested in this type of event was welcomed. Students who lived in Native Housing mentioned the feeling of comfort from living in a complex with other Aboriginal people.

CONCLUSION: DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following discussion addresses the research questions that formed this study. It identifies important factors and considerations that have been identified in the literature and from feedback received from the surveys, student sharing circles, and post-secondary student service and Native Housing staff interviews that may potentially assist in successful completion of post-secondary studies for Aboriginal students living in a large city. The discussion below also contains suggestions that may inform existing or future housing policies and programs for post-secondary Aboriginal students and identifies future research.

The first question addressed the role of housing in the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal students attending college and university in a large city. It was evident that housing played a key role in the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal students attending college and university in the Vancouver area, particularly as they discussed the need for safe, adequate, and affordable housing. More than 95% of the students surveyed indicated that housing was of varying degrees of importance to their decision to enroll in a particular institution, ranging from some importance, very important, to extremely important, giving consideration to rental costs, location, condition of the accommodation, and safety as priorities in their search for housing. One student in the sharing circle emphasized the role of housing in the comment, "It is so crucial. I'd stay in any house. I don't' care about the sanitation, as long as I got a roof, bed, blanket and bathtub. As long as I got that, I know I can concentrate in school" (Native Education Sharing Circle). Students expended much time and energy accessing adequate housing. They often talked about the high stress and anxiety levels they experienced during their housing search, which ultimately impacted their academic studies.

Given the significance of housing to the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal post-secondary students, helping students prepare and plan for their move to university and college may very well contribute to their academic success. Housing availability and issues related to accessibility and maintenance were key issues in their search. Many Aboriginal communities have education co-coordinators that could help students plan for their move if universities and colleges and Aboriginal communities could liaise with one another with the goal of providing students with housing information. Their plan could also include researching resources, whereby students utilize internet resources, make calls prior to their arrival, access newspapers or rental information, contact Native housing authorities, and post-secondary student services staff. Encouraging advanced planning could contribute to successful experiences finding and retaining housing.

In this study, successful strategies identified for finding accommodations were communication with friends, family and/or personal connections, newspapers, personal perseverance in searching, and local agencies. Arriving in an urban setting can be an overwhelming experience. Aboriginal communities could provide a student travel allowance that would enable students to come prior to beginning their studies to begin to seek out appropriate accommodations, allowing them to make contact with agencies and network with friends, family and/or personal connections, and familiarizing themselves with city life. Also, Aboriginal communities could establish orientation sessions, whereby students who have attended post-

secondary programs in an urban setting could present relevant information and share experiences with students preparing to embark on post-secondary education for the first time.

A further move that could be made by Aboriginal communities or tribal organizations is a rental investment in urban settings where housing units were made available to Aboriginal post-secondary students from their community. This housing could also be made available to other eligible Aboriginal students.

Native housing authorities provide another housing option for students in urban settings. Students reported long wait lists associated with the large numbers of urban Aboriginal people accessing housing units and the lack of turn over in the units. Students compete with all other applicants based on the same needs' priorities. Students need to be made aware this is a housing option, with specific numbers of rental units set aside for Aboriginal post-secondary students and families, ensuring they apply immediately.

The second question posed in the research was: what are the problems and successes that Aboriginal students face with housing in contexts of on campus single residence, on campus family residence, off campus rentals, off campus in Native Housing or other settings? Aboriginal post-secondary students faced numerous challenges in finding suitable accommodations. The survey noted that affordability, location, and the condition of the accommodations were significant for over 60% of the respondents. Other problems students reported were encounters with racism, long wait lists, and children not permitted in the accommodation. When ranking the most important factors to completing their studies, nearly 50% of respondents ranked finances as the most significant factor, followed by 38% of respondents indicating housing as a factor. There may be a relationship between finances and housing as students indicated in sharing circles the need to standardize post-secondary allowances to reflect the cost of living in particular urban centers, such as Vancouver, where rental costs are higher than smaller towns or cities. Given the urgent need to increase access to post-secondary education for Aboriginal students, it is important to reduce the number of barriers to schooling, such as providing for adequate and affordable housing.

Students reported incidences of racism and discrimination while either seeking housing or in their current living arrangements. For example, one student reported in one of the focus groups sessions, "It is easier dealing with people of color than white people – if the landlord is Asian, I feel more comfortable on that level, not kinship, but easier" (Simon Fraser University sharing circle). Other students reported being turned away from rental accommodations based on their Aboriginal identity. As one woman stated, "I felt very much like because I was a young native single mom, a lot of places turned me away" (Native Education Center sharing circle). Young Aboriginal male students also experienced discrimination. It might be helpful for students to come prepared to interviews with a *housing resume*, which lists contacts and references, income availability, school and program of study.

Finding support among other Aboriginal students could help post-secondary students deal with the challenges they face. Once they arrive at their new location, it could be helpful to immediately establish rapport with other Aboriginal students to discuss issues related to housing. Whether in residence, city rental suites, or in Native housing accommodations, students could establish a housing circle, which is a network of support where they could obtain information about housing or help one another in emergency situations.

While Aboriginal students faced many challenges with housing, they also reported some successes in accessing and maintaining living accommodations suitable to their needs. Native Housing authorities, such as Luma Native Housing Society and the Vancouver Native Housing Society, were identified by students in both surveys and discussion groups as extremely helpful, if students were able to secure housing with these organizations. Many students indicated they were familiar with the Aboriginal housing authorities and some of the students reported living in accommodations provided by them.

Those students who found accommodation with Native Housing authorities found the intervention approach to dealing with tenancy issues that these organizations take very helpful. For example, they assisted tenants with planning their finances to account for rental payments. Students who found that their funding did not come at the beginning of the month were able to make arrangements for payments to be received at another time in the month. There was also cultural space available at rental locations, which housed family programs. It was evident that the Native Housing Authorities interviewed in this study were sensitive to the historical, social, economical, political, and cultural matters related to students' lives.

The third research question was aimed at identifying particular housing or student support services that helped increase retention of Aboriginal students. Making a difference for students dealing with housing issues were post-secondary student service staff, generally identified as Aboriginal coordinators, counselors, or registrar support. These individuals were responsible for providing information to Aboriginal students and helping them address any housing related issues. Support staff were familiar with the myriad of issues that confronted students and were in a position to advocate for students, particularly at their post-secondary institutions. To increase the range of support staff and resources available to Aboriginal post-secondary students, universities and colleges could increase institutional infrastructure to compile housing resources, such as a website or handbook with information regarding affordable housing. Since many students seemed unaware of the range of services and supports for housing available to them, institutions could explore effective means of making housing information available to students. At the onset of this study, a research and information housing website was developed. This web site might be built upon and maintained by one or more post-secondary institutions participating in this research.

Extending university and college relationships into the community continues to build the networks of support for Aboriginal post-secondary students. Universities and colleges could improve communications with Native housing authorities regarding housing options and availability for Aboriginal students. There could even be collaboration to provide off-campus housing arrangements for Aboriginal post-secondary students.

Providing opportunities for Aboriginal student representation on decision-making bodies, whether at post-secondary institutions or within Aboriginal housing authorities, could provide new perspectives on urban Aboriginal housing or Aboriginal student housing policies and services. For example, universities and colleges could create a housing Ombudsperson position, whereby Aboriginal students could present their housing concerns and suggestions. In sharing circles, students expressed the need for flexible policies that reflected the unique aspects of their lives, where they may have family visit them for longer stays than allowed by current regulations or living arrangements that fall outside the norm of the nuclear family. If students participated in decision-making processes, they would have input into alternative solutions that could mean

extending the length of stays allowed by family members or providing space that family or visitors might use in their stay. This might be particularly helpful when new non-profit or co-operative housing and residence initiatives are being considered. Students could speak to housing arrangements that meet their cultural, familial, and academic needs.

To address incidences of racism and discrimination experienced by Aboriginal students, universities and institutions could provide cross-cultural training for students, staff, and administration supporting Aboriginal students in campus residences. Information about Aboriginal cultures and traditions could form part of any training experience. Processes for dealing with discrimination and racism could be made explicit to students and staff in residences.

The fourth research question asked participants to plan an ideal housing complex for Aboriginal students attending college and university in a large city. This raised further questions for discussion which included: What physical and cultural features would be ideal? How would such a complex be managed? How would such a complex promote sense of community? How would such a complex address particular needs of women and children, single students, and families? In the survey, we first asked students "Do you think designated/pre-allocated space for Aboriginal students is necessary on campus?" In total, 70% of the students indicated that there should be housing exclusively for Aboriginal post-secondary students. In follow-up sharing circles students were asked to describe their ideal housing situation, taking into account physical and cultural features, management and operations, and particular needs of students. Within the wholistic framework that grounds this study, suggestions students made for the ideal housing complex can be positioned in the following manner: circles of relationships among individual, family, and community and relationships among the development realms of spiritual, emotional, physical, and intellectual. The emphasis in this next part of the discussion is on relationship. The research themes of family matters, cultural relationships, and community relationships are prevalent in the ideal housing factors.

Circles of Individual, Family, and Community

Individual: Students have specific housing needs related directly to their studies. There was a desire to have some study space for parents/students with computers and internet access. Ensuring that the complex was friendly to single students suggested the need to recognize that single Aboriginal students felt isolated and lonely during the completion of their studies and that being part of a housing complex where they developed extended family and a network of relationships was important. This finding is consistent with DeGagne's (2002) thesis, where successful Aboriginal post-secondary students found friendships important.

Family: Aboriginal students articulated the importance of family and being able to accommodate visiting and extended family in their living arrangements. Native housing authorities indicated that they hold to policies that allow for limited stay of families, which they recognize does not always reflect the reality of the lives of Aboriginal families/students residing in their housing. Students would like to see alternative spaces that family or visitors might use that are affordable. Any residential space for students should have family-oriented areas, with safe recreation and play space available and affordable child care close by.

Community: Contributing to the community spirit and values of the Aboriginal community are Elders. Three of the sharing circles expressed how important contact with Elders and their support was in their studies. Universities and colleges providing on-campus accommodations

should allow for students to find themselves within a range of options that include single spaces, shared accommodations, multi-grouping living arrangements, and family housing, where Elders would be present. For example, the University of British Columbia has two residential colleges where faculty may live and/or eat with students. A similar residential college could include Elders in the same capacity.

Another way of viewing the ideal housing complex is from spiritual, emotional, physical, and intellectual realms.

Spiritual: It was evident that Aboriginal students place importance on aspects of culture in their living arrangements. They expressed the need to participate in cultural practices and traditions in a safe and respectful environment. They suggested that residences and living arrangements include space for Aboriginal student to engage in cultural practices or ceremonies that are inclusive of family, community members, and Elders. Cultural programs could also support students and may include Aboriginal family night, Aboriginal study groups, Elder's programs and cultural programming for children.

Emotional: Students' need for multipurpose space with support for social, academic, and cultural programs fulfilled the emotional dimension. Further, several students in sharing circles expressed that policies be developed that would make specific residences or accommodations alcohol and drug free.

Physical: Accommodations need to support a range of living arrangements in which students find themselves. Access to services and supports, like an on-site health unit and facilities for various supports groups would contribute to an ideal housing complex. Other aspects to the physical dimension included green/gardening space and fitness room.

Intellectual: Specific study space, whether in a common room or within their own living space was significant to their studies. Consideration would need to be given to natural lighting, sound proofing, and access to computers and internet access. An ideal situation would allow for students to be represented on governance decision-making bodies of the housing complex.

The final question in this research identified similarities and differences among Aboriginal students attending institutions that provided different levels of post-secondary education (i.e., upgrading to college, college and technical diploma, university degree) regarding their housing needs. The most notable differences among Aboriginal students attending institutions that provided different levels of post-secondary education and their housing needs was observed among students with dependents and between university and college students. While a majority of students reported being single, 52 % of the total participants reported they had dependents. Certainly, students with dependents faced additional financial, emotional, and academic strains. For example, students without dependents were more likely to indicate their rent was reasonable than students with dependents. Students with dependents also found rent cost to be higher than those without dependents. Supports for Aboriginal students with children or extended family would be helpful to their success. As previously mentioned, supports might include programs for family, study space and access to computers, health services, and daycare.

Differences were also observed between students attending universities and students attending colleges. University students were more likely to have access to on-campus accommodations, with the exception of the BC Institute of Technology, which has on-campus

residences. University housing and Native housing authorities provided single and family units. There is a need for closer examination of housing models that support Aboriginal post-secondary students. To look more closely at relevant issues and particular needs of various Aboriginal student populations (e.g., single vs. family, college vs. university, male vs. female) and issues related to access and retaining housing and appropriate models calls for continued research. Future research could even look at major urban centers with comparisons made to smaller rural communities.

Concluding Comments

The guiding principles of respect, responsibility, relevance, and reciprocity and the wholistic analytical framework used in this study reflect Indigenous ways of making sense of the world. This example of Indigenous methodology formed our understandings about the meaning of housing to Aboriginal students attending post-secondary studies. We shared our research approach so that others can adapt and improve upon it.

The increasing numbers of Aboriginal post-secondary students attending programs at universities, colleges, and institutes in large urban centres will have significant impact upon housing and Aboriginal students will continue to face many housing barriers. This research identified helping and hindering factors related to housing access, family matters, cultural relationships and community relationships. The research focus on Canadian Aboriginal post-secondary students' urban housing experiences had not been done at the time of our study. Our research contribution is an important starting point, but it is only a beginning to a topic that needs further examination as noted in the discussion section.

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APPENDICIES

Project Recruitment Letters sent to Institutions

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Department of Educational Studies
Mailing address:
2125 Main Mall
Vancouver, B.C. Canada V6T 1Z4

Tel: 604-822-5374
Fax: 604-822-4244
http://www.edst.educ.ubc.ca

[Date]

[Name]
[Title and address] 6T 1Z2

Dear [name],

Re: Research project: The role of housing in the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal post-secondary students.

Greetings. We are conducting a research project that examines the role of housing in the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal students attending post-secondary institutions in the Vancouver area. We work with Aboriginal students at the University of British Columbia. I, Jo-ann Archibald, am from the Sto:lo Nation and teach in the Faculty of Education and Jan Hare is Anishnabe and teaches First Nations Studies in the Faculty of Arts. There is a paucity of research that focuses on Aboriginal post-secondary student housing at the present time. We hope that our research will provide some useful information to help Aboriginal students, colleges, universities, governments, and Aboriginal organizations/communities develop coping strategies, housing policies, funding, and services. This research will also help those of us who provide services to Aboriginal students better understand their housing needs, and issues they face with finding and maintaining appropriate housing while they complete their post-secondary program.

We are seeking permission to conduct this research with Aboriginal student volunteers associated with the [name of institution]. The methods include individual interviews, group discussions, and a questionnaire. The interviews will be held at [name of institution] or another [name] location. We would also like to interview staff that provide student services to Aboriginal students. Attached are copies of the letters requesting informed consent, a sample of the questionnaire and interview questions, for your information.

We seek the assistance of a [institution] staff member who works with Aboriginal students to communicate this research project and to help us distribute letters of informed consent and the questionnaire. We will have UBC student researchers assist with the communication activity.

If [name of institution] agrees to participate in this research project, please send me a letter stating that consent and indicating that space for individual interviews will be provided if necessary. We require this consent letter for the UBC Ethics process. If you require more information or documentation, please contact me via email: jo-ann.archibald@ubc.ca

Respectfully,

Jo-ann Archibald, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Educational Studies.

Jan Hare, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
First Nations Studies.

Cover Letter & Survey

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Department of Educational Studies
Mailing address:
2125 Main Mall
Vancouver, B.C. Canada V6T 1Z4

Tel: 604-822-5374
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September 2003

ABORIGINAL HOUSING RESEARCH PROJECT

Dear Aboriginal Student,

Greetings. We are conducting a research project that examines the role of housing in the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal students attending post-secondary institutions in the Lower mainland area. I am from the Sto:lo Nation and teach in the Faculty of Education and Jan Hare is Anishanabe and teaches First Nations Studies in the Faculty of Arts. There seems to be no studies that focus on Aboriginal post-secondary student housing at the present time and we feel that it is an important factor that needs further consideration in order for colleges, universities, governments and Aboriginal organizations/communities to provide appropriate housing policies, funding, and initiatives for Aboriginal post-secondary students.

We are interested in knowing about your experiences (problems and successes) with acquiring housing; how important housing was to your decision to attend a post-secondary program in a large urban city; and how important housing is to helping you complete your post-secondary studies. Your input will help provide recommendations that we can make to colleges/universities, government departments, such as Indian & Northern Affairs and Canada Mortgage Housing, Bands, and Aboriginal organizations such as Native Housing to better meet the housing needs of Aboriginal students attending post-secondary education in large urban settings.

We are asking you to complete the attached questionnaire, which should take approximately 30 minutes to complete. You have the right to not answer any question and to withdraw from

completing the questionnaire at any time. Your participation is not connected to your academic standing or program in anyway. All information gathered from the questionnaire will be coded, which assures your anonymity, and the data kept in a locked office and password protected on a computer hard drive. Once you have completed the questionnaire, please put it in the provided drop box or return it to the designated First Nations Coordinator for your institution.

If you have any concerns about your rights or treatment as a research participant, please contact the Research Study Help Line in the UBC Office of Research Services at 604-822-8598. If you have any questions about this project, please contact me, Jo-ann Archibald at 604-822-5286 or email at jo-ann.archibald@ubc.ca.

Thank you for helping us with this important research project.

Respectfully,

Jo-ann Archibald, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Educational Studies

Jan Hare, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
Faculty of Arts

AHRP Survey Instrument

Housing Experiences of Aboriginal Students

Section A: Your experiences in finding accommodations

1. Did you move to the Vancouver area to attend post-secondary education?
- a. Yes ❒
- b. No ❒

2. If yes, where did you move from (town/city, province)? _____

3. How long have you lived in the Vancouver area (months)? _____

4. Please indicate which of the housing situations you currently live in (check only one):
- a. Rental apartment ❒
- b. Rental townhouse/home ❒
- c. Rental room ❒
- d. College/university student housing ❒
- e. Own my apartment/condo ❒
- f. Own my townhouse/house ❒
- g. Native housing complex ❒
  - i. Single unit ❒
  - ii. Family unit ❒
- h. Don't rent or own, live with family ❒
- i. Other ❒

  Please explain _____

5. Aside from yourself, how many others live with you (including children)? _____

6. In the past 12 months, how many times have you moved? _____

7. Which of the following factors are most important to you in selecting housing? Rank in order of priority with 1 being most important.
- a. Size ___
- b. Affordability ___
- c. Location ___
- d. Condition ___
- e. Security ___
- f. Other ___
  - i. Please specify _____

Please comment on any of these factors.

_____

_____

8. With regard to your current living situation, please indicate your satisfaction with the following housing conditions in your current living situation.

	Good	So/So	Poor
a. Size	❒	❒	❒
b. Condition	❒	❒	❒
c. Location	❒	❒	❒
d. Security	❒	❒	❒

e. Please comment on any of the conditions mention in **question 8**.

_____

_____

9. If you rent, how much do you pay per month? _____

10. If you rent, do you consider your rent reasonable?

a. Yes ❒

b. No ❒

c. Please explain why/why not,

_____

_____

11. Do you commute to school? Please check the appropriate response. If yes, please indicate how many times a week you use this type of transportation.

	Yes	No	1-2times/wk	3-5times/wk	6-7times/wk
a. Bus	❒	❒	if yes ❒	❒	❒
b. Bicycle	❒	❒	if yes ❒	❒	❒
c. Drive own car	❒	❒	if yes ❒	❒	❒
d. Taxi	❒	❒	if yes ❒	❒	❒
e. Skytrain	❒	❒	if yes ❒	❒	❒
f. Walk	❒	❒	if yes ❒	❒	❒

12. Rate the importance of housing availability in your decision to enroll in your post-secondary program?

a. No importance ❒

b. Some importance ❒

c. Fairly important ❒

d. Very important ❒

e. Extremely important ❒

13. Did you encounter any problems in finding suitable accommodations?

a. Yes ❒

b. No ❒

14. If yes, what problems did you encounter in finding housing in the Vancouver area?

_____

_____

_____

15. Did you consider looking elsewhere? (e.g., Richmond, Surrey)

a. Yes ❒

b. No ❒

(continue to next page ☞)

16. Please indicate things you look for when searching for accommodations (check all that apply)

a. Rent ❒
b. Location ❒
c. Number of bedrooms ❒
d. Furnished ❒
e. Unfurnished ❒
f. Inside parking ❒
g. Outside parking ❒
h. Laundry hookup ❒
i. Laundry facilities ❒
j. Safe location ❒
k. Condition of apartment (e.g., good insulation, clean carpets, etc) ❒
l. Children allowed ❒
m. Pets allowed ❒

17. Which of these items listed in Q.16 are the most important to you? (please indicate letter) _____

18. Do you think designated/pre-allocated spaces for Aboriginal students is necessary on campus? Please explain.

_____
_____
_____

19. a. What are the three most significant problems that you feel Aboriginal post-secondary students face in finding housing in the Vancouver area?

i) _____
ii) _____
iii) _____

b. Please comment on why these problems are a concern?

_____
_____
_____

c. What helped you with finding housing in the Vancouver area?

_____
_____
_____

20. Rate the importance of housing in helping you continue or complete your program of studies:

a. No importance ❒
b. Some importance ❒
c. Fairly important ❒
d. Very important ❒
e. Extremely important ❒

Please comment on your rating

_____

_____

_____

21. Rank the importance of the following factors that help you continue or complete your program of study, with 1 being most important:

a. Housing ..... ___
b. Finances ..... ___
c. Quality of your academic program ..... ___
d. Aboriginal student services ..... ___
e. Family support ..... ___
f. Aboriginal faculty ..... ___
g. Peer support ..... ___
h. Other (please specify) ..... ___

Please comment on any of these factors (from Q.21)

_____
____

_____
_____

_____
_____

22. a. What recommendations would you make to colleges and universities regarding housing for Aboriginal students?

_____
_____
_____

b. Are there any cultural matters that they should consider?

_____
_____
_____

23. What recommendations would you make to Aboriginal bands/organizations concerning housing for Aboriginal post-secondary students?

_____
_____
_____

24. What recommendations would you make to federal government departments like Indian Affairs or Canada Mortgage Housing regarding housing for Aboriginal post-secondary students?

_____
_____
_____

Section B: Demographics

The following questions have been asked so we can describe respondents of the survey. Your confidentiality will be honored and respected.

1. **Are you:**
   a. Female ..... ❒
   b. Male..... ❒

2. **Year of birth?** _____

3. **What is your Aboriginal ancestry?** _____

4. **Are you (check one):**
   i. Single ..... ❒
   ii. Married/ In partnership ..... ❒
   iii. Divorced..... ❒
   iv. Widowed..... ❒

5. **a. Do you have any children/dependents?**
   i. Yes..... ❒
   ii. No ..... ❒
   b. If yes, how many? _____
   c. Please state their ages:_____

6. **Which post-secondary institution are you attending?** _____

7. **Which program and year are you enrolled in?** _____

8. **Please feel free to add any other comments about the role of housing in the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal post-secondary students in the space below.**

_____
_____
_____
_____

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Thank you for completing the questionnaire!

Your opinion and experiences are critical to the success of this research project.

After we have collected the surveys and conducted an initial analysis, we will invite students to a **Sharing Circle** to discuss the findings. We will discuss the problems and possible solutions to the housing issues Aboriginal students face while attending post-secondary programs in the Lower Mainland.

If you are interested in volunteering as a participant in the Sharing Circle please fill out the form below. The Sharing Circle will take no more than 2 hours of your time and will be held at your institution.

Submitting this form is voluntary, it does not obligate you to participate in the Sharing Circle. All information shared will remain confidential and only the researchers will have access to it.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

❒ YES, I am interested in being contacted about the Sharing Circle.

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

ABORIGINAL HOUSING RESEARCH PROJECT

Thank you for completing the questionnaire!

Your opinion and experiences are a critical to the success of this research project.

Later in the semester, once we have collected the surveys and conduct initial analysis, we will be inviting students to a **Sharing Circle** to discuss the findings and to further explore the topic and possible solutions to the housing issues Aboriginal students are facing in the Lower Mainland.

If you are interested in learning more about the Sharing Circle and possibly participating to fill out the form below. The Sharing Circle will take no more than 2hours of your time and will be scheduled at your convenience and held at your institution. A small gift of thanks will be given to each student who participates in the Sharing Circle.

Submitting this form is voluntary, it does not obligate you to participate in the Sharing Circle. All information shared will remain confidential and only the researchers will have access to it.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

❒ YES, I am interested in being contacted about the Sharing Circle.

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Visit Our Website to Learn More!!

http://www.educ.ubc.ca/research/ahrp

ABORIGINAL HOUSING RESEARCH PROJECT

Sharing Circle Script

SHARING CIRCLE SCHEDULE

Group Discussion

1) Once in the Vancouver area, what can you recall about your housing search?
   a) What are the most vivid memories you have about finding housing? Think about the problems and successes. How were these overcome or helpful?
   b) What helped you find housing? (e.g., identify sources of support)

2) What role has housing played in helping you continue or complete your program of studies?

3) What are the cultural considerations that are important to you in finding or keeping housing? (e.g., extended family care responsibilities) Please explain

4) What would an ideal housing situation be like/look like for post-secondary Aboriginal students in a city like Vancouver? Is there a need for any particular services or programs associated with a housing complex? What cultural considerations should be taken into account? What would the facility look like? How would it be managed/governed?

Share Individual Thoughts using Post-its

5) Describe your experiences in learning about housing availability.
   a) What do you recall about your experiences with learning about housing availability when you were making decisions about which post-secondary program and institution to attend?
   b) What role did housing availability play in your decision to attend the college/university that you are enrolled in now?

6) [if you have children] What problems or successes have you encountered with finding or maintaining housing suitable for your children?

7) How has being Aboriginal created challenges and/or opportunities for housing? Or being [single, single parent, family]? Or being from a rural area?

8) What types of housing for Aboriginal students are you familiar with?

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

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http://www.edst.educ.ubc.ca

Dear Aboriginal staff person,

Greetings. We are conducting a research project that examines the role of housing in the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal students attending post-secondary institutions in the Vancouver area. We work with Aboriginal students at the University of British Columbia. I, Jo-ann Archibald, am from the Sto:lo Nation and teach in the Faculty of Education and Jan Hare is Anishanabe and teaches First Nations Studies in the Faculty of Arts. There seem to be no studies that focus on Aboriginal post-secondary student housing at the present time and we feel that it is an important factor that needs further consideration in order for colleges, universities, governments and Aboriginal organizations/communities to provide appropriate housing policies, funding and initiatives for Aboriginal post-secondary students. This research will help those of us who provide services to Aboriginal students better understand their housing needs, and issues they face with finding and maintaining appropriate housing while they complete their post-secondary program.

We are asking you to participate in an interview which should take 45 minutes- one hour. We are interested in knowing your opinions and hearing about your experiences as they relate to housing for Aboriginal students whom you work with. The problems students experiences, how they overcomes these housing problems, and what facilitates finding and maintaining housing are some of the areas we would like to explore with you. Cultural considerations will be also be discussed. The information will help us understand the importance of housing to the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal post-secondary students.

During the interview, you will have the right to not answer any question and to withdraw from the interview at any time, with no adverse affect to you. We would like to tape the interview and then transcribe it. You will be assured anonymity as we will not use anyone's real names and we will not use information that will identify you personally. You will receive a copy of the transcript in order to ensure accuracy of clarity of the text. All information gathered from the interview will be coded and the data kept in a locked office and password protected on a computer hard drive.

If you have any concerns about your rights or treatments as a research participant please contact the Research Subject Help Lines in the UBC Office of Research Services at 604-822-8598. If you have any questions about this project, please contact Jo-ann Archibald at 604-822-5286 or e-mail: jo-ann.archibald@ubc.ca

Thank you for considering this request
Respectfully,

Jo-ann Archibald
Faculty of Education

Jan Hare
Faculty of Arts

If you are willing to participate in an interview, please indicate below and sign this form.

I understand that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time, with no adverse effect to me. I have received a copy of this consent form for my records.

Signature Date

Signature of witness Date

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR ABORIGINAL STAFF WORKING WITH POST-SECONDARY ABORIGINAL STUDENTS

1) How long have you worked in your position?

2) What are your responsibilities regarding Aboriginal students?

3) How many students attend your institution? What percentage of these students come from outside the lower mainland? What percentage are funded or non-funded? How many of these students are male/female, single/married, have dependents/no dependents?

4) Generally, what are the Aboriginal students' experiences with finding housing while they undertake their studies?

5) Please tell me about your most difficult and most successful experiences regarding housing and Aboriginal students? What helped with these situations?

6) How important is housing to recruiting Aboriginal students for your institutions? Why/Why not?

7) How important is housing to retention of Aboriginal students?

8) Based on your experience, which students experience the most difficulty with housing (e.g., single, single parent, family, rural)? What are their difficulties?

9) Are there important cultural considerations that need to be taken into account regarding how your institutions deals with housing matters for Aboriginal students?

10) a) What does your institution do to support Aboriginal students with their housing needs?
b) What housing-related recommendations would you make to your institution to improve recruitment?
c) What housing-related recommendations would you make to your institution to improve retention?

11) What are Bands, Aboriginal organizations, government departments like Indian Affairs and Canada Mortgage Housing doing to help Aboriginal post-secondary students with their housing needs? What recommendations would you put forward to each group?

12) Are you aware of suitable housing for Aboriginal students at any post-secondary institution in the Vancouver area? Or anywhere else? Why is it suitable?

13) Is there anything else you would like to say about the role of housing in the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal post-secondary students attending colleges/universities in the Vancouver area?

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Department of Educational Studies
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Dear Aboriginal staff person,

Greetings. We are conducting a research project that examines the role of housing in the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal students attending post-secondary institutions in the Vancouver area. We work with Aboriginal students at the University of British Columbia. I, Jo-ann Archibald, am from the Sto:lo Nation and teach in the Faculty of Education and Jan Hare is Anishanabe and teaches First Nations Studies in the Faculty of Arts. There seem to be no studies that focus on Aboriginal post-secondary student housing at the present time and we feel that it is an important factor that needs further consideration in order for colleges, universities, governments and Aboriginal organizations/communities to provide appropriate housing policies, funding and initiatives for Aboriginal post-secondary students. This research will help those of us who provide services to Aboriginal students better understand their housing needs, and issues they face with finding and maintaining appropriate housing while they complete their post-secondary program.

We are asking you to participate in an interview which should take 45 minutes- one hour. We are interested in knowing your opinions and hearing about your experiences as they relate to housing for Aboriginal students whom you work with. The problems students experiences, how they overcomes these housing problems, and what facilitates finding and maintaining housing are some of the areas we would like to explore with you. Cultural considerations will be also be discussed. The information will help us understand the importance of housing to the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal post-secondary students.

During the interview, you will have the right to not answer any question and to withdraw from the interview at any time, with no adverse affect to you. We would like to tape the interview and then transcribe it. You will be assured anonymity as we will not use anyone's real names and we will not use information that will identify you personally. You will receive a copy of the transcript in order to ensure accuracy of clarity of the text. All information gathered from the interview will be coded and the data kept in a locked office and password protected on a computer hard drive.

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Thank you for considering this request
Respectfully,

Jo-ann Archibald
Faculty of Education

Jan Hare
Faculty of Arts

If you are willing to participate in an interview, please indicate below and sign this form.

I understand that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time, with no adverse effect to me. I have received a copy of this consent form for my records.

Signature Date

Signature of witness Date

Interview schedule for Native Housing staff

1. How long have your worked in your position?

2. Please tell me how your Native Housing organization provides housing to Aboriginal students attending colleges or universities in the Vancouver area?

3. Generally, what are the Aboriginal students' experiences with finding adequate housing while they undertake their studies?

4. Please tell me about your most difficult and most successful experiences regarding housing and Aboriginal students? What helped in these situations?

5. Which students experience the most difficulty with housing? [single, single parent, family, rural] What are their difficulties?

6. Are there important cultural considerations that need to be taken into account regarding how your housing organization deals with housing matters for Aboriginal students?

7. a) Does your housing organization provide any other support services to Aboriginal students while they are living in your complex? Are these services adequate? Please explain.
   b) Do you have any specific policies/procedures in place that deal with student-tenants (e.g., late-payment on rent etc.?)

8. What are Bands, Aboriginal organizations, government departments like Indian Affairs and Canada Mortgage Housing doing to help Aboriginal post-secondary students with their housing needs? Could they do more or do things better? Please explain.

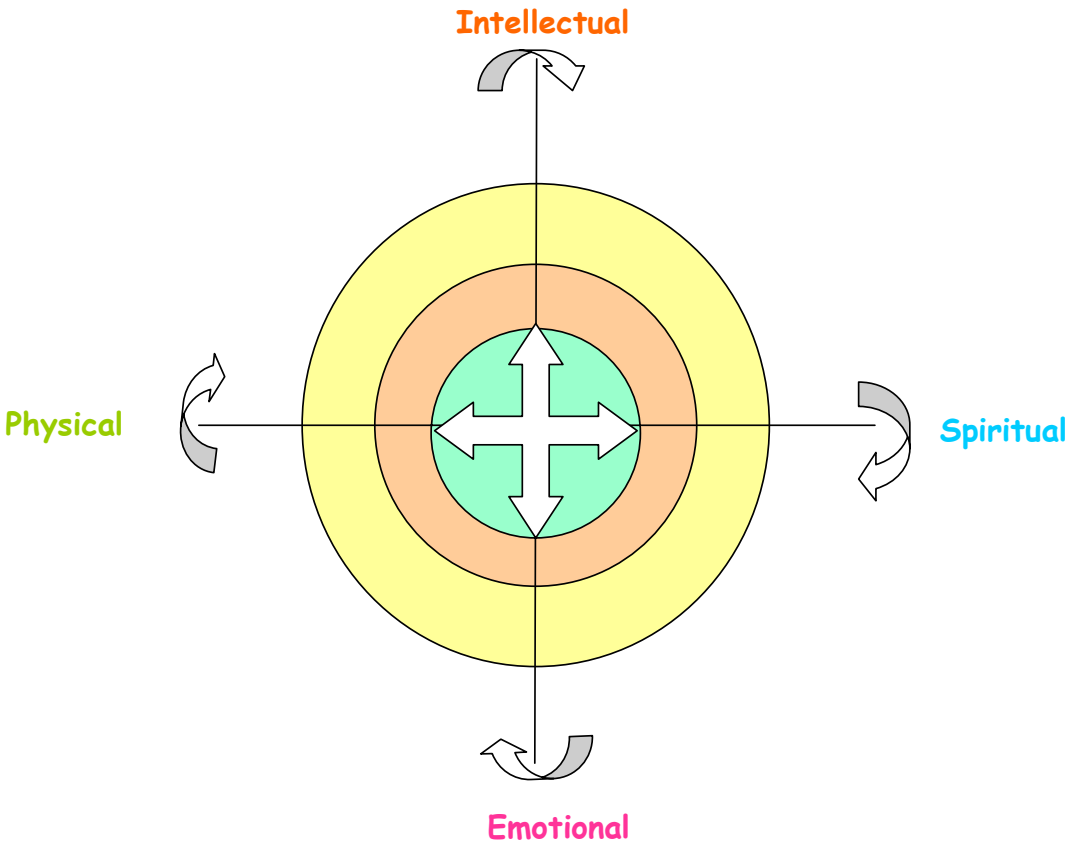
9. What recommendations would you make to improve housing for Aboriginal post-secondary students? (to Luma Native Housing, to , to governments, to Aboriginal organizations)

10. Is there anything else you would like to say about the role of housing in the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal post-secondary students attending colleges/universities in the Vancouver area?

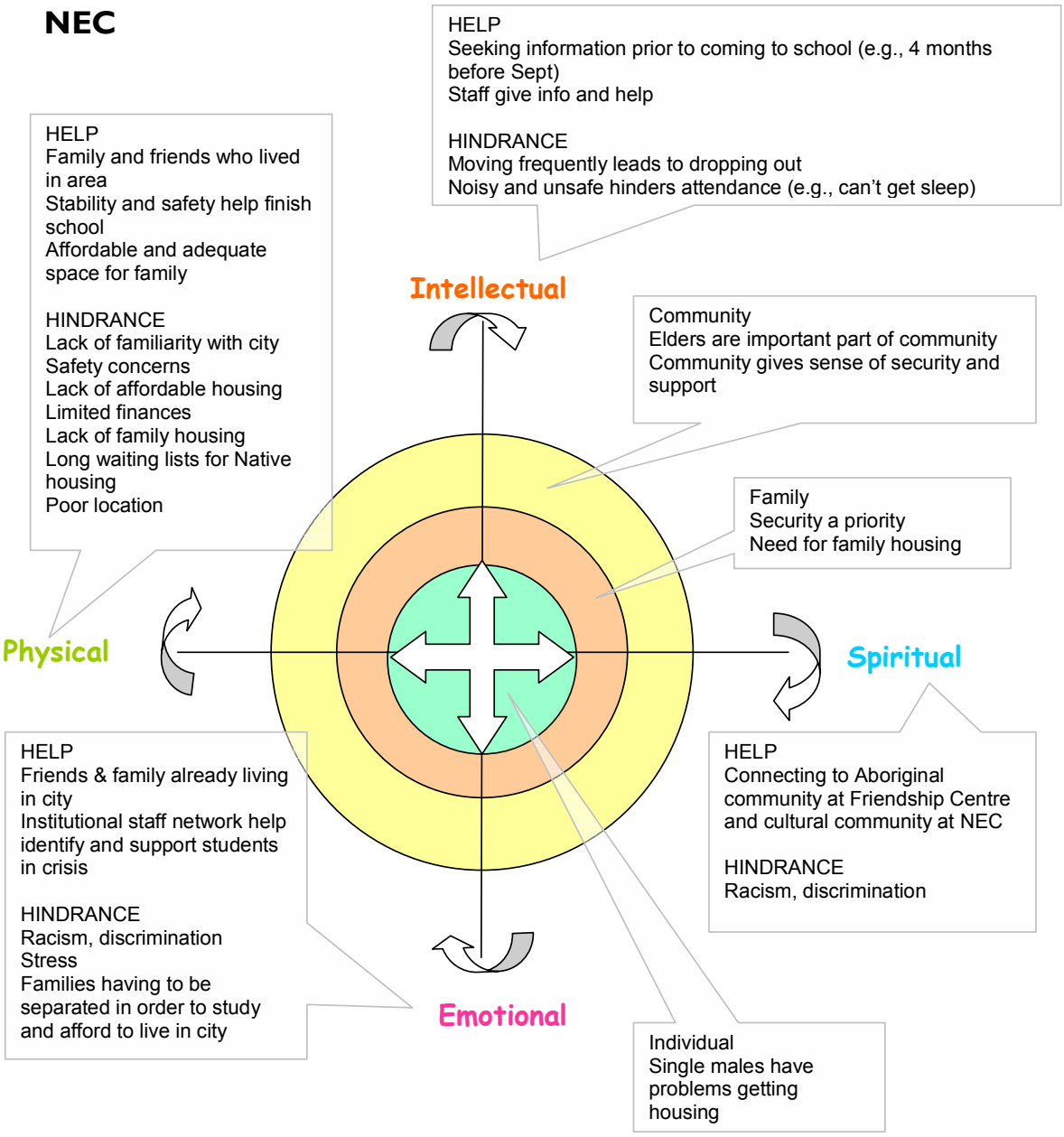
SYNOPSES OF WHOLISTIC ANALYSIS

FOR EACH POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTION

ORGANIZED ON THE INDIGENOUS RESEARCH MODEL

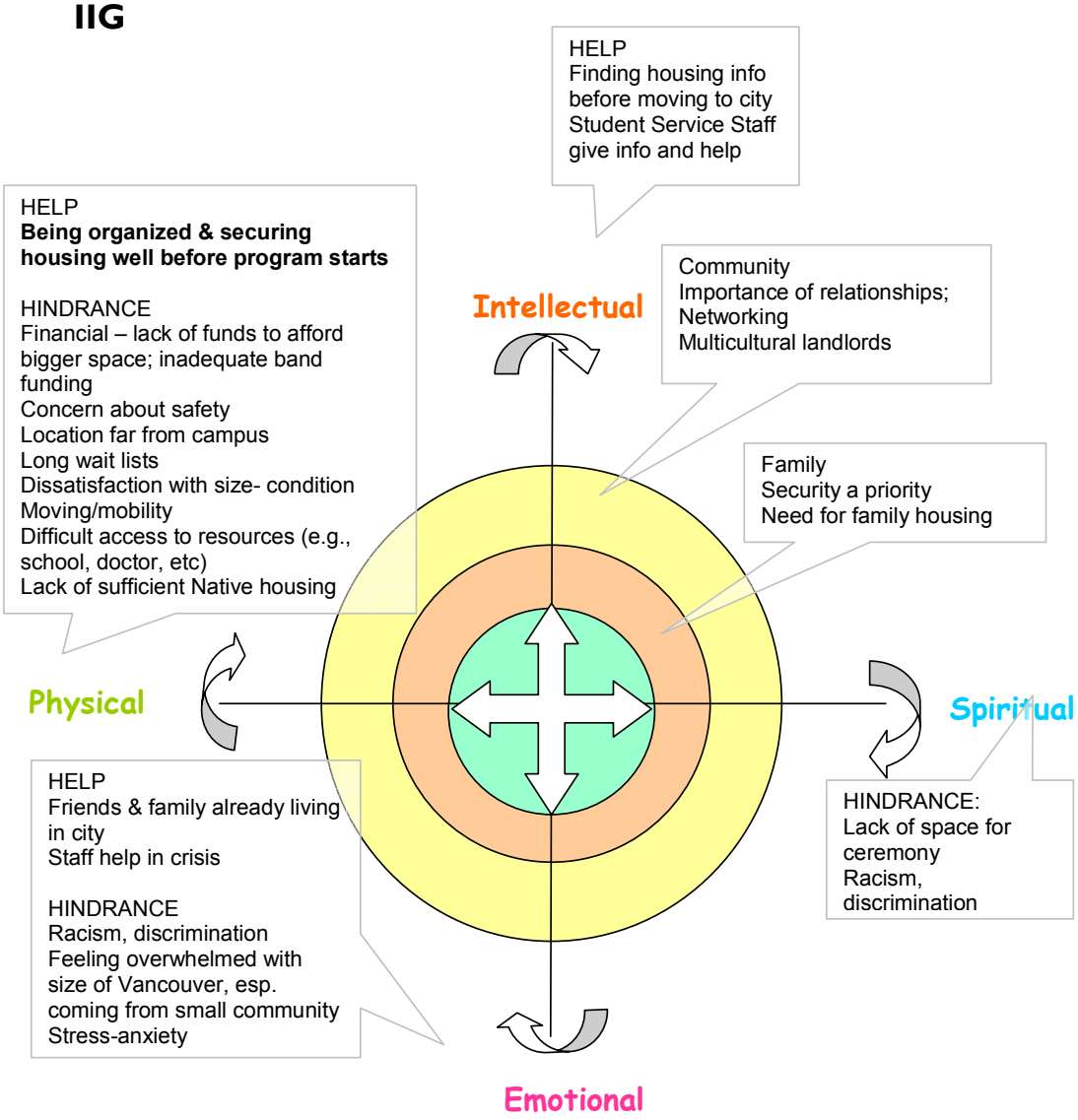


NEC



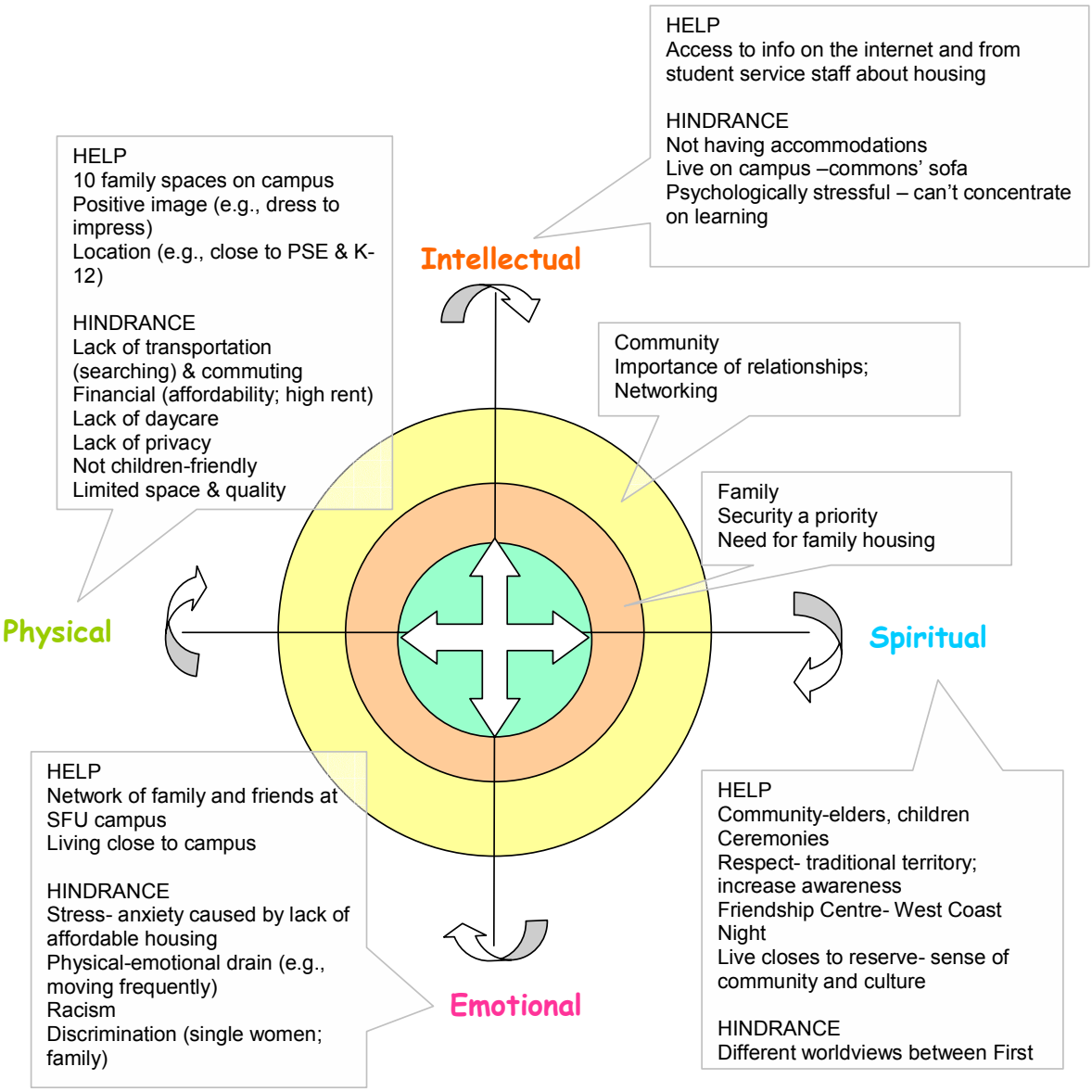
THEMES:
Family- security needs, concentrate more on studies
Single males- difficulty (racism)
Racism

IIG



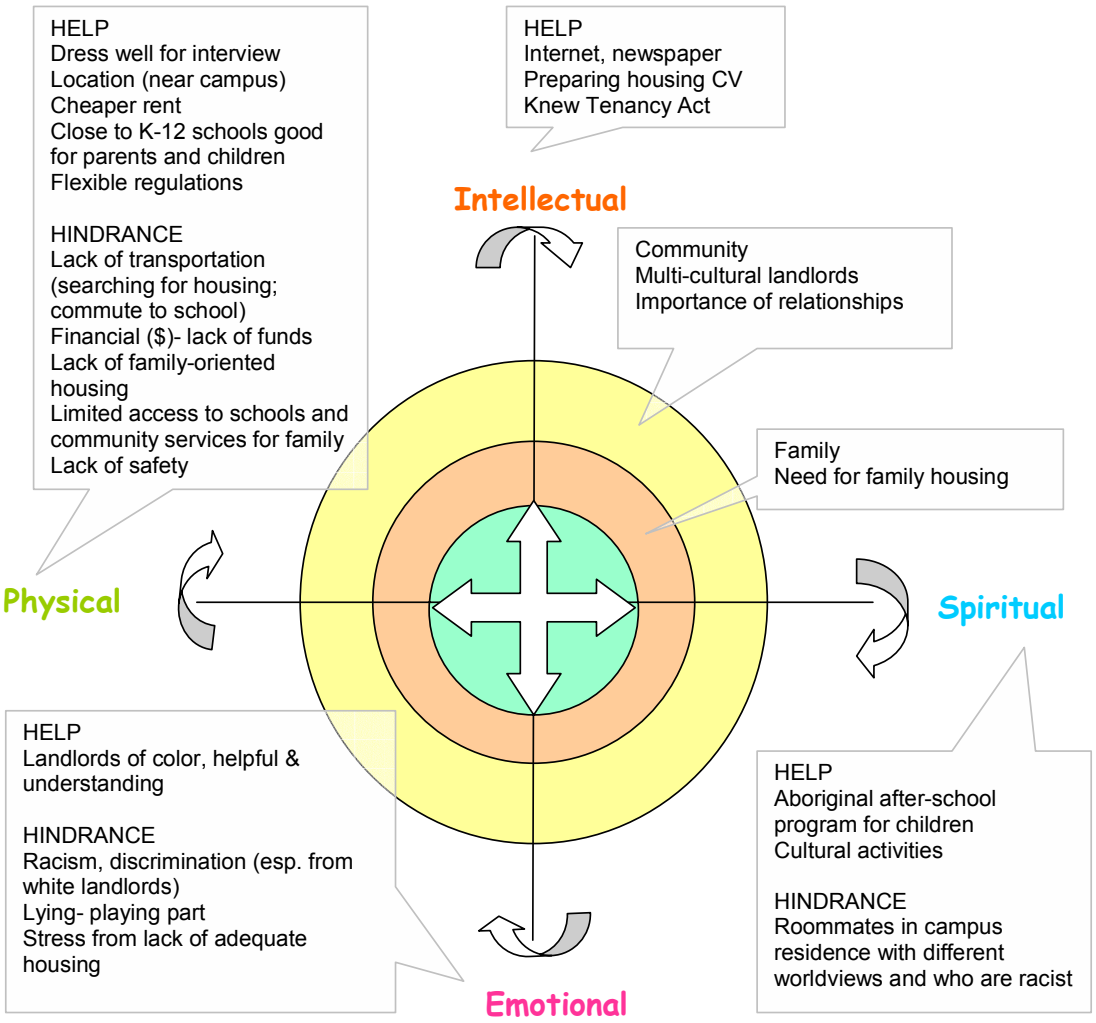
THEMES:
Family - security needs are essential (physical and emotional) to concentrate more on studies (intellectual)
Single males- difficulty finding housing (racism, gender) (emotional-physical)
Racism an on-going concern

SFU



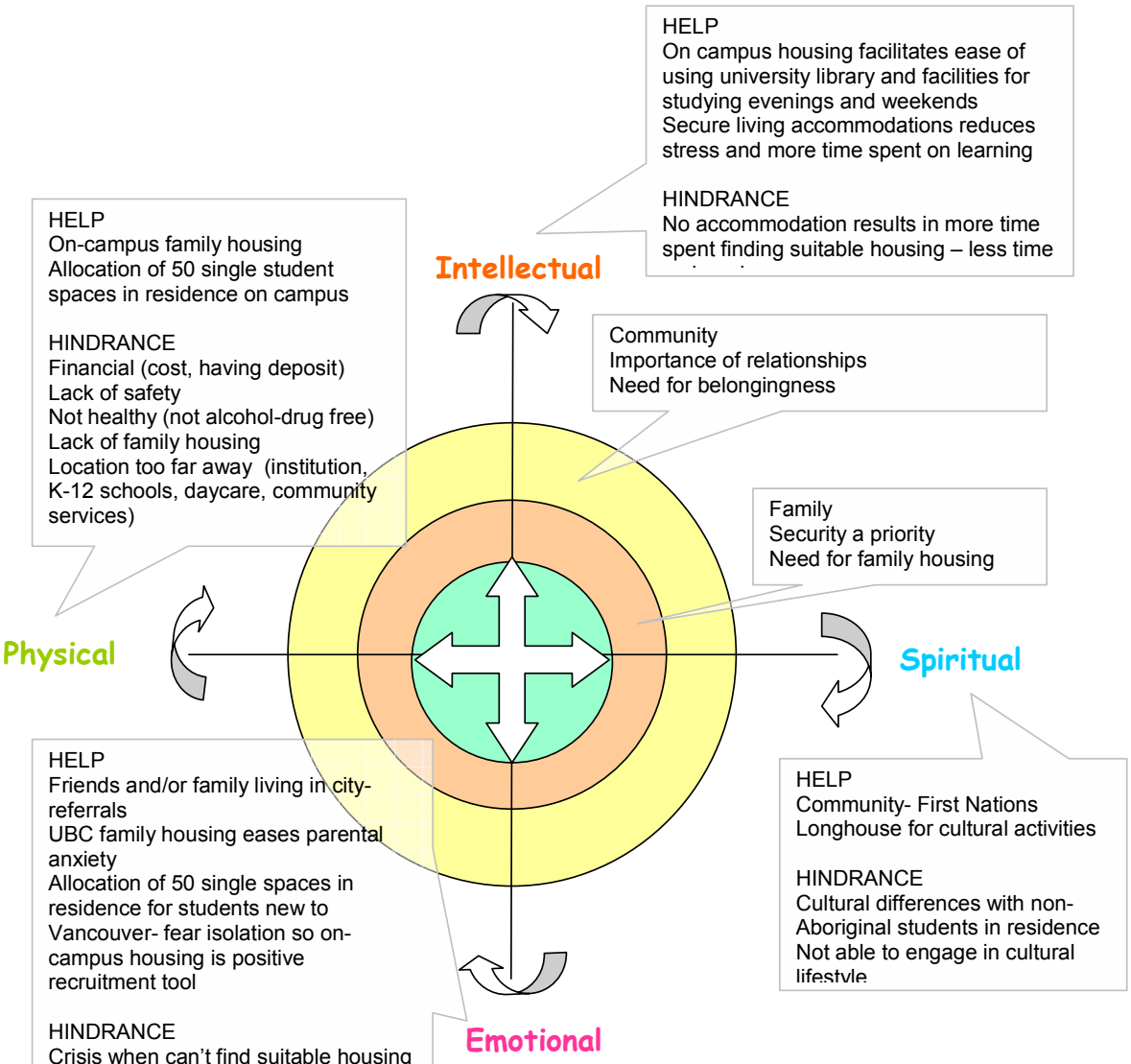
THEMES:
Family and community matter a lot
Safety and security needs for housing are essential
Need sense of community especially for students moving into city

LANGARA



THEMES:
Family matters a lot
Racism
Limited student funding
Limited access to housing

UBC



THEMES:
Emphasis on family- safety, security, especially for children eases stress and more time for study
Spiritual-cultural helps deal with stress- better for studies

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Institutional Fact Sheets

University of British Columbia (UBC)
wHolistic Analysis

(All percentages below – not frequencies)

While this fact sheet provides institution specific information, many of the students' experiences were similar regardless of institution they were attending. Data was collected from September 2003 – February 2004. Please refer to the larger report for more information.

Demographic data

- 50 Aboriginal students from UBC participated in this study.
- The Aboriginal population was very diverse. Many Aboriginal Nations were represented.
- 68% of UBC respondents were female, while 32% were male.
- The average age was 35 years old, with a standard deviation of 12 years.
- 54% were single, 34% were married, 10% were divorced and 2% were separated.
- 52% had children, while 48% did not. In total, 28% of the respondents had one child, and 24% had 3 or more children.
- 78% of the Aboriginal students moved to Vancouver to attend UBC, while 22% did not move to attend UBC. Of those who relocated to Vancouver, 77% indicated they had moved from within BC while 23% had moved from other provinces.
- Respondents had lived in Vancouver from 0 months to 540 months (~45years). The average length of stay was 59.82 months (~4.98 years) (*sd* = 110 months).
- Most students (42%) were enrolled in Arts programs, 22% were enrolled in Education (NITEP), 20% were enrolled in Science programs, and 6% were enrolled in Law. 14% did not respond.
    - Science programs included: Community Medicine, Forest Management, and Human Kinetics. The Arts programs included: Interdisciplinary studies, counseling, anthropology, and political science

PHYSICAL (HOUSING SITUATIONS/PREFERENCES ETC)

- WHAT TYPE OF HOUSING DO YOU CURRENTLY HAVE?
    - 46% of UBC respondents rented an apartment/town home/room
    - 24% lived in college or university housing
    - 8% owned their own home/condo
    - 10% lived in native housing (6% in single native housing; 4% in family native housing)
    - 2% lived with family
    - 10% had other accommodations.

- HOW MANY LIVE WITH YOU?
- 22% lived alone
- 36% lived with 1 other person
- 4% lived with 2 other people
- 20% lived with 3 other people
- 16% lived with 4 or more people.
- 2% did not respond

- HOW MANY TIMES HAVE YOU MOVED IN THE LAST YEAR?
- 34% of respondents had not moved
- 24% moved once
- 16% moved twice
- 18% moved three times
- 6% moved 4 or more times
- 2% did not respond

- HOW MUCH RENT DO YOU PAY?
- Students paid between $181.00 - $1231.00 per month
- 68% of the students said that their rent was reasonable, while 22% did not think it was reasonable. 10% did not respond to the question.

PLEASE EXPLAIN WHY UNREASONABLE/REASONABLE (main themes):

- Indicated a good price, e.g., utilities included
- Found it expensive
- Not a good location
- Size
- Housing conditions – run down etc.

- TRANSPORTATION:

	Yes responses (%)
Bus	74
Walk	74
Car	71
Bike	28
Sky train	26
Taxi	12

This particular table will not add to 100% because respondents could choose multiple responses in the event of using more than one mode of transportation.

- RATE IMPORTANCE OF HOUSING AVAILABILITY IN DECISION TO ENROLL IN UBC
- 32% extremely important
- 24% very important
- 18% fairly important
- 10% some importance
- 16% no importance.

- DID YOU CONSIDER LOOKING ELSE WHERE?
  - Most respondents (64%) did not consider looking elsewhere for accommodations (further away from UBC) while 32% did consider looking elsewhere. 2% indicated a yes/no response and 2% no response.

THINGS CONSIDERED WHEN SEARCHING FOR ACCOMMODATIONS

	"Yes, considered"

Rent	94
Location	98
Safe location	82
Condition of apartment	78
Laundry facilities	68
Number of bedrooms	58
Unfurnished	40
Laundry hookup	32
Children allowed	32
Pets allowed	32
Inside parking	28
Furnished	22
Outside parking	20

This particular table will not add to 100% because respondents could choose multiple responses in the event of using more than one thing considered when searching for accommodations.

- MOST IMPORTANT FACTORS WHEN SELECTING HOUSING:

  #1 Affordability
  #2 Location
  #3 Condition
  #4 Size
  #5 Security.

SATISFACTION WITH HOUSING FACTORS:

Housing Factors	Poor	So/So	Good
Size	15	33	52
Condition	4	40	56
Location	6	13	81
Security	9	19	72

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED

- 64% of respondents encountered problems in finding suitable accommodations; 34% did not. 2% indicated a yes/no response.

- WHAT PROBLEMS DID YOU ENCOUNTER (major themes mentioned):
  - Family
  - Affordability
  - Racism
  - Waitlists
  - Age
  - Availability
  - Pets
  - Location

- FOUR MOST SIGNIFICANT PROBLEMS
  - Affordability
  - Location
  - Condition
  - Racism/discrimination (age, race, family).

- WHAT HELPED WITH FINDING ACCOMODATIONS

- Friends/family
- Newspapers
- Personal factors: luck, perseverance, walking around, personality, good references, networking, lowered standards, lived here before
- Agencies: NITEP, rental agencies, native housing etc
- Internet.

HOUSING AND EDUCATION COMPLETION:

- 78% felt that housing was EXTREMELY/VERY important in completing one's program of study. 8% felt housing was FAIRLY important, another 10% said it had SOME importance and 2% felt is had NO IMORTANCE. 2% did not respond.

- RANK THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FOLLOWING FACTORS TO COMPLETE EDUCATION:

Top ranking	
First*	Finances; Family support
Second	
Third	Housing
Fourth	Quality of academic program
Fifth	Aboriginal student services
Sixth	Aboriginal faculty
Seventh	Peer support

*Since there was a tie for the first place position, the next ranking was positioned third.

CULTURAL/SPIRITUAL:

68% of respondents felt that there should be designated/pre-allocated spaces for Aboriginal students. 16% reported that they did not know or it depended. 12% did not think there should be allocated spaces. Four percent did not respond.

Simon Fraser University (SFU)
wHolistic Analysis

While this fact sheet provides institution specific information, many of the students' experiences were similar regardless of institution they were attending. Data was gathered from September 2003 – February 2004. Please refer to the larger report for more information.

Demographic data

- 20 Aboriginal students from SFU participated in this study.
- The Aboriginal population was very diverse. Many Aboriginal Nations were represented.
- 55% of SFU respondents were female, while 45% were male.
- The average age was 33 years old, with a standard deviation of 8.26 years.
- 50% were single; 50% were married. None of the participants were divorced or separated.
- 45% had children, while 55% did not. In total, 25% had one child, and 10% had 3 or more children.
- 55% of Aboriginal students moved to Vancouver to attend SFU. 45% indicated they had moved from within BC while 10% had moved from other provinces. In total, 45% had not moved to attend SFU.
- Respondents had lived in Vancouver from 3 months to 444 months (~37 years). The average length of stay was 110 months (*sd* = 116.68 months).
- Most students were enrolled in Arts programs (75%), 5% were enrolled in Science programs, and 10% indicated they were enrolled in education, and 10% did not indicate the program they were enrolled in. Arts enrollment included programs like archaeology and criminology. Education included the PDP program.

PHYSICAL (HOUSING SITUATIONS/PREFERENCES ETC)

- WHAT TYPE OF HOUSING DO YOU CURRENTLY HAVE?
  - 60% of SFU respondents rented an apartment/town home/room
  - 0% lived in college or university housing
  - 20% owned own home/condo
  - 15% lived in family native housing; 0% lived in single native housing
  - 0% lived with family
  - 5% had other accommodations.
- HOW MANY LIVE WITH YOU?
  - 30% lived alone
  - 15% lived with 1 other person
  - 10% lived with 2 other people
  - 20% lived with 3 other people
  - 25% lived with 4 or more people.
- HOW MANY TIMES HAVE YOU MOVED IN THE LAST YEAR?

- 55% of respondents had not moved
- 35% moved once
- 5% moved twice
- 5% moved three times or more.

- HOW MUCH RENT DO YOU PAY?
  - Students paid between $190.00 - $1,000.00 per month
  - 65% believed their rent was reasonable, 10% did not, and 25% did not respond to the question.

  PLEASE EXPLAIN WHY UNREASONABLE/REASONABLE (main themes):
  - Indicated a good price, e.g., utilities included
  - Found it expensive
  - Not a good location
  - Size
  - Housing conditions – run down etc.

- TRANSPORTATION:

	Yes responses (%)
Bus	88
Walk	67
Car	89
Bike	40
Sky train	75
Taxi	0

This particular table will not add to 100% because respondents could choose multiple responses in the event of using more than one mode of transportation.

- RATE IMPORTANCE OF HOUSING AVAILABILITY IN DECISION TO ENROLL AT SFU

  - 20% extremely important
  - 25% very important
  - 15% fairly important
  - 20% some importance
  - 20% no importance.

- Most respondents (70%) did not think of looking elsewhere for accommodations (further away from SFU) while 30% did think of looking.

THINGS CONSIDERED WHEN SEARCHING FOR ACCOMMODATIONS

	"Yes, considered"
Rent	90
Location	90
Safe location	60
Condition of apartment	90
Laundry facilities	65
Number of bedrooms	70
Unfurnished	20
Laundry hookup	25
Children allowed	35
Pets allowed	50
Inside parking	30
Furnished	0
Outside parking	20

This particular table will not add to 100% because respondents could choose multiple responses in the event of using more than one thing considered when searching for accommodations.

- MOST IMPORTANT FACTORS WHEN SELECTING HOUSING:

#1 Affordability
#2 Condition
#3 Location
#4 Size
#5 Security.

SATISFACTION WITH HOUSING FACTORS:

Housing Factors	Poor	So/So	Good
Size	15	40	45
Condition	15	20	65
Location	10	15	75
Security	20	20	60

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED

- 45% of respondents encountered problems in finding suitable accommodations; 55% did not.
- WHAT PROBLEMS DID YOU ENCOUNTER (major themes mentioned):

  - Family
  - Affordability
  - Racism
  - Waitlists
  - Age
  - Availability
  - Pets
  - location

The two most important issues were: RENT and LOCATION.

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- THREE MOST SIGNIFICANT PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED
  - Affordability
  - Location
  - Condition.

- WHAT HELPED WITH FINDING ACCOMODATIONS
  - Friends/family
  - Newspapers
  - Personal factors: luck, perseverance, walking around, personality, good references, networking
  - Agencies
  - Internet.

HOUSING AND EDUCATION COMPLETION:

- 75% felt that housing was EXTREMELY/VERY important in completing one's program of study. 10% felt housing was FAIRLY important, another 15% said it had SOME importance and 0% felt it had NO IMORTANCE

- RANK THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FOLLOWING FACTORS TO COMPLETE EDUCATION:

Top ranking	
First	Finances
Second	Housing
Third	Quality of academic program
Fourth	Family support
Fifth	Aboriginal student services
Sixth	Aboriginal faculty
Seventh	Peer support

CULTURAL/SPIRITUAL:

- 80% of respondents felt that there should be designated/pre-allocated spaces for Aboriginal students. 5% reported that they did not know or it depended. 5% did not think there should be allocated spaces. 10% no response.

Native Education Centre College (nec)

wHolistic Analysis

While this fact sheet provides institution specific information, many of the students' experiences were similar regardless of institution they were attending. Data was gathered from September 2003 – February 2004. Please refer to the larger report for more information.

Demographic data

- 55 Aboriginal students from NEC participated in this study.
- The Aboriginal population was very diverse. Many Aboriginal Nations were represented.
- 63% of NEC respondents were female, while 37% were male.
- The average age was 32 years old, with a standard deviation of 11.5 years.
- 53% were single and 40% were married. 7% were divorced. There were no widowed or separated students.
- 55% had children, while 45% did not. Of those that had children, 37% had one child, and 40% had 2 children, while 20% had 3 or more children. Three percent did not respond.
- 53% of Aboriginal students moved to Vancouver to attend NEC, 46% did not relocate. Of those who moved to Vancouver, 83% indicated they had moved from within BC, while 17% had moved from other provinces.
- Respondents had lived in Vancouver from 2 months to 504 months (~42 years). The average length of stay was 98 months (~8 years) (*sd* = 126.8 months).
- Most students were enrolled in Technical programs (49%), 26% were enrolled in Arts programs, and 25% did not respond to this question.

PHYSICAL (HOUSING SITUATIONS/PREFERENCES ETC)

- WHAT TYPE OF HOUSING DO YOU CURRENTLY HAVE?
  - 66% of NEC respondents rented an apartment/town home/room.
  - 7% lived with family
  - 9% lived in native housing (4% in single native housing; 5% in family native housing)
  - 4% lived in college or university housing
  - 0% owned their own home/condo
  - 14% had other accommodations.
- HOW MANY LIVE WITH YOU?
  - 11% lived alone
  - 22% lived with 1 other person
  - 38% lived with 2 other people
  - 13% lived with 3 other people
  - 11% lived with 4 or more people
  - 5% did not respond.

- HOW MANY TIMES HAVE YOU MOVED IN THE PAST YEAR?
  - 31% of respondents did not move
  - 33% moved once
  - 16% moved twice
  - 5% moved three times
  - 13% moved 4 or more times.
  - 2% did not respond

- HOW MUCH RENT DO YOU PAY?
  - Students paid between $0-$985 per month.
  - 49% believed their rent was reasonable; 35% did not. 16% did not respond.

  PLEASE EXPLAIN WHY UNREASONABLE/REASONABLE (main themes):
  - Indicated a good price, e.g., utilities included
  - Found it expensive
  - Not a good location
  - Size
  - Housing conditions – run down etc.

- TRANSPORTATION:

	Yes responses (%)
Bus	76
Walk	73
Sky train	58
Car	46
Taxi	33
Bike	13

This particular table will not add to 100% because respondents could choose multiple responses in the event of using more than one mode of transportation.

- RATE IMPORTANCE OF HOUSING AVAILABILITY IN DECISION TO ENROLL IN NEC

  - 35% extremely important
  - 29% very important
  - 16% fairly important
  - 11% some importance
  - 7% no importance
  - 2% no response

- Most respondents did not think of looking elsewhere (69%) while 29% did think of looking. 2% no response.

THINGS CONSIDERED WHEN SEARCHING FOR ACCOMMODATIONS

	"Yes, considered"
Rent	93
Location	89
Safe location	87
Condition of apartment	86
Laundry facilities	82
Number of bedrooms	76
Laundry hookup	69
Children allowed	60
Unfurnished	47
Pets allowed	42
Inside parking	26
Furnished	21
Outside parking	16

This particular table will not add to 100% because respondents could choose multiple responses in the event of using more than one thing considered when searching for accommodations.

- MOST IMPORTANT FACTORS WHEN SELECTING HOUSING:

  #1 Affordability
  #2 Location
  #3 Condition
  #4 Size
  #5 Security

  Other factors mentioned were pets allowed and family.

SATISFACTION WITH HOUSING FACTORS:

Housing Factors	Poor	So/So	Good
Size	19	39	42
Condition	8	31	61
Location	19	34	47
Security	19	36	45

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTED

- 65% of respondents encountered problems in finding suitable accommodations, while 33% did not. 2% no response

- WHAT PROBLEMS DID YOU ENCOUNTER (major themes mentioned):

  - Family
  - Affordability
  - Racism
  - Waitlists
  - Age
  - Availability
  - Pets
  - Location

- The most important issues were: RENT, CHILDREN ALLOWED and LOCATION.

- MOST SIGNIFICANT PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED
  - Affordability
  - Location
  - Condition
  - Racism/discrimination (age, race, family).

- WHAT HELPED WITH FINDING ACCOMODATIONS
  - Friends/family
  - Newspapers
  - Personal factors: luck, perseverance, walking around, personality, good references, networking, lowered standards, lived here before
  - Agencies: NITEP, rental agencies, native housing etc.
  - Internet.

HOUSING AND EDUCATION COMPLETION:

- 44% felt that housing was EXTREMELY important; 44% thought it was VERY important in completing one's program of study. 6% felt housing was FAIRLY important, 0% said it had SOME importance and 6% felt is had NO IMORTANCE

- RANK THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FOLLOWING FACTORS TO COMPLETE EDUCATION:

Top ranking	
First*	Finances
Second	Housing
Third	Quality of academic program
Fourth*	Family support
Fourth*	Aboriginal student services
Sixth	Aboriginal faculty
Seventh	Peer support

* Aboriginal student services and Family support were tied at fourth; therefore a fifth position was not included.

OTHER SPECIFIED FACTORS THAT HELPED:
- Access: finances, transportation, access to housing and money
- Family: child care, support
- Community: peer support etc
- Culture

CULTURAL/SPIRITUAL:

- 61% of respondents felt that there should be designated/pre-allocated spaces for Aboriginal students. 9% did not think there should be allocated spaces. 10% indicated they were not sure or it depended. 20% did not answer the question

Langara College
wHolistic Analysis

While this fact sheet provides institution specific information, many of the students' experiences were similar regardless of institution they were attending. Data was gathered from September 2003 – February 2004. Please refer to the larger report for more information.

Demographic data

- 16 Aboriginal students from Langara College participated in this study.
- The Aboriginal population was very diverse. Many Aboriginal Nations were represented
- 81% of Langara respondents were female, while 19% were male.
- The average age was 33 years old, with a standard deviation of 9 years.
- 56% were single and 44% were married. There were no widowed, divorced or separated students in this sample.
- 63% had children, while 37% did not. Of those that had children, 30% had one child, and 20% had 2 children, while 50% had 3 or more children.
- 44% of the Aboriginal students moved to Vancouver to attend LANGARA, while 56% did not relocate. Of those who moved to Vancouver, 71% indicated that they had moved from within BC while 29% had moved from other provinces.
- Respondents had lived in Vancouver from 2 months to 192 months (~16 years). The average length of stay was 67 months (~5.5 years) (*sd* = 59.3 months).
- Most students were enrolled in Arts programs (56%), 19% were in Arts/Science (co-joint programs), 6% were in Technical programs, and 6% Chinook Business programs respectively. Thirteen percent did not respond.

Comment: We used the titles of programs provided by students and they refered to their program as arts/science

PHYSICAL (HOUSING SITUATIONS/PREFERENCES ETC)

- WHAT TYPE OF HOUSING DO YOU CURRENTLY HAVE?
  - 81% of Langara respondents rented an apartment/town home/room
  - 6% lived in single native housing; 0% lived in family native housing
  - 6% had other accommodations
  - 0% lived with family
  - 0% lived in college or university housing
  - 0% owned their own home/condo.
  - 7% did not respond
- HOW MANY LIVE WITH YOU?
  - 12% lived alone
  - 19% lived with 1 other person
  - 25% lived with 2 other people
  - 19% lived with 3 other people
  - 25% lived with 4 or more people.

- HOW MANY TIMES HAVE YOU MOVED IN THE LAST YEAR?
  - 31% of respondents did not move
  - 25% moved once
  - 19% moved twice
  - 13% moved three times
  - 6% moved 4 or more times.
  - 6% did not respond

- HOW MUCH RENT DO YOU PAY?
  - Students paid between $350-$1750 per month
  - 44% believed their rent was reasonable; 56% did not.

  PLEASE EXPLAIN WHY UNREASONABLE/REASONABLE (main themes):
  - Indicated a good price, e.g., utilities included
  - Found it expensive
  - Not a good location
  - Size
  - Housing conditions – run down etc.

- TRANSPORTATION:

	Yes responses (%)
Bus	91
Walk	89
Car	80
Sky train	71
Bike	0
Taxi	0

This particular table will not add to 100% because respondents could choose multiple responses in the event of using more than one mode of transportation.

- RATE IMPORTANCE OF HOUSING AVAILABILITY IN DECISION TO ENROLL IN LANGARA

  - 31% extremely important
  - 13% very important
  - 31% fairly important
  - 6% some importance
  - 19% no importance.

- Most respondents did not think of looking elsewhere (63%) while 37% did think of looking.

THINGS CONSIDERED WHEN SEARCHING FOR ACCOMMODATIONS

	"Yes, considered"
Rent	100
Location	100
Number of bedrooms	94
Condition of apartment	88
Laundry facilities	88
Safe location	63
Laundry hookup	63
Children allowed	50
Unfurnished	44
Pets allowed	25
Furnished	19
Inside parking	6
Outside parking	6

This particular table will not add to 100% because respondents could choose multiple responses in the event of using more than one thing considered when searching for accommodations.

- MOST IMPORTANT FACTORS WHEN SELECTING HOUSING:

#1 Affordability
#2 Location
#3 Condition
#4 Size
#5 Security
Other- bus route

SATISFACTION WITH HOUSING FACTORS:

Housing Factors	Poor	So/So	Good
Size	37	19	44
Condition	12	38	50
Location	12	13	75
Security	12	25	63

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTED

- 81% of respondents encountered problems in finding suitable accommodations; 19% did not.
- WHAT PROBLEMS DID YOU ENCOUNTER (major themes mentioned):
-
    - Family
    - Affordability
    - Racism
    - Waitlists
    - Age
    - Availability
    - Pets
    - Location

- The most important issues were: RENT, CHILDREN ALLOWED and LOCATION.

- MOST SIGNIFICANT PROBLEMS
  - Affordability
  - Location
  - Condition
  - Racism/discrimination (age, race, family).

- WHAT HELPED WITH FINDING ACCOMODATIONS
  - Friends/family
  - Newspapers
  - Personal factors: luck, perseverance, walking around, personality, good references, networking, lowered standards, lived here before
  - Agencies: NITEP, rental agencies, native housing etc.
  - Internet.

HOUSING AND EDUCATION COMPLETION:

- 38% felt that housing was EXTREMELY important, 50% thought it was VERY important in completing one's program of study. 6% felt housing was FAIRLY important, another 6% said it had SOME importance and 0% felt it had NO IMORTANCE.

- RANK THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FOLLOWING FACTORS TO COMPLETE EDUCATION:

Top ranking	
First	Finances
Second	Housing
Third	Quality of academic program
Fourth	Family support
Fifth	Aboriginal student services
Sixth	Aboriginal faculty
Seventh	Peer support

OTHER SPECIFIED FACTORS THAT HELPED:
- Access: finances, transportation, access to housing and money
- Family: child care, support
- Community: peer support etc
- Culture

CULTURAL/SPIRITUAL:

- 81% of respondents felt that there should be designated/pre-allocated spaces for Aboriginal students. 13% did not think there should be allocated spaces. 6% did not answer the question

Institution for indigenous governance (IIG)

wHolistic Analysis

While this fact sheet provides institution specific information, many of the students' experiences were similar regardless of institution they were attending. Data was gathered from September 2003 – February 2004. Please refer to the larger report for more information.

Demographic data

- 31 Aboriginal students from IIG participated in this study.
- The Aboriginal population was very diverse. Many Aboriginal Nations were represented.
- 48% of IIG respondents were female, while 52% were male.
- The average age was 30 years old, with a standard deviation of 9.29 years.
- 73% were single, 24% were married, and 3% were widowed. None of the participants had been separated or divorced.
- Overall, 60% of respondents have children. Forty percent did not have children, this figure includes one individual who did not respond. Of those who did have children, 42% had one child, 33% had two children and 25% had three or more children in their family.
- 58% of Aboriginal students had moved to Vancouver to attend IIG, while 42% had not moved to attend IIG. Of those who relocated to Vancouver, 71% indicated they had moved from within BC while 29% had moved from other provinces.
- Respondents had lived in Vancouver from 1 month to 624 months (~52 years). The average length of stay was 72.6 months (~6 years) (*sd* = 130 months).
- Most students were enrolled in Arts programs (84%), 0% were enrolled in Science programs, and 3% were Business programs, and 13% did not indicate the program they were enrolled in. Arts programs included: Aboriginal studies, general arts and Social Work.

PHYSICAL (HOUSING SITUATIONS/PREFERENCES ETC)

- WHAT TYPE OF HOUSING DO YOU CURRENTLY HAVE?
  - 74% of IIG respondents rented an apartment/town home/room.
  - 0% lived in college or university housing
  - 10% owned own home/condo
  - 3% lived in native housing (0% in single native housing; 3% in family native housing)
  - 3% lived with family
  - 10% had other accommodations
- HOW MANY LIVE WITH YOU?
  - 10% with alone
  - 39% lived with 1 other person
  - 13% lived with 2 other people
  - 26% lived with 3 other people
  - 6% lived with 4 or more people
  - 6% did not respond
- HOW MANY TIMES HAVE YOU MOVED?

- 32% of respondents did not move
- 32% moved once
- 20% moved twice
- 10% moved three times
- 3% moved 4 or more times.
- 3% did not respond

- HOW MUCH RENT DO YOU PAY?
  - Students paid between $0.00 - $1200.00 per month
  - 48% believed their rent was reasonable; 36% did not. 16% did not respond to the question

  PLEASE EXPLAIN WHY UNREASONABLE/REASONABLE (main themes):
  - Indicated a good price, e.g., utilities included
  - Found it expensive
  - Not a good location
  - Size
  - Housing conditions – run down etc.

- TRANSPORTATION:

	Yes responses (%)
Bus	89
Walk	75
Car	67
Bike	13
Sky train	74
Taxi	0

This particular table will not add to 100% because respondents could choose multiple responses in the event of using more than one mode of transportation.

- RATE IMPORTANCE OF HOUSING AVAILABILITY IN DECISION TO ENROLL AT IIG
  - 29% extremely important
  - 35% very important
  - 16% fairly important
  - 10% some importance
  - 7% no importance
  - 3% did not respond

- Most respondents (52%) did not think of looking elsewhere for accommodations (further away from IIG) while 45% did think of looking elsewhere. Three percent did not respond.

THINGS CONSIDERED WHEN SEARCHING FOR ACCOMMODATIONS

	"Yes, considered"
Rent	94
Location	94
Safe location	81
Condition of apartment	95
Laundry facilities	84
Number of bedrooms	55
Unfurnished	45
Laundry hookup	52
Children allowed	48
Pets allowed	23
Inside parking	26
Furnished	13
Outside parking	32

This particular table will not add to 100% because respondents could choose multiple responses in the event of using more than one thing considered when searching for accommodations.

- MOST IMPORTANT FACTORS WHEN SELECTING HOUSING:

  #1 Affordability
  #2 Location
  #3 Condition
  #4 Size
  #5 Security

SATISFACTION WITH HOUSING FACTORS:

Housing Factors	Poor	So/So	Good
Size	16	42	42
Condition	3	45	52
Location	10	35	55
Security	16	32	52

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTED

- 55% of respondents encountered problems in finding suitable accommodations; 45% did not.

- WHAT PROBLEMS DID YOU ENCOUNTER (major themes mentioned):
  - family
  - affordability
  - racism
  - waitlists
  - age
  - availability
  - pets
  - location

- The two most important issues were: RENT and LOCATION.

- THREE MOST SIGNIFICANT PROBLEMS
  - Affordability
  - Location
  - Condition.

- WHAT HELPED WITH FINDING ACCOMODATIONS
  - Friends/family
  - Newspapers
  - Personal factors: perseverance, walking around, personality, good references, networking, lowered standards
  - Agencies
  - Internet.

HOUSING AND EDUCATION COMPLETION:

- 77% felt that housing was EXTREMELY/VERY important in completing one's program of study. 13% felt housing was FAIRLY important, another 3% said it had SOME importance and 3% felt is had NO IMORTANCE. Three percent did not respond.

- RANK THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FOLLOWING FACTORS TO COMPLETE EDUCATION:

Top ranking	
First*	Finances
Second	Housing
Third	Quality of academic program
Fourth	Family support
Fifth	Aboriginal student services
Sixth	Aboriginal faculty
Seventh	Peer support

CULTURAL/SPIRITUAL:

- 67% of respondents felt that there should be designated/pre-allocated spaces for Aboriginal students. 4% reported that they did not know or it depended. 9% did not think there should be allocated spaces. 20% did not respond.

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