Analysis of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Practices at Canadian Publicly Funded Community Colleges: Toward Student Success
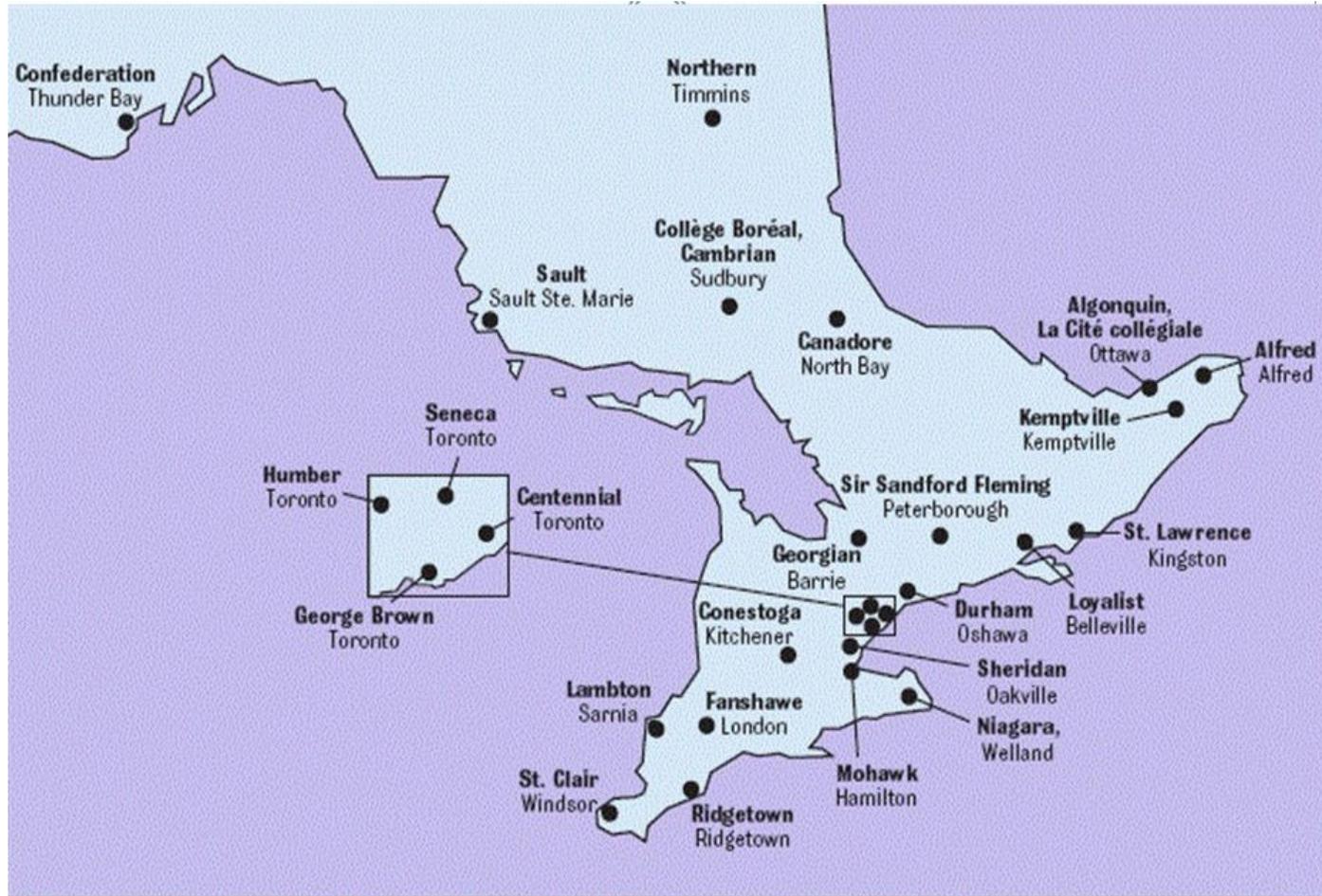
Hayfa Jafar

American University of Iraq, Sulaimani

Oleg Legusov

Seneca College, Canada

Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (CAATs)

- Ontario post-secondary education system.

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- 24 Ontario colleges

- Most CAATs were founded in the late 1960s

- Initially CAATs focused on vocational and technical education for local communities

Sources: https://canadaschoolcamp.com/canadian-colleges/province-of-ontario/

Diversity at Ontario Colleges (2021-2022)

Student Profile		Total Enrolment 192,391
Student type	Direct	22.7%
	Non-direct	77.3%
Gender	Female	55%
	Male	45%
	Other gender identity	<1%
Age	<21 years	50%
	21-25 years	26%
	26-30 years	10%
	31-35 years	5%
	>35 years	8%
First Language	English	87%
	French	3%
	Other	10%
Indigenous identify	Indigenous	4%
Status in Canada	Canadian citizen	50%
	International students	36%
	Unknown	6%
	Permanent resident	5%
	Refugee Status	1%

Source: Colleges Ontario (2022). Student and Graduate Profiles

Why EDI?

1 Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action

2 Black Lives matters movement

3 International students

4 Labour market disruptive

5 Technological changes

6 Changing Demographics

7 Location

8 French Identity

The Problem

Even though the body of literature on EDI at postsecondary institutions is growing, it is not clear how successful such initiatives are in addressing needs and concerns of diverse students.

Research Questions

- What strategies do Ontario Colleges use to achieve Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion?

- How do Ontario Colleges evaluate the quality of EDI plans and initiatives?

- How do Ontario Colleges EDI initiatives contribute to student success?

Methodological Approach

Documents Analysis

Interview Techniques developed by O'Leary (2014).

In the interview approach, the document is treated as an informant that provides pertinent information (O'Leary, 2014).

Document Analyzed

How student success is defined within EDI context

- Satisfied
- Job ready/Employed
- Global Citizens

HOW?

- **Culturally-safe environment**

- **Unique college experience**
- **Individual success plans**
- **Signature Innovative Learning Experience**

- **Comprehensive range of services**
- **Customized employment support**

Institutional Commitment

100% of Ontario Colleges considered EDI as part of their institutional values

ALGONQUIN COLLEGE

RESPECT We value the dignity and uniqueness of the individual. We value the equity and diversity in our community

Political

- Truth & Reconciliation
  - Adopt Indigenous mindset and way of thinking
  - Indigenous Education
  - Indigenous language courses

- Declaration on EDI

- Anti-Racism Policy

- French Language courses
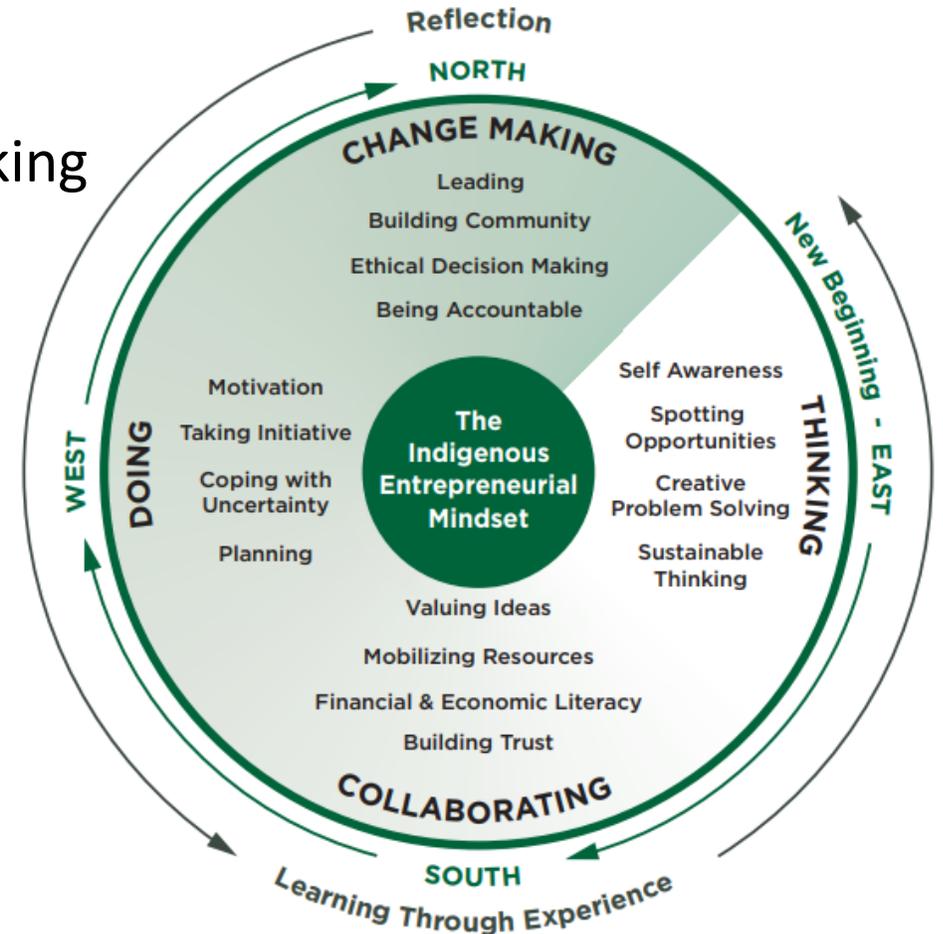
Structural & Procedural

Structure

- EDI office, committee, task force, Indigenous Reconciliation department
- Indigenous centered holistic services and learning for students success.
- Facilitate employment and career-related opportunities and supports for international students
- Strategy for data collection

Policies

- Develop an Anti-Racism and Equity Policy
- Early alert and intervention system to support underrepresented students
- Admission requirements reflect equity

EDI lens

- Establish an Equity Lens Policy Review Committee
- Adopt EDI lens in hiring staff/faculty and recruiting students.

Increase capacity and capability to advance equity through responsible collection and use of data

Spatial

- Native symbolism
- Places of worship
- Land acknowledgement

Socio-cultural

- Awareness about systemic racism
  - Lectures
  - Guest speakers
  - Seminars
  - Training sessions
  - Informal documents sharing

Academic and Educational

- Program diversity

- Decolonization of the curriculum (Indigenization)

- Internationalization of the curriculum

- Employability & Essential skills

- Career readiness

CENTENNIAL COLLEGE

Our Academic Plan is situated within a lens of inclusivity, valuing and reflecting multiple voices, identities, standpoints, and histories.

EDI Success Measures

- Total number and diversity of learners

- Enrolment of indigenous people and visible minorities

- Scholarships and support for indigenous people

- Program Diversify

- Indigenous learning

- Transition and retention

- Educational outcomes

- Students' attainment of core labour market skills and global perspectives

- Student and employer satisfaction outcomes.

- Financial resources allocation

ALGONQUIN
COLLEGE

Technology programs will reserve up to 30% of their seats for women.

Conclusion

- The findings suggest that equity, diversity and inclusion activities have become a policy priority attached to a variety of institutional action plans and performance reports.

- EDI is defined as creating a sense of belonging in a safe, inclusive, and welcoming environment.

- The majority of colleges are focusing on removing institutional barriers to equal access to education and employment for indigenous students.

- The most profound strategy is the structural and procedural integration of EDI units within the colleges' organizational structure and adopting an EDI lens in the hiring process of staff and faculty.

- Many of the EDI success measures are typical KPIs used to measure overall institutional effectiveness, such as student and employer satisfaction, retention rate, student retention, and employment rate.

- It remains to be seen how successful Ontario colleges are in implementing these strategies within the context of EDI agendas.