

TO: First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education Action Committee
The College of Alberta School Superintendents

FROM: Scott Key
Director, Professional Learning

DATE: January 19, 2022

RE: The Master of Education in Educational Studies (MES) Program

Background

The University of Alberta has been awarded a grant from the BHP Foundation. This grant is focused on Supporting Indigenous Language Revitalization.

The Master of Education in Educational Studies (MES) program has been included as part of this grant. The MES program is a course-based master's program focused on educational leadership. The program consists of 10 courses including a field-based research project. The program has served teachers and school leaders in Alberta and beyond for more than 15 years.

In 2019, the Kee Tas Kee Now Tribal Council Education Authority (KTCEA) approached the Faculty of Education about a master's degree for their staff. The Faculty of Education partnered with KTCEA to offer the MES program to 17 KTCEA staff (Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff) and 2 community members. To meet the needs of KTCEA, Indigenous faculty members modified both content and pedagogy to better reflect Indigenous knowledge and Indigenous ways of knowing. This work led to the program being taught primarily by Indigenous faculty focusing on Indigenous pedagogies and research methodologies. The KTCEA cohort will finish the program by the end of May 2022 with the academics requirements for Alberta's Leadership Quality Standard (LQS) certification completed.

In addition, the MES program will be offered to a new cohort of Aboriginal Teacher Education Program (ATEP) graduates. The program will be similar to the program taken by the KTCEA cohort with Indigenous perspectives on educational leadership infused throughout the program. Currently, program participants are being recruited with the program open to any ATEP graduate (Indigenous and non-Indigenous). The program will take 2 years to complete and will include the academic requirements for Alberta's Leadership Quality Standard (LQS) certification.

Current Context

Language belongs to the First Nations. The BHP Grant is focused on supporting Indigenous language revitalization. While some programs under this grant are focused on language acquisition, the MES program would center on leadership development with a focus on leadership that supports language revitalization and retention.

While the MES program has been included in this grant, before the MES program can be offered, it is crucial to engage with the First Nations and Métis Peoples in Alberta to determine the best path forward.

Conversations with the Indigenous colleges of Alberta (through First Nations Adult and Higher Education Consortium) are ongoing. This conversation with CASS' First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education Action Committee is an important step in determining the best path forward.

Possible questions to begin our conversation:

- 1) Is there a need for school leaders (or future school leaders) to enhance their leadership practice including how to support language revitalization?
- 2) If there is a need, how could the MES program assist with this work?
- 3) If the MES program can assist this work, how can the Faculty of Education work with various school authorities to offer the MES program?

I look forward to our conversation on January 27, 2022 and thank you for your participation.

If you have any questions or wish to continue our conversation, I can be reached via email at skey@ualberta.ca.