International Indigenous WIL Exchange:

The University of Victoria/University of Newcastle Experience

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Session outline

• The UVic context
• Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Scholarship
• International Indigenous Co-op Exchange: UVic-University of Newcastle (UoN) partnership
• The Program
• Assessing the Learning
• Success factors and lessons learned
• Next Steps
The UVic context

• UVic’s Co-op program has extensive experience in international WIL and international exchanges

• We exchange students with countries in Asia, Oceania, Europe, South and North America

• We prepare students for international experiences using curriculum designed to prepare students for living and working abroad, developing and assessing intercultural competencies and linking to global readiness for career
Queen Elizabeth Scholarship Program

In 2015 received ~$500,000 from the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Commonwealth Scholarship Program (QES) to develop a program with the following goals:

1. Student mobility between Canada and other Commonwealth countries
2. WIL students in STEM subjects
3. Community engagement and knowledge mobilization
International Indigenous Co-op Exchange: UVic-University of Newcastle partnership

One component of our QES program involves a partnership between University of Victoria (Co-op program and the LE, NONET program) and the University of Newcastle (Wollotuka Institute)

- Indigenous students from UVic having an international WIL (co-op) term in Australia

- Indigenous students from Australia having an academic term with a WIL experience in Canada (community internship)
UVic Components: LE, NONET

- An integrated suite of holistic supports for Indigenous students (academic, cultural, social, financial)

- The academic component includes a Preparation Seminar (Indigenous research and community engagement methods) and experiential learning opportunities (research apprenticeship, community internships)
Principles for supporting Indigenous student success

- Reciprocal learning
- Supporting Indigenous identity development
- Culturally relevant programming
- Community building
- Relationship building
- Individualized programming

UoN Components: Wollotuka Institute

- Indigenous Centre at the University of Newcastle
- Provide cultural programming and support
- Connected UVic student to Indigenous research project
The Program: UoN student on exchange in Canada

• In September 2015, UoN education student arrived
• Welcoming and blanketing ceremony conducted by Elders from local Indigenous nations
• LE NONET courses and electives pre-approved by her program at UoN
• Involvement with Campus Cousins
• Community internship at WSÁNEĆ School Board, Tsarlip Nation in Brentwood Bay, BC.
• Farewell ceremony, presentation and send off in January 2016
UoN student Cristal Walters at blanketing ceremony with Elder May Sam
The Program: UVic student on exchange in Australia

• In September 2015, social sciences student from UVic received blanketing ceremony conducted by Elders and travelled to University of Newcastle
• Supported by Wollotuka Institute
• Research – UoN Global Indigenous and Diaspora Research Studies Centre
• Returned to Canada January 2016
UVic student Kimberly Hanton at blanketing ceremony with Elder May Sam
Assessing the Learning

• Students completed intercultural assessments used by all UVic students who participate in international work terms
• Final presentation and debrief
• Final reports
Success Factors

- The LE,NONET program for the incoming student provided the socio-cultural context critical for her successful understanding and integration
- Campus cousins provided a supportive student network
- The involvement of the Elders
- Supportive Homestay family
- Experience with international exchange and navigating this complex program
Lessons Learned

• Indigenous students benefit from Indigenous cultural preparation in addition to the cultural preparation of the country to which they are exchanging
• Additional supports that involve Elders, the student community, homestay family
• Regular and extensive communication above the normal amount for a typical international exchange
• Consideration of the dimensions of intercultural training (knowledge, motivation, strategy, action) and assessment from an indigenous perspective (medicine wheel)
Cultural intelligence and the Medicine Wheel: Two Eyed Seeing?
Next Steps

• 2 students doing co-op exchange with Wollotuka in Fall 2016

• Future UVic students are only eligible if they have completed the LE,NONET Preparation Seminar

• Strengthen communication strategy

• Strengthen supports for students while on exchange
Thank you!

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